



How to cultivate intentional self-confidence and stop letting what other people think hold you back from being your most courageous self.

by Kate Swoboda

The Courage to Be Confident

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CULTIVATING INTENTIONAL SELF-CONFIDENCE



Photo by In Her Image Photography

I'm Kate Swoboda. I help people stop getting stuck in their fear, and step into self-confidence. I became a life coach in 2006, growing my practice at YourCourageousLife.com.

Since that time, I've written books (The Courage Habit and 100% Fully Alive) and become Director of Training for the Certified Life Coach Collective.

The Courage to Be Confident is about cultivating intentional self-confidence--

--not arrogance, bravado, or "pick me" energy.

It's confidence where you believe in your own capacity at the same time that you want everyone to win in their own way.

It's confidence where other people can have their opinions, and you aren't swayed by what they think.

Let's get started!

 [Your Courageous Life podcast](#)

 [Craft of Coaching podcast](#)

 [Certified Life Coach Collective](#)

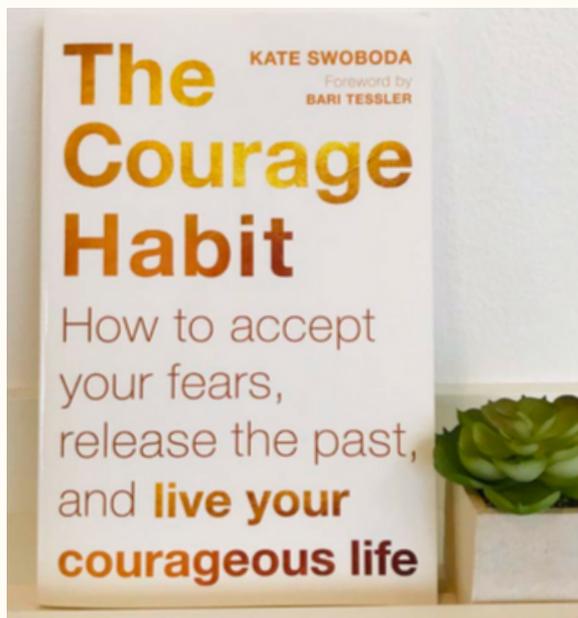
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 tiktok.com/@katecourageous

 katecourageous.bsky.social

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THE COURAGE HABIT



Named "A Top Book on Habits" — BookRiot

What kind of life would you live if you didn't allow your fears to hold you back?

The Courage Habit offers a powerful program to help you get unhooked from your inner critic, work toward your highest aspirations, and build a courageous community. Using a practical four-part program, you'll learn to understand the emotions that arise when fears are triggered, and to pause and evaluate your emotional state before you act.

You'll discover how to listen without attachment to the self-defeating messages of your inner critic, understand the critic's function, and implement respectful boundaries so that your inner voice no longer controls your behavior. You'll reframe self-limiting life narratives that can—without conscious awareness—dictate your day-to-day decisions.

Learn more: <https://www.yourcourageouslife.com/courage-habit>





100% FULLY ALIVE

GOING FROM
BURNOUT,
TO BRILLIANCE

by Kate Swoboda

Burnout is so cringe.

**Here's how you take your life back, one tiny
change at a time.**

<https://www.yourcourageouslife.com/100-percent-fully-alive>



The first life you change, will be your own. We're a life-changing program, for life-changing coaches.

When you're tired of settling in your career--settling for being at the mercy of corporate layoffs, poor leadership, and pretending to be excited about the latest (time-wasting) new initiative.

When you're tired of settling in your life--wanting to do something purpose-driven, rule your own time, and bring in more cashflow while also growing who you are.

It's hard to feel fed up. It's scary to make changes.

That's why the backbone of our program is courage.

We're an ICF-Accredited life coach program, that combines elements of a personal growth mastermind with a training curriculum that will set you up to excel as a coach.

Courage + Coaching + Connection are where it's at. Where would you like your life and career to be, one year from now?

<https://TeamCLCC.com>



It takes courage, to be confident.

Courage is many things--a state of mind, a practice, an action.

In behavioral psychology, courage is defined as a virtue. **Virtues** are broad categories that are universally seen as important across the world even in diverse cultures.

Every society virtues courage, because courage encompasses the ability to use your own will to handle difficult situations, even if you're afraid.

Confidence is a belief in your thinking, abilities, judgment, and personal character.

With courage, you're stepping into the unknown, and it's uncomfortable. There's much more fear and involved, and you have to figure out a way to manage it.

With confidence, you're also stepping into the unknown, but you're assuming positive outcomes.

By the time you're assuming positive outcomes, you're managing your fear--you've started to put courage into practice.



Cringly Confidence

There's an "ick" form of self-confidence--as the kids would say, "it's so cringe"--and that's not what you're curating.

Cringly Confidence looks like:

- a refusal to be self-aware about shortcomings or to admit mistakes,
- assuming that one automatically knows more than others,
- making promises that can't be fulfilled based on an assumption of positive outcomes without setting up systems to create the positive outcome,
- or bragging about your accomplishments via comparisons ("Some people just can't figure out how to XYZ and they're so clueless--can you believe it? I, on the other hand...").

Cringly Confidence is harmful, both to the person claiming to be confident and to others. When it's harmful to the person claiming it, it is because Cringly Confidence is a form of delusion or a form of posturing to try to be "the best" to cover over deep insecurity and eventually, that sort of posturing will always fail.

When Cringly Confidence harmful to others, it's because this form of confidence rests on comparisons, putting others down, or betrayal when promises cannot be honored.



Cultivating intentional self-confidence

Intentional self-confidence is different.

It's about self-awareness to know what your strengths and weaknesses are.

It's about owning your strengths with pride, without pretending you don't have weaknesses.

It's about trusting in your capacity, while understanding that sometimes things don't go according to plan.

It's about using the past to learn, without projecting past failures onto the future.

It's about giving self-encouragement during moments of insecurity and doubt.

In this way, courage and confidence reinforce each other. You practice courage when you (for instance) give yourself encouragement during moments of insecurity and doubt, and this reinforces your confidence. And, as you reinforce your confidence, it becomes easier to practice courage, intentionally using your willpower to do what you believe is right or aligned for your life.



Confidence is cultivated through action.

To be self-aware--the undertaking of being willing to evaluate yourself and look honestly at your strengths and weaknesses--is an action. It requires courage to do this when we are afraid of what we will discover about ourselves. We build confidence when we see that while we are more than our weaknesses and that yes, we do have skills, abilities, and capacities.

To own your strengths is an action. To be willing to say, "I am good at this" to others with pride, or to execute a skill in your strengths area is an action. To be willing to own it when you don't have skill in an area, is also an action. It requires courage to be honest about who we are, and yet we build confidence when we are genuine and authentic.

To trust in your capacity--to make a decision to put your trust there--is an action, and so is deciding to keep going even when things don't go according to plan. This requires courage when we are afraid that things will go wrong, and yet we build confidence when we see that even when things go wrong we can decide to keep going.

The Courage to Be Confident



To decide to learn from the past is an action. Self-evaluation of what did and did not go well is an action. Feeling the discomfort that arises and deciding to learn from the past rather than let the past dictate your future, is practicing courage. When you do this habitually, you develop more confidence.

To give yourself encouragement when you feel insecure, is an action. Hearing the voices of self-doubt, or dealing with the criticisms and judgments and opinions of others and deciding to reframe them or ignore them, or use what you can and leave the rest? That's practicing courage.

When you willfully decide that you will practice courage by not letting the criticisms, judgments, or opinions of others stop you, you grow in confidence.



**It's time
to let go
of what
other
people
think
of
your life.**

The Courage to Be Confident



Kim's Story:

What were the specific worries that you had about what other people might think of you becoming a coach?

When I became a coach I was transitioning from being a Doctor of Physical Therapy. As a DPT there is a certain level of intellectual elitism that occurs within the field that made me worry what others would think when I made the switch: would they think I was taking a huge step back in my career? Would they think I'd lost my mind and having a life crisis? Would they look down on me?

How did you move through these worries, specifically? What actionable strategies did you use?

When I worried about what bosses and coworkers were thinking, I used it as a cue to return to *my own thoughts and beliefs* about making a career transition to being a coach and why I was making that choice in the first place.

I reminded myself that I did not like being a DPT and was not thriving in the work itself or with the work schedule. And I reminded myself of how I came alive when coaching, and how it felt as natural as breathing to me, in a way that physical therapy never did.

In short, I grounded myself in my own choices (in both my body and mind) and allowed them to carry more weight than others opinions.

I also practiced learning to be with the somatic discomfort that came up knowing that others didn't agree with me and had their own less than supportive thoughts and feelings about this change.

Kim Kimball

<https://www.kimkimballcoaching.com>



Step 1: Decide what you want and how bad you want it.

When you have made a decision that you want something, and when you know how badly you want it, you are fine-tuning the muscle that makes your desires more important than what other people think. It's an important part of grounding into your personal power.

*What is it that you actually want, really-really? Do you want to be incredibly wealthy, move to a different country, totally change up your style/fashion/aesthetic, leave your relationship, change jobs, write a book, start a business, explore alternative spirituality, get tattoos, say what you really think, fight for an important cause? **Write it below.***

* Not sure what you really want? Get *The Shift Plan* guide from the [Your Courageous Life](#) subscriber library.



Step 2: Rank whose opinion matters.

There are usually 3 groups of people we're thinking of when we are worried about the opinions of others: our family/friends, our colleagues, or strangers. This could be strangers on the internet, or strangers you meet at parties, or people you pass on the street.

Whose opinion are you most worried about? Write down their names, below. Then rank how important their opinion really is, on a 1-10 scale with "1" being "not at all" and "10" being "The Most Important of All." For example: Random internet troll = 2, my mother = 9, my kid's teacher at school = 4.



Step 3: Write it out.

For anyone you ranked a “6” or higher in terms of how much you importance you would give their opinion, write out what it is that you worry they will think of you.

Write down their names, below, and then write what you think they might say or do to judge you. Examples:

Mom = “There you go again, jumping into some new crazy idea.”

Work colleague = Smiles to my face, mocks me to colleagues.

Random internet troll = Writes a nasty comment on my social media post, “Who are you to give advice to anyone, LOL.”

The Courage to Be Confident



Mona's Story:

When you became a coach, were you more worried about what your job would think, or what your friends and family would think, or what random strangers would think? I'd say I was particularly worried about the opinions of family, acquaintances, and random strangers. The thought of facing criticism from people who knew me before was really discouraging.

How did you move through these worries, specifically? What actionable strategies did you use?

- Conversations with my inner critic. Acknowledging my fears and self-doubts instead of pushing them away. This helped me understand where they were coming from and work through them.
- Reframing my thoughts. I started seeing challenges as opportunities to slow down, grow, and learn. I reminded myself that it's okay to make mistakes and that perfection is never the goal. (As a recovering perfectionist, this has been quite a journey!)
- Somatic practices. I practice meditation/mindfulness, breathwork, and movement to stay grounded and present. These practices really helped me manage my thoughts and process my feelings and emotions.
- I reached out to mentors, coaches, therapists and communities for support. Having people who understood my journey and could offer guidance and encouragement was invaluable.

Mona Rose

Certified Life and Somatic Coach

<https://monarose.love/>



Step 4: Oh, well.

Read out loud what you think these people will do or say (read what you wrote on the previous page). After you read each one, try this behavioral intervention: Shrug your shoulders, force a silly laugh, and say, "Oh, well!" It's a silly exercise, but it gets you to lighten up a bit and take their opinions less seriously.

How do you feel? Do any new worries come up?

Remember, Cringy Confidence looks like:

- a refusal to be self-aware about shortcomings or to admit mistakes,
- assuming that one automatically knows more than others,
- making promises that can't be fulfilled based on an assumption of positive outcomes without setting up systems to create the positive outcome,
- or bragging about your accomplishments via comparisons ("Some people just can't figure out how to XYZ and they're so clueless--can you believe it? I, on the other hand...").

If you're not doing any of these things, it's okay to decide not to "care" about the judgments, criticisms, or opinions of others.



Step 5: Decide to mind your own business.

You probably dislike the idea that anyone else should tell you what to think, right?

Then why do you want to control what others think, by convincing them not to judge you? Consider that what you think is your business, and what other people think is their own business. You get to decide what you think is stupid, a dumb decision, cringy, not worth the effort, silly, ridiculous...whatever.

Other people also get to decide what they think is stupid, a dumb decision, cringy, not worth the effort, silly, ridiculous...whatever.

If you no longer assume responsibility for what other people think, because it's not your business what they think, you release control--and really, you never had control over what they think anyway, and never will. Below, write what you notice as you consider this.

The Courage to Be Confident



Jocelyn's story:

What were the specific worries that you had about what other people might think of you becoming a coach?

I was crazy to explore a different type of work and career since I had been teaching for over 15 years at that point. I was worried that people would think, "Oh, that's cute that you're becoming a coach. What do you even do?" I was worried that people would assume coaching is a person giving advice.

Were you more worried about what your job would think, or what your friends and family would think, or what random strangers would think? I was more worried about what my friends and family would think because I was following my intuition to pursue coaching and didn't have a clear plan of what would be next.

How did you move through these worries, specifically? What actionable strategies did you use?

1. Allowing myself to ride the emotional wave of worry instead of avoiding or battling against the emotion.
2. Reframing my critical thoughts that would amplify my feelings of 'not enough', worry, and imposter syndrome.
3. Cutting out the naysayers in my life who questioned my choice to pursue coaching.
4. Revisiting my "why" and the values I hold as a coach.
5. Connecting and surrounding myself with my "hype" community. Networking has been super helpful and important for me to stay grounded, supported, inspired, and motivated to continue the work I do as a coach.
6. Intentional time for introspection to deepen my self-awareness of what's happening subconsciously.
7. Working with my own coach to help me process.

What have you learned about how to handle it when you worry about what other people think, since?

I've learned that my worries about what other people think are figments of my imagination. It's "my mind playing tricks on me." Awareness of this has been key to helping me pause in the moment to practice distancing myself from the thought or challenging my thought because thoughts are just thoughts, not facts.

Also, worry is an emotion, and emotions have wisdom. Therefore, I've learned to allow myself to ride the emotional wave of worry and then become curious about the emotion asking what it's trying to tell me. Finally, when I find myself worrying about what other people think, I notice it distracts me from exercising my courage to take the next step that will build my confidence.

Jocelyn Auyeung

<https://www.jocelynauyeung.com/>

The Courage to Be Confident



Lara's story:

I loved the idea of life coaching but it definitely had/has a stigma with some folks, although it's much more mainstream & accepted now. I also resisted the title of Executive Coach for a while because it felt too big for me, but I've happily evolved into it.

How did you move through these worries, specifically? What actionable strategies did you use?

I honestly fell so in love with coaching, that I couldn't not do it! I just kept coaching and things kept building momentum. Funny thing about building something - people's worries and judgments melt away when you make it work.

What have you learned about how to handle it when you worry what other people think, since?

People judge. We all do it. I do it, you do it, everyone does it. I'd rather be judged and happy than judged and doing something that I hate.

--Lara Heacock, PCC, MBA.

Executive Coach at <https://LaraHeacock.com>



Step 6: Create Your Reframes

Cognitive reframing is a powerful tool (and it's backed by clinical research in psychology). When you reframe, you take a statement that is negative or distressing and reframe it in the direction of something positive. The reality is that sometimes even knowing that we can't control what other people think...it still bothers us! So, let's reframe.

Re-write the judgey statements or actions that you were worried about from Step 3. Next to that, write a reframe.

Mom = "There you go again, jumping into some new crazy idea." ==> REFRAME: "It's so great that I'm always willing to try something new, isn't it?"

Work colleague = Smiles to my face, mocks me to colleagues. ==> REFRAME: If that's how someone behaves, it teaches me who NOT to trust going forward.

Random internet troll = Writes a nasty comment on my social media post, "Who are you to give advice to anyone, LOL." ==> REFRAME: Clearly this person is hurting, which means I can wish them well and not give them any more of my attention.

(cont'd on next page).

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Re-write the judgey statements or actions that you were worried about from Step 3. Next to that, write a reframe.

The Courage to Be Confident



More from [Kim Kimball](#):

What have you learned about how to handle it when you worry what other people think, since?

At this point I recognize that everyone is going to have opinions-and they get to have them.

I don't have to spend time convincing them or proving myself.

My truth just is. There is no defense necessary.

Their opinions are formulated through their own values, experiences, and worldview, and have no bearing on my own choices.

It feels so freeing to be able to somatically and cognitively allow others the freedom to think and say what they wish, and continue on the path that I know is meant for me.

The Courage to Be Confident



Sophia's Story:

What were the specific worries that you had about what other people might think of you becoming a coach?

I was fearful of being judged for starting something new with no guarantees of income at my age.

Were you more worried about what your job would think, or what your friends and family would think, or what random strangers would think?

My job ended around the time I signed up with CLCC and when I chose to fully engage with my dream to become a life coach so that was not an issue. While I did have concerns about what my immediate circle might think I guess I was more concerned with random strangers since my potential clients would be in that pool!

How did you move through these worries, specifically? What actionable strategies did you use?

Working through the fears, building confidence and creating an online presence as it related to my life coaching. Offering free coaching, getting reviews and using them.

What have you learned about how to handle it when you worry what other people think, since?

I am a big fan of mindset and mental fitness; recognizing self inflicted fears and limitations is a priceless tool. People pleasing is debilitating.

Sophia Coyle

<https://www.archelifecoaching.com/>

The Courage to Be Confident



More from [Mona Rose](#):

What have you learned about how to handle it when you worry what other people think, since?

I've learned that I've been outsourcing love, validation, and acceptance to others, and it isn't the way to go.

I've realized I can create an identity that serves me well, and there are healthier ways to protect myself than shrinking or hiding.

It's also been comforting to know that even native English speakers make mistakes.

I've learned that my inner critic can have a voice, but it doesn't get to drive my decisions.

I handle worries on a few of levels:

- Mentally: I focus on self-awareness and remind myself that I'm the best judge of who I am. Positive self-talk and affirmations help reinforce my self-worth and abilities.

- Emotionally: I allow myself to feel and process my emotions without judgment. This helps me face criticism and setbacks with a balanced mindset.

- Spiritually: I remind myself that one of my purposes is to serve something larger than myself – to serve humanity and be of service to Love. This perspective helps me zoom out and detach from the things I've placed too much importance on.

Next Steps.



Want some help with this? Now you've got someone in your corner.

The part where you don't know if you can do it, don't know if you want to, feel stupid/ridiculous/awkward, worry that you're too introverted (too old, too young, too-too-too much), worry that you're not enough, or that you're not "being realistic"?

That's all fear talking.

If you want some support along the way, check out my [life coaching](#) page or my books [The Courage Habit](#) and [100% Fully Alive](#).

You may also like the [Your Courageous Life](#) podcast where I talk about facing fear, practicing courage, and building self-confidence. (And if you think coaching might be your jam, head to <https://TeamCLCC.com>).



I believe in you. I've sat by so many people who truly didn't think they could create the life they want the most--and once they stopped letting fear-based thinking rule their lives, everything changed. Be your own biggest supporter.

Kate

**YOU'VE
GOT
THIS.**