Need More Confidence? These 10 Bestselling Books Will Help Improve Your Self-Esteem

If you struggle with confidence and self-esteem, you're not alone. Over the years, studies have shown that a majority of people – about 85 percent – struggle with self-confidence. Improving self-esteem can have significant long-term benefits. Gaining confidence is a difficult process, but you can seek help from experts or people with valuable life experiences to share. Self-help books have exploded in popularity over the past decade, many of which have the explicit goal of helping readers improve their self-esteem.

These 10 best-selling self-improvement books, spanning three decades, have helped readers take important strides and improve their well-being. Check them out – they might help you, too.

The Six Pillars of Self-Esteem: The Definitive Work on Self-Esteem by the Leading Pioneer in the Field – Nathaniel Branden (1994)

Image credit: Bantam | Entrepreneur

What We Love: This book about confidence is an oldie but goodie. In it, Nathaniel Branden – a pioneer in the self-

esteem movement (and former romantic partner of Ayn Rand) — answers four questions: What is self-esteem? Why is it important? What can we do to raise our levels? And what role do others play in influencing our self-esteem? He also addresses six self-esteem cornerstones: the practices of living consciously, self-acceptance, self-responsibility, self-assertiveness, purposefulness and integrity. Branden outlines steps for success in each of these areas, and he cautions that the task of sustaining them falls on each individual.

What Readers Say: One reviewer writes: "As someone who is pretty self-aware but only just now dabbling into my deeper issues (self-esteem being my core struggle), I found this book to be supremely helpful. It offered me a ton of 'Aha!' moments on how I relate to myself and others. It puts into perspective that self-esteem isn't the prize at the end of treatment or work — it's the actual work you do." Another says: "I'm a psychotherapist, and I have gotten a lot out of this book personally and have recommended it to a lot of my clients."

Best Place to Buy: Currently listed at $13.95 on Amazon

The Gifts of Imperfection: Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are — Brené Brown (2010)

Image credit: Hazelden Publishing | Entrepreneur

What We Love: There's a reason why one of Brené Brown's speeches ranks among the most popular TED Talks of all time. She's a research professor and bestselling author, and this

book offers guidance on living wholeheartedly, something Brown equates to living your life from a place of worthiness. Through the book's 10 guideposts – with titles like "Cultivating Authenticity: Letting Go of What People Think" and "Cultivating Creativity: Letting Go of Comparison" – Brown teaches readers to view themselves as "enough," let go of productivity as self-worth and move away from self-doubt and the need to feel constantly in control.

What Readers Say: One reviewer writes: "I initially avoided this book out of concern that it was one of many under-evidenced self-help titles. Changing my mind on reading this was undoubtedly one of the best decisions I have ever made, and I am a much better person for it … I think I can guarantee that something in this book will profoundly change you." Another says: "The author talks a lot about how making a major change in your life isn't something you wake up and do one day, it's something you practice every single day. And most will struggle with it, but without the struggle, we lose out on so much. I will have far fewer regrets on my deathbed having read this book."

Best Place to Buy: Currently listed at $5.49 on Amazon

The Happiness Project: Or, Why I Spent a Year Trying to Sing in the Morning, Clean My Closets, Fight Right, Read Aristotle, and Generally Have More Fun – Gretchen Rubin (2011)

Image credit: Harper Paperbacks | Entrepreneur

What We Love: Gretchen Rubin's writing and analysis put her at the forefront of research on habits, human nature and happiness, and her works have been translated into more than 30 languages. This book, which topped the *New York Times* bestseller list, was sparked by a simple question she asked herself on a rainy afternoon on a city bus: *What do I want from life, anyway?* In this book, Rubin outlines her own resolutions for the year she spent working on her own "happiness project." She focused on a different area each month, like vitality and boosting energy for January, which meant having goals like an earlier bedtime, better exercise and simply acting more energetically. Rubin's angle here isn't telling readers to do something – rather, it's to share her own experience in hopes of inspiring readers to think differently about their own happiness.

What Readers Say: One reviewer writes: "The quirkiness of this 12-month plan for a focus on happiness distinguishes it from other self-help books. It allows for a plan that can be modified to fit any individual." Another says: "A realistic, genuinely practical (but not easy), lifelong approach to making the constant adjustments we know we need to be our best selves."

Best Place to Buy: Currently listed at $5.98 on Amazon

You Are a Badass – Jen Sincero (2013)

Image credit: Running Press Adult | Entrepreneur

What We Love: In the first paragraph of her book, Sincero

writes, “What little I knew about the self-help/spiritual world I found to be unforgivably cheesy … At the same time, there was all this stuff about my life that I desperately wanted to change and, had I been able to bulldoze through my holier-than-thouism, I could have really used some help around here.” If this hits home, give *You Are a Badass* — written by a *New York Times* bestselling author and success coach — a try. In chapters with titles like “Love The One You Is” and “Your Brain Is Your Bitch,” Sincero dives into concepts like self-perception, spirituality, healthy views about money, meditation and purpose, all via accessible language and actionable how-tos.

What Readers Say: One reviewer writes: “Stop what you are doing and get this book … This was the last book I read in 2017. The timing of it was perfect, because it helped me to formulate my goals and resolutions for 2018. This book helped me come up with my theme for the year: ‘Love yourself.'” Another says: “Her writing style does not feel like a self-help book at all. It’s like having real-talk with a self-loving, educated girlfriend.”

Best Place to Buy: Currently listed at $8.89 on Amazon

The Confidence Code: The Science and Art of Self-Assurance — What Women Should Know — Katty Kay and Claire Shipman (2014)

Image credit: HarperBusiness | Entrepreneur

What We Love: In this book, broadcast journalists Katty Kay and Claire Shipman draw practical advice from their own life experiences, as well as those of other prominent women in media, business and politics. They combine these ideas with research in genetics, behavior, cognition and gender to arrive at self-esteem advice for women of all ages. “The newest research shows that we can literally change our brains in ways that affect our thoughts and behavior at any age,” the authors write. “A substantial part of the confidence code is … our choice. With diligent effort, we can all choose to expand our confidence. But we will get there only if we stop trying to be perfect and start being prepared to fail.”

What Readers Say: One reviewer writes: “I was expecting a touchy-feely book about how girls should have more confidence and drop everything to pursue their dreams, but I was incredibly pleasantly surprised at how scientific this book is.” Another says: “This book mentioned so many things that I used to do myself … I could see how I’m stacking the deck against myself without even knowing it. I read it before a salary negotiation, and as a result, I upped my initial asking number (and they gave it to me)!”

Best Place to Buy: Currently listed at $10.99 on Amazon

Year of Yes: How to Dance It Out, Stand in the Sun and Be Your Own Person – Shonda Rhimes (2015)

Image credit: Simon & Schuster | Entrepreneur

What We Love: Shonda Rhimes might have had three shows on television, but she didn't have it all – especially when it came to confidence. Six words her sister said at a 2013 Thanksgiving dinner changed her life: "You never say yes to anything." Rhimes realized she consistently said no to public appearances, interviews and events for one simple reason: fear. Self-esteem, unhappiness with weight and social anxiety all prompted her to decline invitations. And although it terrified her, she decided to change that in the hope that embracing new things would lead her closer to happiness. In this book, she chronicles the year she spent saying yes to every single thing that scared her – and inspires readers to do the same.

What Readers Say: One reviewer writes, "She's funny. Like laughing-out-loud-in-public funny. Like people changing seats on the bus because you're smiling and snickering to yourself funny. Like spitting up coffee and pastry on the Kindle screen funny … In addition to being funny, she's pitch-perfect in her capacity to convey authenticity, vulnerability and confidence all within the same paragraph." Another says: "I felt overwhelmed by my responsibilities: work, school, mom, wife, trying to be everything to everyone … By the end of the first chapter, I was ready to start saying yes to more things in life."

Best Place to Buy: Currently listed at $10.42 on Amazon

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*Unfu*k Yourself: Get Out of Your Head and into Your Life* – Gary John Bishop (2016)

Image credit: HarperOne | Entrepreneur

What We Love: If you're stuck in your head when it comes to self-confidence – and you respond well to tough love – look no further than Gary John Bishop's book. "Here's what you've forgotten: You're a fu*king miracle of a being," he writes. The author also serves up a fresh wake-up call for those who believe they're not in control of all aspects of their life, transparently reminding readers that other people and circumstances aren't what's standing in their way – it's their own negative self-talk. In that vein, Bishop also provides strategies to boost self-esteem, as well as "assertions" for readers to repeat until they believe. For example, "I am not my thoughts; I am what I do."

What Readers Say: One reviewer writes, "With the help of Gary's words, I realize that I am my hero and, ultimately, this is really good news for me. I was so busy waiting for things to get better that I wasn't in action about living a happy life … I feel like I am finally awake after an extended nap." Another says: "One of the best books I've read. He doesn't just talk about changing your life but he lays out clear steps to make it happen. Must read!"

Best Place to Buy: Currently listed at $14.99 on Amazon

The Mountain Is You: Transforming Self-Sabotage Into Self-Mastery – Brianna Wiest (2020)

What We Love: Brianna Wiest, the bestselling author and columnist, does not hold back. In *The Mountain Is You,* she makes it clear that becoming the best version of yourself

requires sacrifice, including jettisoning the things that are holding you back. “Your new life is going to cost you your old one,” she writes. “It’s going to cost you your comfort zone and your sense of direction. It’s going to cost relationships and friends … The people who are meant for you are going to meet you on the other side.” She dives into the complexity of self-sabotage, why people do it and how hard it is to break out of one’s comfort zone. In doing so, she makes a compelling argument that people’s biggest obstacle is often themselves.

What Readers Say: One reviewer writes: “This book is a treasure trove of wisdom, offering profound insights and practical guidance to overcome self-destructive patterns and embrace personal development and growth.” Another says: “I read this book while I was in my first six months of a 12-step addiction program, getting out of a toxic relationship, changing jobs, coming to terms with my poor choices over 20 years. Now, I look back a year later and wonder how I ever survived. Briana’s writing is so beautiful. I tell my friends, ‘She gently gives you the hard truth,’ and that is what I needed.”

Best Place to Buy: Currently listed at $17.99 on Amazon

Do Hard Things: Why We Get Resilience Wrong and the Surprising Science of Real Toughness – Steve Magness (2022)

What We Love: With a background as an elite running coach and exercise scientist, Steve Magness has studied human performance – and the things that hold us back – for decades. While many of the lessons are derived from athletics, Magness offers guidance that can help anyone struggling with life’s obstacles, whether those emerge in a relationship, job, the battlefield or elsewhere. Magness offers four core pillars to

resilience: “Ditch the Facade and Embrace Reality,” “Listen to Your Body,” “Respond Instead of React” and “Transcend Discomfort.” Readers will build confidence and learn to embrace resiliency by following those pillars.

What Readers Say: One reviewer writes: “I have read a lot of powerful books about mental toughness, and this was by far the best one I’ve read. His approach to mental toughness is different than most, yet it is logical and really makes sense. I liked the exercises given to help develop the mental skills described. Not only do the lessons apply to sports, but also to business and real life.” Another says: “It offers perspectives that can help coaches, parents, athletes, creatives or really anyone who strives. What I love most about it is that it reminds you of how much you actually love doing hard things … Magness doesn’t tell us why, but rather, he helps us understand why the process of doing hard things is more rewarding than having done them.”

Best Place to Buy: Currently listed at $15.99 on Amazon

Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life, 30th Anniversary Edition — Jon Kabat-Zinn (2023)

What We Love: When it was originally published in 1994, *Wherever You Go, There You Are* served as a groundbreaking text for those interested in mindfulness. Author Jon Kabat-Zinn, who founded the Center for Mindfulness at the University of Massachusetts, offers a scientific understanding of how meditation can help people overcome stress and ultimately improve their awareness skills. “Mindfulness practice means that we commit fully in each moment to be present; inviting ourselves to interface with this moment in full awareness,” Kabat-Zinn writes. The new edition contains not only a new

introduction but also updated research that Kabat-Zinn has collected over the past three decades.

What Readers Say: One reviewer writes: “I read this book back in the 1990s and just re-read it as my interest in learning about and practicing mindfulness has been high recently … It’s written from a mostly secular/scientific point of view, though Kabat-Zinn does reference the Buddhist roots of mindfulness.” Another says: “Kabat-Zinn speaks in a no-nonsense tone about mindfulness. In this book, he guides us to gain direct experience – taking baby steps at first, larger steps later – to gain a personal understanding of mindfulness.”

Best Place to Buy: Currently listed at $10.98 on Amazon.

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