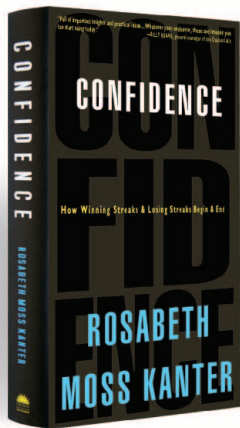




# Executive Book Summaries®

FILE: LEADERSHIP



By Rosabeth Moss Kanter

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## How Winning Streaks and Losing Streaks Begin and End

# CONFIDENCE

### THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

*One moment you're up, one moment you're down. Whether they are businesses, sports teams, or organizations, those on winning streaks seem to get all of the advantages — adulation, career opportunities, good deals, and the benefit of the doubt. It's easy to feel on top of the world as a winner, but once you face setbacks and a losing streak, life becomes a cycle of loss and failure.*

*Losing once does not make someone a loser, but what is the difference between losing all of the time and keeping the ability to win? It is a question of confidence, and the conscious sense of accountability, collaboration and inspiration that gives people control over their responses to their circumstances. Presidents, managers, coaches and even individuals have the power to choose how they deal with a loss, and whether they are going to allow it to be the beginning of a trend, or have the confidence to learn how to win next time. By studying winning and losing teams, companies and organizations, Harvard Business School Professor Rosabeth Moss Kanter has found the keys to confidence and the way to find it when it is lost.*

*This summary presents the new theory and practice of success, and explains why success and failure are not mere episodes but self-perpetuating trajectories.*

## What You'll Learn In This Summary

- ✓ The three cornerstones of confidence and how leaders can use them to perpetuate a winning team.
- ✓ Why winning streaks build and continue over time.
- ✓ How a winning streak comes to an end when panic takes the place of confidence.
- ✓ How the lack of confidence caused by losing streaks becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.
- ✓ The difference between a loss at the beginning of a trend and a wake-up call for winners who are not trying as hard.
- ✓ The steps necessary to create a culture of confidence in any organization.
- ✓ How to use the cornerstones of confidence in your everyday life to be an optimistic winner.

# CONFIDENCE

by Rosabeth Moss Kanter

## — THE COMPLETE SUMMARY

### Winners and Losers

After one of the highest-performing decades in its 100-year history, Gillette, the global consumer products company, slipped badly in the mid-1990s. Poor business practices and overpromising to Wall Street resulted in 15 quarters of missed earnings estimates before a new leader turned the company around and restored accountability. Gillette once had confidence, then lost it, then got it back.

People, groups and companies can get swept up in fortunate and unfortunate cycles of wins and losses. Confidence is often what causes these swings to rise and fall. Confidence is the bridge between expectations and performance; between investments and results.

Positive cycles or winning streaks create positive momentum and increase confidence. People who believe they will win are more likely to put in the effort to ensure victory. Their halo effect makes it easier to attract the best talent and the investments to perpetuate victory. Losing cycles also feed on themselves, destroying confidence along the way. Losing has a repellent effect that makes it harder for a team to bond and to attract new talent, and easier to fall behind.

#### Arrogance and Despair

Confidence is the balance between arrogance — the failure to see any flaws — and despair. It is human nature to seek patterns and trends even in random events. But in non-random activities, where effort and skill make a difference, success and failure become self-fulfilling prophecies.

Failure and success are trajectories, directions and pathways. Each decision and action is shaped by what happened last time. Once set in motion, streaks harden, and to turn a cycle from decline to success, leaders must restore confidence in the system. In business as in sports, winning on the playing field is heavily influenced by what happens off the field. ■

For additional information on how confidence affects a team's outcome, go to: <http://my.summary.com>

### Winning Streaks

The positive momentum of success leads to a winning streak. Winning puts people in control of their circumstances and brings rewards that only perpetuate more

winning.

Every winning streak begins when leaders create a foundation for confidence. Winning begets winning because it produces confidence at the following four levels:

- 1. Self-confidence:** an emotional climate of high expectations.
- 2. Confidence in another:** positive, supportive, team-oriented behavior.
- 3. Confidence in the system:** organizational structures and routines reinforcing accountability, collaboration and innovation.
- 4. External confidence:** a network to provide resources.

At each level, confidence both feeds winning and feeds off of it. This is how leading organizations such as General Electric, Toyota, Wal-Mart, Oxford, Harvard and the New York Yankees succeed year after year. What makes winning streaks even more dramatic is that winning is hard work. Losing is much easier.

#### A Mini-Virtuous Cycle

People who believe in themselves are likely to try harder and longer, increasing their chances of success. They believe that their efforts will pay off in the future. These expectations translate into an investment of resources that improve performance in a mini-virtuous cycle. Leaders look more closely, invest more time, and give winners the benefit of the doubt.

Winning is contagious, and leaders can set an emo-

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### Winning Streaks

(continued from page 2)

tional tone and shape expectations that produce initial wins. People naturally gravitate toward behaving in ways that support confidence. Accountability, collaboration and initiative are central to confidence, and they occur when winners work together comfortably.

External confidence is necessary for success. It includes money for investment, as well as the ability to recruit top talent. The whole context is enriched for winners. They get powerful networks, career opportunities, and better deals with those who want to be associated with them.

Winning streaks also feature leadership continuity. Losing teams or companies tend to churn their leaders, and everyone has to keep adjusting to new relationships. Continuity of people means deepening relationships, continuity of strategy, and the security to build on a plan rather than mindlessly follow a script.

#### Why Winning Streaks End

Like everyone, winners make mistakes. One loss or fumble doesn't end a winning streak because winners usually receive the benefit of the doubt. Tough times can propel a team to get motivated again. But winning streaks do involve struggles that must be dealt with. The rules of sports and business encourage competition against unmitigated success. Teams become the ones to beat, so others try harder. New companies enter markets that appear lucrative.

Even so, it is not external forces that hurt winners; it is their own failure to maintain discipline and support systems. Paradoxically, winners get lazy and slack off the

### Connecticut Huskies' Investment Cycle

After 10 losing seasons out of 11, new coaches arrived for the University of Connecticut's Huskies women's basketball team in 1984. At that time, there was only one set of bleachers and only 50 people attended each game, but the university promised the new coaches the resources of a broad-based athletic program. As the team started winning, the school became more interested in investing resources to promote success. By the time the Huskies made it to the Final Four in 1991, they had a luxurious new basketball facility. By 1997, devoted Huskies fans made sure all games were sold out in advance. The team topped attendance records, was followed by seven full-time beat reporters, and generated \$4 million in profit in 2001. In 2003, new donors paid up to \$50,000 for four season tickets. Because of the Huskies, the WNBA decided to put a team in the area — its first team without a men's NBA team. The team got continually better over time because it received investment and confidence to fuel its improvement.

### Too Much Success at Chernobyl

In the lead-up to the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, experienced reactor operators allegedly violated safety rules because they had done so before without incident. It made life easier to have one less process. The operators were well-respected, award-winning experts who became overconfident and ignored the safety rules as they started to act automatically rather than reflectively. They reinforced one another's conviction that everything was just fine. The resulting disaster wasn't due to a failure of individuals, but to the breakdown of a system that had been very successful in the past. Fundamental pieces of the support for high performance were neglected.

activities that made them winners in the first place. When things go wrong, they lose confidence and panic. During a game, anyone can be losing, but winners' confidence in their ability pulls them through. Panic distracts and prohibits good decision-making under pressure, while confidence calms and makes sure fumbles don't turn into losses.

#### Arrogance and Overconfidence

Preparing for the worst-case scenario and practicing under the most difficult circumstances strengthen problem-solving and the ability to work through disasters. Confidence is based on reasonable expectations. When people become arrogant or overconfident, they miss some of the information associated with success and failure.

Being a success in the first place means surviving long enough to need maintenance and reinvestment. A winning streak requires renewal and rebuilding. Winners age naturally or reach their limits. Slowing momentum can start with removing just one element or ignoring one rule.

Winning ends when denial about threats and problems sets in. Winners can work through setbacks as long as they face problems head-on and their discipline remains in place. The antidote to denial is dialogue, which is made possible by confidence. Winners who reinforce accountability, collaboration and initiatives are better equipped to see mistakes and changes. They are willing to respond to trouble through self-examination and by assuming there is a solution rather than avoiding it. ■

For additional information on the sources of denial, go to: <http://my.summary.com>

### Losing Streaks

Losing streaks are escalating cycles of decline that erode confidence. Losing makes people feel out of control, and they give in to the temptations associated with defeat. Their powerlessness corrupts confidence, and then it gets weak.

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### Losing Streaks

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One of the biggest signs of losers is that they do not like to talk about being losers and they stop communicating. Whether they are individuals, teams or companies, people on a losing slide avoid dealing with the issue. No one wants to tell the world that he or she is responsible for starting a losing streak. Managers retreat to their own turf and defend it against change, not considering the effect on the organization. Secrecy and isolation accelerate the problem as people talk less and find scapegoats to blame for problems.

Next, people become mired in “learned helplessness” and believe nothing they do can really make a difference. They set less aggressive goals, find short-run solutions, and surrender to the timidity of mediocrity. They become trapped in “doom loops,” self-perpetuation systems where responses to problems actually make the problems worse. Cutting costs might create a product no one wants, which reduces revenues, creating losses, making it impossible to borrow at reasonable rates, which increases expenses, and so on.

#### *Habitual Losers*

Losing becomes a habit. Even winners can get dragged down when put in a losing situation, because the powerlessness of loss causes corruption and the system turns them into sore losers. When there are few coping mechanisms, people fall back on primitive self-protective behaviors that are the polar opposites of what it takes to win:

- **Communication decreases.** People avoid unpleasant conversations about problems.
- **Criticism and blame increase.** People do anything to avoid self-scrutiny.
- **Respect decreases.** People feel surrounded by mediocrity.
- **Isolation increases.** People don’t want to be reminded of failure by others.
- **Focus turns inward.** People look out for their own interests.
- **Rifts widen and inequities grow.** People hoard assets, play favorites, and exhibit rivalries.
- **Initiative decreases.** People are paralyzed by anxiety.
- **Aspirations diminish.** People look for life satisfaction elsewhere.
- **Negativity spreads.** Contagious negativity reduces everyone’s mood.

#### *Why Losing Streaks Persist*

Whether one loss is a trend or a blip is not always clear, but once losses accumulate, they take on the weight of history. Past performance shifts expectations and turns into a self-fulfilling prophesy, as it did for the Panthers of Prairie View A&M University, a historically black college in Texas. The team had the longest unbroken losing streak in NCAA football history — 80 straight losses between

1989 and 1998. It had been 25 years since the team won more games than it lost, and the school’s strong academics were overshadowed by the football team. Being treated like second-class citizens, deprived of its share of resources, and having no confidence are the conditions that set the team up to fail.

The Panthers were champions in the midcentury, but the civil rights movement in the 1960s changed the racial composition of college campuses — and their football teams. Good players were recruited to integrated colleges, and Prairie View didn’t adapt. Its last winning season was in 1976, 6–5. At that point, the school was in trouble overall, and auxiliary reserves for athletics, dorm renovations, and student health were depleted. The team was kept alive by memories and support of alumni, but there was no investment in improvements. For a while, the team was coached by the golf coach, it had no scholarships, and the national media ridiculed it. It also found that other teams played harder against it to avoid the humiliation of losing to the Panthers. Referees gave the team’s players more penalties assuming they couldn’t possibly be winners.

#### *A Platform for Confidence*

A new head coach was appointed in 1997 and gave the team a platform for confidence. With more scholarships, more staff, and less contact with the media, the Panthers played better and then won on Sept. 26, 1998. They had won one game, but still didn’t have the patterns of winners. Even when a new coach arrived in 2000 and helped them wipe out bad habits, start winning, and get some respect, they retained the pathologies of losers, and a doom loop undermined their confidence. They lacked talent because they had weak and inconsistent leadership, because they lost, and because they had no resources. Finally, in 2000, the school started a capital campaign to infuse resources, but external confidence was still missing.

In 2003, C.L. Whittington took the head coaching job and instilled the team with school spirit. He put up pictures and trophies from the glory days, taught the team’s players the school song, got them back in shape, enforced a dress code, and created more opportunities to bond. Players began to grow confidence and stop losing. But Whittington took it too far and began to bring back loser values. He rode them too hard, blamed everyone for problems, got into heated arguments, and was eventually fired.

Losing is not one act. It is a combination of economic, organizational, cultural and psychological factors that interact to make it more likely for people to respond in dysfunctional ways. That is why losing streaks are so hard to break. It was impossible for the Panthers to leap from loser to winner overnight, no matter how many people wanted it. Wins mixed with loser behaviors, such as disruption, churn, lurching, and lack of investment, do not overcome losing streaks. ■

## Turnarounds: The Art of Building Confidence

When it is time to make a turnaround, leadership matters most because confidence has eroded at all levels. Turnarounds are not for the faint of heart or impatient, and they have similar issues. These include:

- **Coming off a losing streak, the situation is always worse than anyone thinks.**
- **Promises of change have been made before to no avail.**
- **Those hailed as heroes when they arrive can become villains when they make unpopular decisions.**
- **If victory is too easy, it might be too temporary.**
- **Turnarounds run on several clocks that are not always in sync.**

There are three situations that trigger turnarounds: Some organizations are terminally ill; some turnarounds begin when a loss of external confidence finally compels change; and some turnarounds are simply an unanticipated byproduct of normal life events, such as succession. While each turnaround is different, they all start with the need to make unpopular decisions about a situation that's full ugliness has been denied. It's hard for that kind of clarity to come from inside the organization. New leaders are required because they are better able to disentangle system dynamics in which they are not caught up.

### *Rapid Leader Turnover*

But decline cycles are known for having rapid leader turnover. What is the difference between a leader who will stay and one who will soon be packing his or her bags? It is the confidence the leader shows in the people who must work to deliver winning performance. The turnaround leader's agenda is daunting, with endless problems, unpopular decisions, and skeptics to convert. These people often proceed unevenly and slowly. It takes minutes to destroy confidence, but forever to build it up. To satisfy people, it takes a combination of bold strokes and long marches to change culture.

There will be false negatives when actions with long-term objectives create apparent short-term losses. There are also false positives, early signs of recovery that bring so much relief that effort decreases. These false positives can provoke selfishness if they occur before spirit is restored. That is why early successes can sometimes be the most dangerous time in a turnaround. Stopping losses is not the same thing as gaining the confidence to create wins.

### *Face Facts*

The confidence to create wins starts with accountability. When people in losing streaks stop talking, practicing or trying, accountability is lost. James M. Kilts recognized that when he took over as CEO of Gillette in

2001. Gillette was a good-old-boy organization that valued seniority and corporate loyalty over competence. The company had star products, sometimes reaching 80 percent market share, but there was little focus on innovation by individuals. In the 1990s, the stars couldn't hide the underlying problems anymore, and it was easy for investors and employees to lose confidence. Gillette's downward spiral included stagnant sales with declining profits, market share, and stock price. The company slipped into a long cycle of decreasing communication, blame-shifting, and denial of responsibility for poor performance.

Before coming to Gillette, Kilts investigated the company. It was ending its 15th consecutive quarter in which it failed to hit earnings estimates. He could see that Gillette lacked accountability. He immediately set in motion a series of changes to restore responsibility and accountability. Two of his top goals were to provide straight talk about problems and expectations, and to have the courage to admit responsibility for problems.

### *Setting Expectations*

Kilts began the turnaround by explaining exactly what behavior he expected, including setting and achieving realistic targets, and not inflated targets to please Wall Street. He showed courage to break with the past by admitting errors after discovering the sales force was engaging in trade loading at the end of each quarter to make its unrealistic targets. When he asked salespeople why they engaged in this practice, they said executives told them to do it. Kilts admitted it was wrong and stood up to Wall Street by not issuing earnings advisories before the end of the quarter. Then people began to understand that he was serious.

Kilts stopped the trade loading, even when customers had budgeted for it and couldn't believe salespeople weren't going to reduce prices at the end of a quarter. It took nine months to stop the trade loading enough to convince salespeople to be confident to succeed without falling back on it.

For nine of the 10 quarters after Kilts' arrival, Gillette met or exceeded analyst forecasts. Market shares increased and quarterly financial targets were met. Innovation increased and confidence grew enough that when its rival Energizer bought Schick razors, Gillette was ready to deal with it.

The employees had confidence in Kilts because he named problems everyone knew were there, and put facts on the table for anyone to see.

### *Cultivating Collaboration*

After accountability, the next major cornerstone of confidence is collaboration. When people are isolated and avoiding or attacking each other, leaders cannot just

*(continued on page 6)*

For additional information on how Kilts turned around Gillette, go to: <http://my.summary.com>

### Turnarounds: The Art of Building Confidence

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tell them to “play nice.” Seagate, the world’s largest manufacturer of computer hard-disk drives needed to turn around a losing streak when the company slipped in the mid-1990s and 30 percent of its products required rework. No one was working together. Divisions worked as individual silos that focused on the best results for themselves, blamed others, and the senior staff members showed little respect for each other.

In 1998, Steve Luczo became Seagate’s CEO. He and COO Bill Watkins decided on a new strategy and business model involving technology leadership, investment in innovation, and operating efficiencies. The problem was that the strategy would require companywide teamwork and mutual confidence that didn’t exist.

#### *Vision and Values*

First, they established a corporate management council to open a dialogue with senior management about vision and values. Once the council made a decision, members were expected to fully support it. Those who persisted in their dissent were phased out. Over 70 percent of management changed during the next two years.

In 1998, they started a new project to improve the number and quality of their disk drives. They had been producing 1,500 to 2,000 disk drives per line per day, and they chose a new goal of 20,000 drives per day, or one every 3.5 seconds. The leaders asked for it, but the workers said it couldn’t be done because they had no confidence. But the engineers were told to stretch and not to worry if they made mistakes. Permission to fail created psychological safety and helped the team bond. An engineer found an innovative solution, and by 2003 they were producing 16,000 drives per day, giving Seagate a large advantage over competitors.

Seeing that collaboration could accomplish important tasks helped spread teamwork at Seagate, and cross-functional groups from many locations became a more common mode for solving problems. They created core teams that took leadership roles on projects, and were mainly responsible to one another. Membership on a core team gave people in the rank and file a way to shine and demonstrate leadership. A virtuous cycle developed where managers trusted people below; more work could be delegated; and there was more respect for the lower ranks, who developed more confidence and were willing to take on more responsibility.

#### *Inspiring Initiative and Innovation*

The most damaging losing pathologies are passivity and learned helplessness. People surrounded by pessimism drag others down and find the worst in everything. A personal pep talk is not enough to overcome this

pessimism; sometimes it takes a gigantic extravaganza.

#### *BBC’s Losing Streak*

By 2000, the British Broadcasting Corp. (BBC) needed a shake-up. The Web and declining audience were bringing it down, and there was little internal or external confidence. The BBC was being made to compete with independent external producers, but bureaucracy hampered creative efforts, and employees felt undervalued. External consultants reinforced another doom loop, sending the message that internal people weren’t capable, and reinforcing passive resistance to top management, which induced them to hire more consultants.

Though there were still pockets of excellence, by 1999 the BBC was on a losing streak when Greg Dyke was appointed deputy director general. His first inspirational action was an internal TV broadcast to the whole organization promising more support for the BBC’s programming and related services. In it, he said he planned to free up £200 million by reducing overhead and consultant fees.

#### *‘One BBC’*

In 2000, Dyke reorganized under a grand initiative — “One BBC” — to inspire his people. He enhanced self-confidence by showing them they were worth investment. He started at the top with the executive committee (famously known as the ExCo) helping executives unlearn defensiveness and become collaborators. Meetings were less formal and challenged people to express themselves. He created cards that said “CUT THE CRAP: MAKE IT HAPPEN” to shift losers’ passivity to winners’ initiative. With renewed confidence, ExCo executives hatched ideas and took back the new gospel of initiative to their own organizations.

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### BBC Just Makes It Happen

The following are some of the innovative ideas that came out of Greg Dyke’s “One BBC” program:

✓ **Departures From Tradition.** A successful Scottish soap opera was produced locally rather than in London, the source of most programs in the past.

✓ **Innovations Through Collaboration.** Interactive features appeared on the BBC Web site through combined efforts of the news, sport, drama, children’s program and “new media” divisions.

✓ **Fast, Decisive Actions.** Nightly TV news was moved to 10 p.m., which reversed a multiyear decline in viewership.

✓ **Surprising Successes.** A new trainee used funds intended for a training video to create a pilot for a comedy that ended up being the United Kingdom’s top-rated comedy series, *The Office*.

## Turnarounds: The Art of Building Confidence

(continued from page 6)

“One BBC” generated tangible results by channeling £270 million into new broadcast programs. Ratings and audience satisfaction were up. By 2001, the executives were doing well, but there was still unhappiness in the ranks. Company leaders decided to be more ambitious and held a huge “Just Imagine” workshop with the top 350 managers, discussing ways to improve the company. The ideas were as small as changing the reimbursement process and as big as producing a BBC-wide orientation program for new hires.

People got bolder, their confidence grew, and the wins got bigger. Quality increased as collaboration between all of the divisions of BBC improved dramatically. BBC began involving more and more levels of management, and began implementing innovative ideas for systematic change. Confidence soared, and even when Dyke had to step down amid a national scandal in 2003, the employees were able to continue and inspire themselves. ■

For additional information about Seagate's situation, go to:  
<http://mg.summary.com>

## A Culture of Confidence

Turning around a company or sports team is one thing, but how do you inspire confidence in a whole country — especially one that has suffered under oppressive regimes and economic depression? In 1994, Nelson Mandela was the first democratically elected president of South Africa. Before the end of apartheid, the country was in a classic losing streak. This included suppression of information, tribal rivalries, isolation and self-protection, passivity and helplessness, and a negative climate that produced low expectations and envy toward those in better circumstances. The country had weak institutions for accountability, collaboration and initiative; misallocated or squandered resources; and had declining external investment.

After spending 27 years in prison, people might have expected Mandela to be vengeful, but after being elected, he worked hard to put his whole country on the right track. He had to balance between addressing the pain and suffering that millions had experienced, and fostering a spirit of reconciliation aimed at moving the country forward. Mandela had to shift the cycle of decline.

Citizens of the country lacked confidence in leaders to lead, and in their own ability to improve their circumstances. Mandela knew he couldn't fix everything, but he could start programs and institutions that would shift people's behavior. He took the following steps:

- Mandela **opened dialogue and banished denial** by

supporting a free press and promoting an election designed to ensure widespread input. All people were given opportunities and encouragement to participate in creating the new constitution.

- He promoted **respect and accountability** by being inclusive of all South Africans, black and white, and shepherding the controversial Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

- He promoted **collaboration** in his choice of colleagues. He favored inclusiveness of all races and highlighted the efforts of those around him. He emphasized that whites were fellow South Africans and urged them to stay in the country.

- He promoted **opportunity and enterprise** by making cuts and adjustments in the government's budget to satisfy outside investors. He phased in free compulsory education for all children, and required companies to draw up employee equity plans to phase in black employees and build a black middle class.

Mandela saw the long march ahead for his country, but all of his steps made things go in the right direction. There were doubters, but expatriates began returning, and foreign investment poured in. Mandela's confidence in himself and other people helps account for the remarkable and historically unique transitions he was able to make. ■

## Delivering Confidence: The Work of Leaders

Leaders certainly need self-confidence. It helps them persist through problems and triumph over troubles during unstable turnaround periods. But they must also have confidence in other people. If they only rely on themselves to rescue any situation, while focusing on other people's inadequacies, they undermine confidence and reinforce losing streaks.

When leaders believe in other people, confidence grows and winning becomes more attainable. Leaders multiply because everyone becomes less dependent on the commander in chief, and people at many levels take on leadership roles. Leaders establish the support structure to make further leadership possible. When people have confidence in one another, they are willing to lead and be led by the team.

Every leader must promote the three cornerstones of confidence. To ensure accountability, leaders must foster straight talk, communicate expectations clearly, and make information transparent and accessible. To make sure people feel connected, they must foster collaboration by structuring collaborative conversations, reinforcing respect and inclusion, and defining joint goals and definitions of success. And finally, to develop tools,

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## How Leaders Build Confidence in Others

- ✓ **Espouse high standards.** Give pep talks and messages that incite others to action by using positive expectations based on specific facts to justify their optimism.
- ✓ **Exemplify behavior.** Use the power of personal example to serve as a role model for their high standards.
- ✓ **Establish formal mechanisms.** Develop processes, routines and structures that embed winners' behavior in the culture and routine.

### Delivering Confidence: The Work of Leaders *(continued from page 7)*

channels, rewards and permission for people to take initiative, leaders must open channels for new ideas, treat people as experts in their own work, and encourage small wins and grass-roots innovations.

Leaders connect people to tasks, to members of the team, and to the outside world. As winning streaks are associated with the growth of external networks of customers, fans, audiences, investors and public officials, it is important for turnarounds to restore external confidence by repairing and rebuilding stakeholder relationships. Kilts had to plug holes in Gillette's investor relations and trade relations. Mandela had to convince international businesses, foreign investors, and South Africans in exile that his country could shift to a winning cycle. ■

For additional information on how leaders make choices to define a culture of winning, go to: <http://my.summary.com>

## Winning Streaks, Losing Streaks and the Game of Life

How do these lessons about confidence help you in your everyday life? The secret to winning is not to lose twice in a row. Confidence brings the resilience to bounce back from defeat to victory. It does not guarantee that you will win every single time, but confidence makes people more likely to analyze problems and face them head-on, communicate and cooperate with those whose support they need, and take initiative to make adjustments or try innovations. People with confidence can count on themselves to shape events, and they know they will stay in the game no matter what.

The only good thing about losing is that it sounds an alarm bells and can shake people out of complacency. A setback represents a time to make a choice, to make a

difference, or to slip into self-defeating behavior. The dividing line between winning streaks and losing streaks is the choice of behavior in response to setbacks. The choice to rally instead of getting discouraged is that of an optimist who assumes negative events are temporary glitches rather than a permanent state of affairs.

### Internal Supports

Successful people also have character, the internalized three cornerstones of confidence — accountability, collaboration and initiative — and the ability to support others. When the going gets tough, they draw on those internal supports. Character is shaped by values and the desire to achieve excellence in all pursuits, regardless of the outcome. They know that getting beaten by a better opponent is different than losing. As long as they are playing at the highest level, they will resume winning. Their standards are internal and they have the perseverance to stay in the game just a little longer. Winners define setbacks as detours, and they redouble their efforts to find a way around the obstacles.

One of the best things a winner can do when facing a loss is to think of others. Winners avoid the loser's temptation to shut down and withdraw. People must build their own mini-network, knowing that others can be remarkably generous.

### The Long March

Winners also avoid the loser's habit of assuming too much. Winners don't focus on the huge goal in the future; they work step-by-step to progress a little faster or a little smarter. They know they can't jump stages. Winning is a long march, and even when the problems seem overwhelming, winners focus on what they can control — being prepared, working hard, and accomplishing small wins that will improve the odds of achieving the next big success. ■

For additional information on how confidence can affect personal life, go to: <http://my.summary.com>



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