

Transcription - Being Confident

Welcome back, I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec. Today we are going to talk about being confident. The particular situation we're looking at, is that in a performance review you have been told by your manager, that you need more confidence.

What do you do? How do you develop that? And what does it really mean in terms of a work situation? What does being more confident really mean? In this I am going to defer to the ultimate confidence person. I don't think that she has ever suffered from a lack of confidence in the workplace, I've certainly never seen it. Actually, that's not entirely true. I have seen a lack of confidence in the workplace when I mention video.

Oh yeah, I hate that. Anyway it's not about me. What this is about, is a manager saying, okay, so you need to be more confident. The first thing I would say, what does that mean? I'm not going to ask my boss that if that was me in that situation.

I think that, just as a general statement, in all performance review discussions, as managers, we need to remember to be accurate in our speech, to be accurate about the feedback that we're giving and saying "be more confident" is entirely inaccurate.

That's true for the managers. As a recipient, I would want to look at, this is a perception of somebody that I value their feedback. So what is it that I'm doing to make it look like I'm not confident? Some of the things that you might want to look at are, am I always checking everything? Your intent maybe that I want to make sure I've covered everything for my boss or my colleagues or whatever. So you're forever checking. Are you constantly trying to be a good team member and a person that values others and asking them, deferring to others to include them? This might inadvertently be giving the impression you don't trust your own judgment but you're deferring to others more and you're forever checking. Are you coming across as you're trying to get everything right, not because you want to make everyone happy and get the results, but you're coming across like you're afraid to make a mistake? Is that how people are seeing you when your intention is different?

So, in that sense, look at what you think might be the root cause or the tell tales that seem to give you this lack of confidence persona. Once you do that and just try to be as objective as possible, don't worry about saying, well, I wasn't trying to

do that, I was just trying to include you. Don't. Just change your method. In your method, make sure that you put your hand up for more challenges, you give your view, your balanced view.

I think that's probably the thing that stands out for me most, is about giving your view. For me, that's where I have suffered in that I was always of the mindset in my working career that I didn't give an opinion, unless I thought it was a worthwhile opinion to give, unless I thought it would contribute to the discussion that was happening. And so often I would sit in a meeting and not say anything for 2 hours and in my performance reviews I did get criticized for not contributing enough. In some ways that could have been seen as not being confident enough to view my opinion. So I would encourage you, regardless of what you think of your opinion, if you've got an opinion and you think it will contribute to the discussion, give it.

And don't be afraid to know that it's at a stage, your opinion is at a certain stage and that can develop. It can be either, you change your opinion after you get more information and facts or you build on it or you shape it. That shaping of it is where you go to do all those other things that you did, which is the inclusion of others by confidently saying what you think but being open to listen to others and then do your research, etc. So I guess it's what are the behaviors that you are doing that will give the impression you're lacking confidence and then address them.

The other thing is this to have a real good look and be honest. Are you lacking confidence? Are you having doubts about your ability in that role or in contributing at a certain meeting or whatever? If that's the case, it will come through. It will come through because if you don't see yourself as good enough or ready enough or important enough as everyone else, then it will come through. How do you deal with that?

Try to get more knowledge about whatever you're doing. Try to figure out, what if I did this and something went wrong? What would be your strategy to fix anything that went wrong? Knowledge comes in many, many ways - you're learning from others, you're doing research, you go to training, whatever that is, that will, in itself, give you heaps of confidence because what you're doing is learning more about what you're talking about. Then you listen to others and see the presentation, your body language etc. Kim is the expert on speaking in public and Kim covers that in so many ways about how important the eye contact is, the body language, etcetera, that will give the appearance of, it reflects the confidence, not give that appearance of, rather than looking for others to speak

for you or for the topic.

Make a good impression in the first place, is very, very important. So that impression can be by what you said, by how you handled objections, by how you actually responded to someone who was not in agreement with your view. Again, that will show your ability to be confident even though you are in a disagreed position.

The issue for me in all of this is looking at yourself. So I think the exercise needs to be that you've been told this information, you have sought clarification that word again, of what that actually means in terms of the assessment that's been given. So write it down as you're being told, write it down because it stops you thinking about it in that moment and trying to justify it as Fulyana has said. It's not about justifying why you do what you do and how that perception has led to this assessment. It's about getting the facts, getting the impressions that you are giving out and understanding, then going away from that situation and understanding that these behaviors are giving this impression. So, what behaviour can I replace that with to give a different impression? If you need to talk that through with someone, that's probably a good thing to do, because your behaviours have developed over time to suit who you are and how you like to work. Changing those, changing any behavior, whether it's addictive behavior or anything else, takes time, takes effort, takes knowledge. So you need to identify the behaviors. Identify, why you do those in certain situations, talk to others that can help you think through those situations and give you alternative ways of looking at those situations and dealing with those situations. Come up with some options yourself, write it all down and for me, the writing down is the thing that helps me sort it all through, then I can get all the bits of paper. I would do it on what we used to call file cards, they're about the size of a mobile phone and that's what I'd use for writing speeches as well so I've always got plenty on hand. I'm old-school kind, I'll write things down because part of writing things down is you're actually focusing on that idea because you've got to spell out the words and do all of that, there's a whole neurolinguistic theory behind it, but it does help a certain range of people to actually physically write down things to help them work through situations. So I would write down behaviours on one set of cards, what I do for those situations, so what my reaction is to that, then what my impression is that it is creating. I would have a different colored set of cards that looked at those behaviours or those situations and thought about alternative ways of addressing them that I would be comfortable with. But not always ones that I would be comfortable with because sometimes you have to grow. If you're being told this as part of a way of developing you, then you are going to have to grow. So you are going to have to be uncomfortable at some point in this growth

cycle. And that's a good thing because it does mean that you're growing, it does mean that you're moving beyond your comfort zone, it means that you are capable of more, you are recognizing that you are capable of more.

So let's have the growth recognized. Let's acknowledge that, that's going to happen and let's just work on that growth cycle so that the next time it comes around, that your manager says to you it's time for us to sit down and let's do an assessment and see where you are or it comes up in conversation or whatever, you can ask, you can say, am I improving? Do you feel that my confidence level is better than it was three months ago, six months ago? Get that feedback because if it's not happening and you've done all these things then you've got to rethink. Don't let the situation go on until the next time you get told that information because if you let it go 12 months or 18 months and you are told you are still not confident, you think I've done all these things and it's made no difference, what's the point. So don't allow yourself to be lulled into a sense of, I've done the work so it must be getting better. Make sure the person who assessed you in the first place or someone who is in an assessing position of that kind, can help you on this path, can help the growth.

When you're doing that, I think it's really important to make it easier for the person who gave you the first lot of feedback and now as Kim said when you're checking where you're at, make it easier for both of you and try to identify, it's too wide, the confidence thing. So, are you appearing more confident when it's a one-on-one situation? Are you more confident when you're talking to your team? Is it that you appear to be less confident when you're called into a super senior management meeting or to present at the board level? If you look at all of what is the environment and how do you perform. Do you perform differently on the confidence level in different environments? That will help you identify even more. So the person giving you the feedback might say I definitely saw it and you never had trouble with your confidence talking to me one-on-one, you seem pretty good when you're talking to the team in relation to the area that you run. That's really good. But when we ask you, when you're at a meeting, a cross division meeting, in a cross-functional sense, there's a difference or when you're at senior management. That information is valuable because then you can tailor your behavior and solution to suit that.

It's also valuable in terms of you and your career. Because if you know and you've had assessed that these are situations where you are more or less confident, you can choose to be a part of those or not or find some other solution or find someone else in your team or someone else that can do those things on behalf of you or the team. No one person is indispensable and no one person has to do everything in an organisation. Know your strengths, know your

weaknesses and in knowing your weaknesses, know how you can turn those into opportunities for yourself or for others in the team and that will help you to manage your career path and your expectations of the roles that you would like to play or the roles that you would like to create for yourself within an organization.

The other thing is that you are confident, you have the knowledge but you're not communicating. Maybe it's just your communication and the more you find out the more you'll be able to address it. So maybe by you not saying what you're thinking or by you not saying the details of what you're thinking, then people will think you only stopped at a certain point because you lacked confidence in your conviction, in what you're about to say. On the other hand, it might be that you're looking at something and you went into the detail and not high-level enough at a certain meeting. Again, it's more learning about yourself and the situational analysis that you'll be doing by finding out information. So then you can be aware of it. That's all you probably need to do.

The first step is to have that statement of confidence clarified so that you know exactly what it is in accurate terms, measurable terms, so that you can address that issue. I think that's all before the building falls down around us. We've got a very noisy group beside us in one of the rooms of the library. We'll finish the recording here. I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec.