For Libby, who shows me what courage looks like.

ARCTURUS
This edition published in 2021 by Arcturus Publishing Limited
26/27 Bickels Yard, 151–153 Bermondsey Street,
London SE1 3HA

Copyright © Arcturus Holdings Limited

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior written permission in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright Act 1956 (as amended). Any person or persons who do any unauthorized act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

Authors: Dr. Katie O'Connell, Ph.D., and Claire Philip
Illustrator: Stef Murphy
Editor: Violet Peto
Designer: Stefan Holliland
Editorial Manager: Joe Harris

ISBN: 978-1-83940-858-8
CH008351NT
Supplier 29, Date 0821, Print run 11788

Printed in China

Contents

Find Your Confidence! 4
Rate Your Confidence 6
What Does It Feel Like to Have Courage? 8
What Is Fear? 10
Making Friends with Fear 12
Helping Each Other 14
It's Brave to Talk 16
The Confidence to Try 18
What Is Self-Esteem? 20
Looking After Yourself and Others 22
Setting Goals 24
Let's Get Started! 26
Be in the Now 28
Take a Deep Breath 30
Worry Box 32
Wash It All Away 34
The Power of Laughter 36
Ask Your Friends and Family 38
Good Chatter 40
Healthy Body, Healthy Mind! 42
From Fear to Flow 44
Time in Nature 46
Dance and Stomp 48
Powerful Poetry 50
Draw Your Feelings 52
Make a Comic Book 54
Get Musical! 56
Get Moving! 58
Plan for Success 60
Trying New Foods 62
Survival Skills 64
Unleash Your Inner Artist 66
Making Friends 68
Joining Clubs 70
Saying No 72
Learn to Stop Bullying 74
Speak up for the Planet 76
Journal Your Way to Confidence! 78
I Belong 80
Being Grateful 82
Reflect on Your Bravery Journey 84
For Parents
- Explain confidence and lead by example 86
- Let them know they are not alone 88
- Explain how you deal with fear 90
- Remember that children can replicate what they see 92

Glossary 94
Further Reading 95
Index 96

Find Your Confidence!

Everybody feels nervous sometimes—and that's true of even the most confident of people. True confidence isn't about being fearless, but about having the courage to do things even though you feel worried or doubtful. It is a balance between courage and fear.

Finding confidence looks different for everyone because each person's journey has different challenges. As we start on our own unique path, we may come across obstacles. Sometimes overcoming them will feel easy, and other times it may feel hard.

The key is to keep trying. Don't focus on the outcome—progress not perfection is your goal! As you learn to face your fears, in time you will realize that they aren't so scary after all. You've got this!

This book gives you the tools to help you find your confidence, with activities and tips for staying cool, calm, and collected when under pressure. Remember that courage begins by taking little steps. As you take small "risks," you build a foundation of confidence. It's a little bit like building a wall, brick by brick.

Who can help you?

You don't have to find your courage alone! We all need a backup team. It can be helpful to write a list of people who are always on your side. Who in your life encourages and supports you? It could be parents, siblings, friends, teachers, or anyone else you can think of. No matter what the outcome, your team will be there to help you get started, pick you up when you fall, and celebrate your successes!

My backup team!

Rate Your Confidence

We each find different situations in life challenging. Belief in your ability, trust in your environment, and your past experiences all shape your confidence when you are called on to be brave.

Rate how confident you feel in each situation by checking the boxes.
1 means "not confident at all." 10 means "very confident."

Learning a new skill
Imagine riding on a skateboard for the very first time. How hard would you find that?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Eating a new food
Imagine trying a new food when you don't know how it will taste. How would you feel?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Standing out from the crowd
Would you be scared about doing something fun if not *all* your friends thought it was cool?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Trying again
How would you feel about doing something again, if you failed the first time?

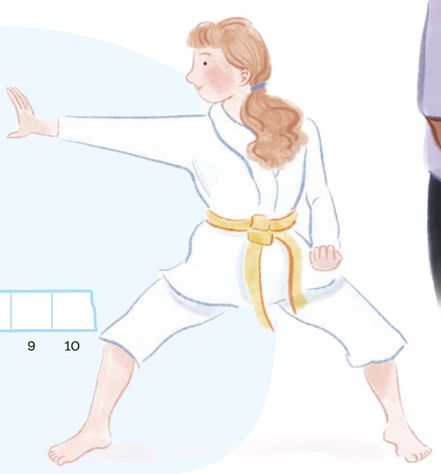
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Speaking in public
Imagine making a speech at a school assembly—how would you feel? Speaking in front of crowds is a common fear.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Meeting new people
Imagine joining a new club where you don't know anyone yet. Would you find that easy?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



Write down a time you have felt brave.

What was the situation? _____

What helped? _____

What would you do differently next time? _____

_____

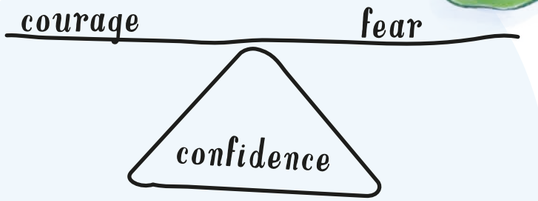
How it helps

Identifying where you lack confidence is the first step to overcoming your fears. Writing about a time when you have been brave can help you remember the feeling of courage. This can help you apply that feeling again in a different situation.

What Does It Feel Like to Have Courage?

Courage is a choice. It's being ready and willing to face a situation, even though you think there is a risk of some kind. This might be embarrassment, danger, or pain, difficulty, uncertainty, or failure.

If you feel nervous, it simply means that you are stepping outside of your comfort zone. The feeling of courage comes when you try something despite feeling unsure. How you judge your strength, what the risk is, and your ability to manage your fear will all affect your confidence in a situation.



Fear and courage go hand in hand in any situation that is challenging. Getting the balance right between the two leads to confidence and a positive belief in your own abilities.

Here are some more feeling words associated with courage. Which ones have you felt before? Which ones would you like to feel again?

bold
adventurous
determined
gutsy
strong
daring
patient

Here are some examples of children feeling afraid but being courageous anyway. It takes guts to act when you feel fear!

Standing up for yourself is brave.

It takes courage to keep going!

How it helps

Knowing that we can feel nervous and courageous at the same time is very important. We can experience fear and still do the thing we want to do. In time, the feeling of fear is replaced with confidence and bravery instead.

What Is Fear?

Emotions make us act and feel a certain way. Fear might just be the most basic and instinctive emotion because its job is to keep us alive and safe!

When we feel fear, our natural response is to go into a state called "fight, flight, or freeze" to protect our safety. People have felt this response ever since humans first walked the earth. When a prehistoric human was faced with a tiger, they had to make a choice between fighting, running away, or freezing.

Animals in the wild are the same—in a dangerous situation, lions will fight, antelope will run away (flight), and possums will play dead (freeze).

fight

flight

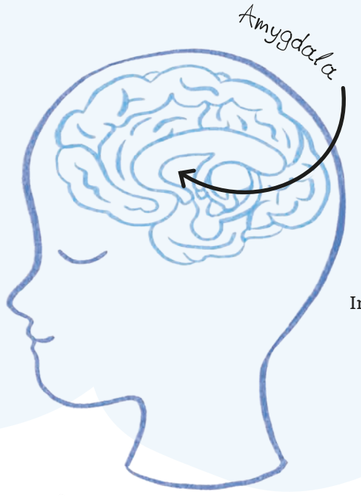
freeze

There are two kinds of fear—real fear and false alarm fear. Real fear is triggered by danger or pain. False alarm fear is the feeling of anxiety or concern about an imagined threat or something that has not happened yet.

The key to building courage is understanding the difference between the two types of fear. If we can slow down our thoughts and recognize false alarm fear, we can continue to build bravery.

If a human doesn't know that everything is okay, an area of the brain called the amygdala is activated. The amygdala controls how you process, react to, and remember emotions.

It receives information (inputs) from all five of your senses and your body systems like your tummy.



The amygdala sends information (outputs) to your body's alarm system (autonomic nervous system) and does things like change your heart rate, blood pressure, and breathing.

In order to come out of fear, this part of the brain needs to return us to feeling safe.

One way to connect to your body and hear its messages is to meditate.

1 Find a comfortable place to sit for five minutes.

2 Sit upright, close your eyes, and take a few deep breaths.

3 As you breathe, notice how your body feels. How does your stomach feel—is it relaxed? How about your jaw? Can you relax all your muscles? See if you can be aware of your whole body at the same time.

4 Focus on your breath—notice how the air fills your lungs as you breathe in and how it feels when it leaves your nose as you exhale.

5 After five minutes has passed, slowly wiggle your toes and fingers and open your eyes.

How it helps

Meditation allows you to quiet the analyzing part of your mind so you can focus on recognizing signals from your body. Over time, meditating will strengthen your balance between feelings and triggering thoughts.

Making Friends with Fear

The next time you notice that you are feeling false alarm fear, remind yourself that you are being challenged by a sense of uncertainty. Start to try being okay with not knowing what comes next. This might feel very difficult at first, but with time, your mind (and body) learns that you are safe.

Is there something right now that you are worried about? Write down two things that could go right and two things that you could learn from the experience no matter what happens.

I'm afraid to go to my new friend's house after school to play.

Two things that could go right:

1 I could have a really nice time!

2 We could play games that I really like.

Two things I could learn no matter what:

1 I could learn social skills.

2 Even if something makes me feel anxious, I am safe—I am not in danger.

Sometimes our fear can signal a need. Maybe we need to feel accepted by our friends, or maybe we need to know that we will be loved, even if we fail. Or maybe we need help and to be shown how to do something a few times.

What do you need from your friends and family? Draw whatever comes to mind in this box.

How it helps

Every single person on Earth has needs. Part of finding your courage is asking for what you need. This is why we have backup teams—these are the people to go to for support.

I'll love you no matter what.

Helping Each Other

It's important to remember that when we start something new, we are beginners—you aren't expected to know everything at once. It can take a long time to learn new skills, so asking for help can be important, especially at the beginning.

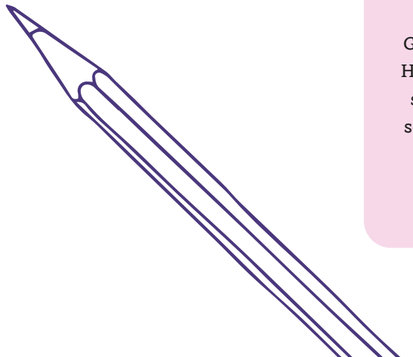
We might need help to get something right ...

or be reminded how something is done ...

or that maybe it's a not a one-person job.

Can you be a helper to someone else?

Ask your teacher if they need help getting the classroom ready.	Ask a parent if they need help with any chores.	Give someone a compliment when you see them trying hard.
Clean up after someone (even though the mess isn't yours!).	Hold the door open for someone.	Bake some cookies for your teacher.
Send thank you cards to your local fire station, police station, or hospital.	If you see someone doing something you know how to do, ask if they would like some help.	If you finish a task first, see if anyone else would like assistance.



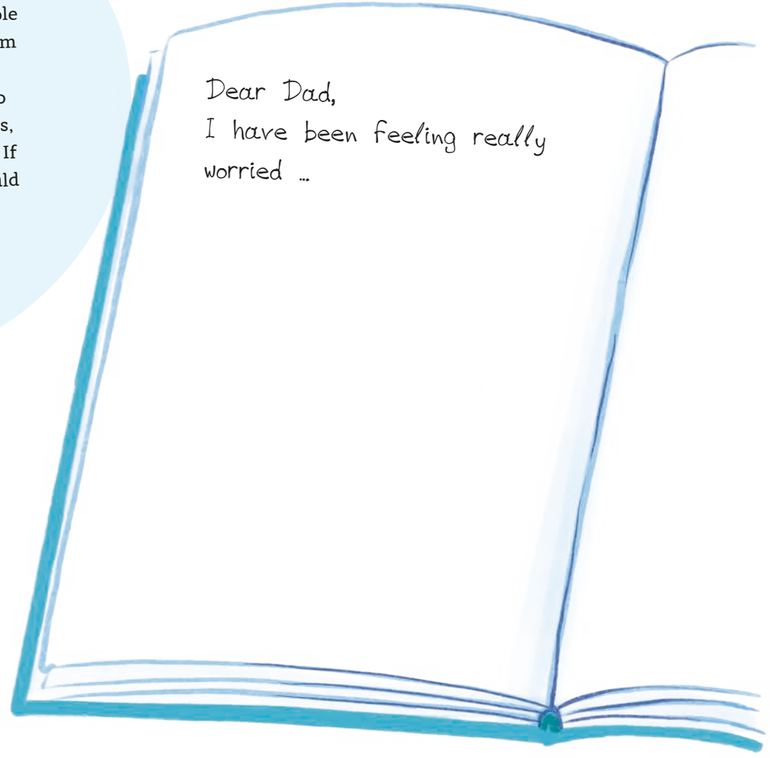
How it helps

Giving and receiving help is a two-way street. Helping others lets you put to use the valuable skills you have. Making a positive impact on someone else builds your confidence and self-esteem. You learn that everyone needs and appreciates support from other people.

It's Brave to Talk

Telling someone in your backup team how you feel is an act of bravery. It takes courage to explain your feelings, especially sadness, anger, or fear.

It is important to share our feelings with people we trust. Talking over our feelings makes them more manageable and less overwhelming. Keeping our fear locked up inside gives it no place to go. Once we have shared our worries, we can return to feeling calm and confident. If you are struggling to speak out loud, you could share your feelings in a letter.



Use this space here to write down a feeling that you need to share ...

I can ask my teacher to explain something to me ...

... or I can ask one of my friends for help.

How it helps

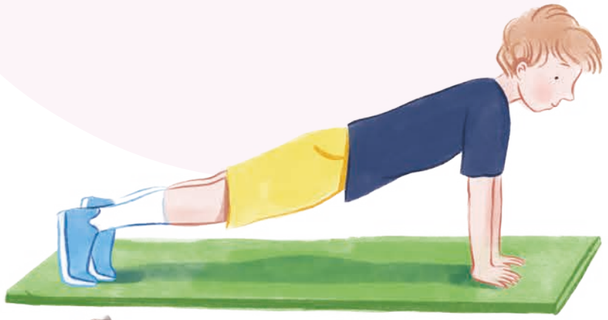
Writing down what you need to say can be very helpful. You get a chance to find the right words, which means that you come across more clearly when you say it in person. Make sure you share your feelings with people you trust, such as your backup team—this will help you feel safe, allowing you to steadily build confidence.

The Confidence to Try

If you want to do something but you also feel like you need to play it safe, you may be thinking about what could go wrong rather than what could go right. The confidence to try is more important than the outcome. You may fall short of your goal, but that is to be expected when you are learning something new.

Can you think of some more confidence-boosting statements?

Courage is like a muscle: Each time you take an opportunity to be courageous, you gain strength. This builds confidence over time—even if the outcome isn't exactly what you wanted. Confidence comes when you keep trying and learn what it takes to succeed!



If you have not had the outcome you want, think of a time when you felt your most successful—let yourself remember what that felt like.

Who do you see as confident?
Can you list some of their qualities?

How it helps

Asking yourself how a confident person would act in a certain situation can help you act more bravely, as you embody their imaginary actions. There is a well-known phrase, "fake it till you make it," but a better one could be, "fake it till you become it."

Try wearing an outfit that makes you feel great!