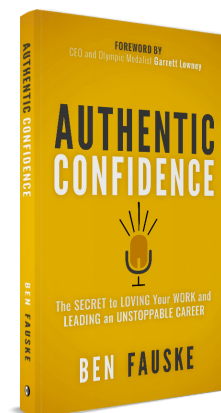


Authentic Confidence

The Secret to Loving Your Work and Leading an Unstoppable Career

by **Ben Fauske**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

The world of work is replete with people who are feeling anxious and stressed. Who feel like imposters. Who are struggling to get along with their bosses or co-workers. Who believe they lack the education or experience they need for success. Who want to increase their influence. Who feel like they are falling behind.

Authentic Confidence: The Secret to Loving Your Work and Leading an Unstoppable Career shows that a major cause of these and other problems that hold people back in their careers is overconfidence or under-confidence. The book is for people who want to find appropriate confidence for themselves or coach it in others.

Author Ben Fauske, who has studied rock musicians extensively, draws from examples in that world and presents a process for achieving the middle ground, which he terms *Authentic Confidence*. The process works for new leaders, sales professionals, plant employees—anyone in a position that requires strong leadership. Thousands of people who have been taught this process have been transformed in their careers.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why confidence issues are key to career success.
- What Authentic Confidence looks like and how to attain it.
- A self-assessment process for identifying confidence issues.
- The career pattern of world-class influencers.

Why Some Love and Others Hate Work

In any organization, customer confidence is the most important currency. If customers lose confidence, organizations go out of business because customers have options.

Overconfident behaviors appear insensitive, arrogant, and bossy. Their behaviors are toxic.

People who are under-confident demonstrate behaviors that are often fear-based and indecisive. Customers will do whatever they can to avoid this option. Underconfident people often worry about the opinion of others and feel they are not good enough. These behaviors are disruptive.

Authentic Confidence is the fast track to success. Leaders with Authentic Confidence exhibit two critical traits: pride and humility. In the right balance, these traits are a powerful combination. Customers are attracted to the person with Authentic Confidence, who delivers exceptional service and creates great relationships.

Disengagement

According to Gallup research, more than 70% of the American workforce is disengaged. This is an epidemic with disastrous consequences. Organizations filled with engaged employees—who are passionate about their work and committed to the organization—are filled with loyal and confident customers.

Negative behaviors in teams are often related to confidence issues. Ego, hidden agendas, and selfish behaviors always generate the strongest reactions. Overconfident behaviors by coworkers are often listed as the root cause of terrible teams, which make people hate work.

A common problem is that many people spend every day in an environment filled with gossip when certain people who have an “I am better than you” attitude are only looking out for themselves. Nobody likes a showoff, yet it is a common behavior in business, sports, and politics.

Confidence issues are left unchecked for many reasons. The person with the issues might be a great performer. Leaders are afraid to address the issue because their star player may leave. Or members of the team may attempt to deal with the issues, but they are quickly shut down by the person with the confidence issues. They eventually give up.

When one person demonstrates overconfidence, others will have to demonstrate under-confident behaviors to survive. Instead of a balance of opinions, there is one dominant and

many submissive team members. The team talks about the behaviors behind the back of the dominant person. This breaks down trust and creates dysfunctional teams. Where gossip thrives, so does disengagement.

Culture Is the Problem

An organization’s culture—its unwritten rules—is the most powerful force in shaping individual behavior. A culture that is ego-driven will lead to turf wars and backstabbing. People will pull against someone who is overconfident.

In most organizations, decisions have to be made to make it safe to speak truth without consequences. There is a place for strong leadership, but if people cannot share their views with leadership, then group think and self-justification will be the norm.

A culture that stifles success will lead to under-confident employees and, in turn, underwhelmed customers. There are unintended consequences of a humble culture taken too far. When you cannot be excited about your own success for fear of retaliation, there is a problem.

The key is creating a culture where success is applauded and egos are checked where necessary. Your effort is celebrated and jealousy is low. Everyone is working hard for a common goal and individual contributions are recognized. The mission of the organization is the highest priority, but it is clearly understood that a team is made up of many individual contributors.

So how do you develop a healthy culture? In short, healthy cultures guide under-confident people to find courage and overconfident people to find humility. Building leaders who build culture is the strategy proven to work.

Authentic Confidence Explained.

First, we receive input or feedback. We respond with either over-, under-, or Authentic Confidence. There are certain personalities or topics that will trigger us to respond with over- or under-confidence. It might be education, experience, age, gender, background, or the tone of someone’s voice.

Once we understand our triggers, it is essential to create a game plan to resolve them. If we don’t, we’ll cycle between over- and under-confidence, either blaming others or ourselves for things not working out. Authentic Confidence is the process of getting to the root of confidence issues, resolving them, and responding with the appropriate amount of confidence in every situation.

When we start communicating with Authentic Confidence, customers will respond. They want nothing more than to partner with someone they can trust who provides an exceptional experience without drama.

Core Beliefs of an Unstoppable Career

Authentic Confidence is defined by two core beliefs: pride in work and humility in relationships.

Healthy pride is finding significant satisfaction from your career. You must care about the quality of the work you do before anyone else will.

Healthy humility is taking equal ownership of your greatness and growth areas. You should believe you are great but not a better person than others. You may be better at specific skills, but that does not make you a better human being. Humility in relationships allows you to work with people for a long time. You allow others to take the main stage when it is their turn. You listen without the intent to respond. You pull for others to do well. You assume the best in others until they prove otherwise. You are not intimidated or jealous of others' success. You are driven by individual and team accomplishments.

Growing Your Influence

A person with Authentic Confidence takes great pride in their work and has humility in relationships. They are gifted influencers for both relationships and results. They have the most productive teams, creating the greatest customer experience. They are refreshing to be around and quick to share the glory with the team. They are honest optimists in action.

Increase Your Self-Awareness

Great leaders communicate the appropriate amount of confidence in every situation. Finding the balance between overconfidence and under-confidence starts with understanding our confidence tendencies. Studies have shown that we have a genetic predisposition to certain levels of self-esteem. This means that Authentic Confidence is challenging—it is not a natural state. We have to learn how to overcome our bias.

One of the ways to consider your bias is to examine how you react to compliments and criticisms. People with Authentic Confidence can accept both and respond appropriately. Your ability to appropriately respond to feedback is largely based on your self-awareness. Self-awareness is having an accurate view of yourself and being equally comfortable with your

greatness and your weakness. Self-awareness is essential to effective leadership. The first step in increasing it is honestly evaluating the quality of your work and relationships.

Authentic Confidence Quotient

The Authentic Confidence Quotient (ACQ) is a confidential self-assessment. You must identify your own issues, not be told what they are. The ACQ includes four sections:

- List your current roles and responsibilities.
- Define the current level of confidence in each role (under-, over-, or Authentic Confidence).
- What are the limiting beliefs you have in each role (the thoughts you have about your career that hold you back)?
- Write a future goal that will build Authentic Confidence. What does success look like in every area of over- or under-confidence? You must find a replacement belief for each limiting belief. Visualize a goal as clearly as you can; this will create an image that will inspire action.

Finally, list your greatest strength. You must be able to communicate your competence in clear terms so others will have confidence in you. Choose one area of under-confidence to resolve—an area that is significant in your role and one in which you can make meaningful progress in the next three to six months.

Then create your Statement of Authentic Confidence. Combine your greatest strength and area of under-confidence in one statement. The purpose of this statement is to first believe your greatness internally. Once you believe it internally, you will find ways to demonstrate it externally.

Discover the Pattern of World-Class Influencers

The 5 Stages of Career Confidence

Stage 1: Significance (Moment of Impact)

Career significance refers to making the decision to have a meaningful impact with your work. Significance is found through continued growth. By gaining new leadership skills and resolving your confidence issues, your influence will increase, and so will the opportunities that cross your path.

Think in detail about the confidence issue on which you are working. Imagine different scenarios, including potential obstacles, and you will be drawn to solutions that make that

image a reality. The biggest mistake most people make in their careers is not knowing where they are going. They do not have a clear definition of what success looks like.

Stage 2: Competence (Model the Master)

To grow your competence—the ability to do something successfully or efficiently—it is critical to find someone who has been where you would like to go. New leaders will succeed faster by learning from experienced leaders, helping them avoid a lifetime of trial and error.

Learning from mentor is as simple as setting up an informal meeting to learn the best practices of your desired skill. Most will be flattered you want to learn from them. Reach out and ask for one hour of their time. You are just asking them to help you learn one specific skill and help you overcome your area of under-confidence. Come prepared for the meeting with questions on how they deliver excellence in this area. Take good notes and thank them for their time.

Stage 3: Authenticity (Signature Creation)

We were designed for unique contribution and anything less is to sacrifice our potential. Authenticity is the discovery and display of our individual value to others. Authenticity is the spark for invention, innovation, and creativity. To create your own signature style, reflect on your roots and remember what makes you most proud. Start to think about how you can deliver your core competence in new ways.

When you are developing your own leadership brand, you will find a new energy you never thought possible. You are creating something new, fresh, and unique to you. Some of your ideas will fail miserably, but more often than not you will see your effectiveness increase because you are being authentic and genuine. This is where the real love of work begins.

Stage 4: Leverage (Communicate Confidence)

After you master your new skill in the authenticity stage, you must learn how to share with others that you are not only competent in an area, but also that you are willing to use your skill to help others. People will see you as an expert on a subject and doors will open in areas you never thought possible.

Stage 5: Empathy (Better Together)

Empathy is never forgetting where you came from. It is the belief that even though you may be better at a skill, it does not make you a better person. Empathy is the mindset that leads to a desire to give back. The goal is for the student to eventually become the teacher and pass on the same confidence-building process to others.

Conclusion

No matter where you are in your confidence journey, enhancing your relationships is the greatest impact you can have on the culture of your organization. When you are driving out of the parking lot of your organization for the last time, what will be your legacy?



Ben Fauske is the creator of the Authentic Confidence process and has taught thousands of leaders how to communicate with confidence. His clients describe him as passionate and committed to their success. Prior to creating the Authentic Confidence Process, Ben was the Director of Organizational Development for a Canadian based multi-national corporation. He is a certified Professional Behavioral Analyst and is sought after for executive coaching, live workshops, and keynotes.

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