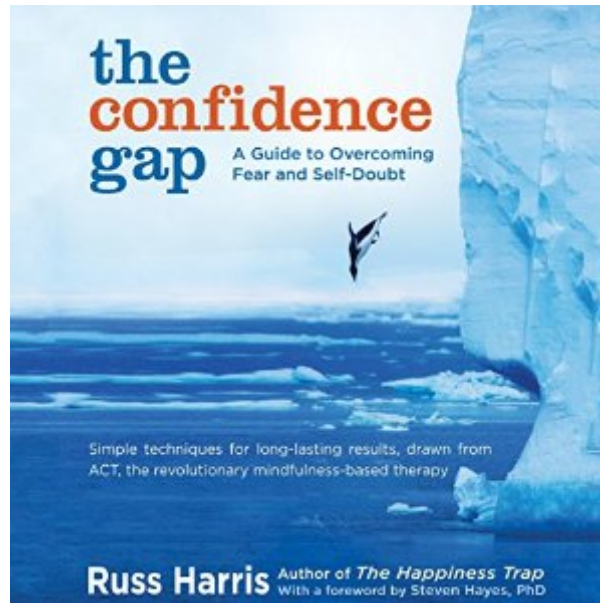


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# The Confidence Gap: A Guide To Overcoming Fear And Self-Doubt



## Synopsis

Too many of us miss out on opportunities in life because we lack self-confidence. Whether it's public speaking, taking on a leadership role, or asking someone for a date, there are situations in which we just don't feel equipped to handle the challenges we face. Russ Harris offers a surprising solution to low self-confidence, shyness, and insecurity: Rather than trying to "get over" our fears, he says, the secret is to form a new and wiser relationship with them. Paradoxically, it's only when we stop struggling against our fearfulness that we begin to find lasting freedom from it. Drawing on the techniques of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), a cutting-edge form of cognitive-behavioral therapy, *The Confidence Gap* explains how to: Free yourself from common misconceptions about what confidence is and how to build it; transform your relationship with fear and anxiety; clarify your core values and use them as your inspiration and motivation; use mindfulness to effectively handle negative thoughts and feelings.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Ah, just as I suspected: all that think-positive-Pollyanna-drivel is poppycock. According to Russ Harris, author of "The Confidence Gap", we evolved to think negatively. A hundred thousand years ago, if you weren't on constant vigil for dangers like lions, tigers, and bears in your environment, you didn't live very long, certainly not long enough to pass on your Pollyanna genes. So thinking negatively is ingrained in us, and I'm happy to hear that because I sure was getting sick and tired of those Stuart Smalley daily affirmations. "The Confidence Gap" is a guide to overcoming fear and

self-doubt. As a recovering drug addict it's important, very important for me to learn how to deal with fear, because I always dealt with this problem with drugs and "liquid courage." That was my solution for overcoming low self-confidence, shyness, and insecurity. Hellen Keller said that life is a daring adventure or nothing. If we're stifled by fear then our life will certainly be nothing. We'll stay stuck in our comfort zones as life passes us by. Harris lists four common reasons why we're afraid to leave our comfort zones: 1. Obstacles - our minds point out all the obstacles. 2. Self-judgements - our minds point out all our weaknesses. 3. Comparisons - our minds compare us to others who seem to be better than us. 4. Predictions - our minds predict failure. Before I published my book, I thought it would be the greatest thing I'd ever accomplished, but as soon as it came out, I was attacked by self-judgements. I thought what I'd written was stupid, and of inferior quality, and I almost regretted doing it. Even worse, I had to write for this website.

Do you feel like a lack of confidence is holding you back in life? Do you often find yourself waiting to feel ready before you go after your goals? Do fear and anxiety keep you stuck? If so, The Confidence Gap make likely change the way you've been doing life. Based on the principles of ACT--Acceptance and Commitment Therapy--this book offers a refreshing approach to filling the confidence gap: "Whatever it is that's interfering with your self-confidence, the solution lies in mindfulness, values, and action: defuse from unhelpful thoughts, expand around difficult feelings\*, take actions guided by your values, and engage fully in whatever you are doing." (p. 198) This approach can be nicely summarized using the acronym itself: A--Accept your thoughts and feelings C--Chose valued direction T--Take action mindfully (\*Yep, that's right. The solution lies in embracing uncomfortable feelings, and letting them be a guide to helping you become more in tune with living a life that's in line with who you really are. The sweet irony is that when we stop trying to avoid negative feelings, we actually feel better: "When we let go of trying to control our feelings, and instead start acting on our values and engaging fully in whatever we're doing, then pleasant feelings often show up for the ride. We are likely to feel healthier, happier, and calmer." (p. 199) ) This approach to building lasting confidence is built around developing the three skills of: 1. Handling your thoughts and feelings effectively using key aspects of mindfulness: defusion (becoming "unhooked" from your thoughts); expansion (making room for emotions, sensations, and feelings); and engagement (being fully psychologically present in the here-and-now) 2.

Whether you call it lack of confidence, fear of failure, performance anxiety, or self-doubt, the chances are it's cost you dearly in your life. Take a moment to consider:

What have you given up? What have you missed out on? What opportunities have you lost because of it? Over the years, I've worked with literally thousands of people who have put their hopes, dreams, and ambitions on hold because they don't have enough confidence. And the sad thing is, this lack of confidence is not due to any fault of their own. It is certainly not because of stupidity, or laziness, or negative thinking, or a deprived childhood, or a chemical imbalance in the brain. It is simply because they do not know the rules of the confidence game. ...On your journey, you'll discover a revolutionary new approach to maximizing human potential: a model of change that is firmly based on cutting-edge research in human psychology. And you'll learn to develop a mind-set known as psychological flexibility—a powerful mental state that enables you to respond effectively to fear, anxiety, and self-doubt. You'll also learn to develop genuine, lasting self-confidence. And you'll learn to enhance your performance in any area of your life—from sports, business, and creative arts to socializing, parenting, and sex! ~ Russ Harris from *The Confidence Gap*

Russ Harris is one of the world's leading authorities on one of the most cutting-edge forms of therapy known as Acceptance and Commitment Training, or ACT for short (pronounced like the word act not A.C.T.). ACT is essentially a powerful blend of mindfulness training and cognitive behavioral therapy. I'll be covering Russ's first book (*The Happiness Trap*) soon where he provides a general intro to it.

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