

THE CONFIDENCE POCKETBOOK

By Peter English

Drawings by Phil Hailstone

"This is an excellent pocket-sized resource, packed with tips and advice for developing confidence. The scenarios and examples are a great way to bring the theory to life."

**Diane Morgan, Assistant Director of HR – Education and Development,
St George's Healthcare NHS Trust**

"Peter English has the great skill of taking complex research findings and making them clear and applicable. He respects his readers, and at the same time helps them to have the best chance they can of applying what he is teaching. This book is about building confidence and Peter is the perfect guide, taking the reader on a well-reasoned, step by step path to mastery."

**David Megginson, Emeritus Professor of Human Resource Development,
Sheffield Hallam University**

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ACTION STRATEGIES

SUPPORT NETWORKS

DRAINS & RADIATORS



The third action strategy for building your confidence is to **develop your support network**.

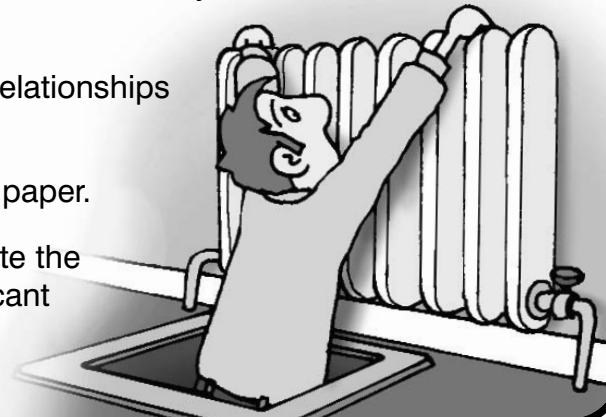
Although it's good not to need other people's approval in order to have a sense of your own worth, you'll make faster progress if you have a network of support – as long as it is of the right kind.

The narrator of Julian Fellowes' novel *Past Imperfect* describes people as being like either drains or radiators. Radiators give warmth, drains leave you feeling empty or miserable.

Try the following exercise as a way of auditing your relationships in terms of how much giving and taking is going on:

Step 1 Write your name in the middle of a piece of paper.

Step 2 In a circle around the edge of the paper, write the names of people in your life who are significant or with whom you spend a lot of time.



ACTION STRATEGIES

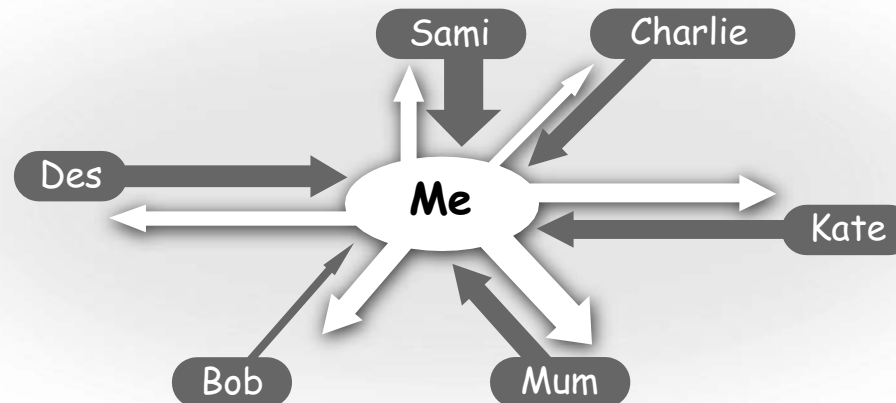


SUPPORT NETWORKS

DRAINS & RADIATORS

Step 3 Draw an arrow from you to each person. The thickness of the arrow represents how much you give to that person. Giving can be practical (you help them with their work, or by doing things for them) or emotional (you are supportive when they are feeling low).

Step 4 Draw an arrow from each person to you. The thickness of the arrow represents how much that person gives to you.



ACTION STRATEGIES

SUPPORT NETWORKS

DRAINS & RADIATORS



When you look at your diagram, what do you notice? In particular, look for whether the overall pattern is for you to be doing more of the giving. It's possible that this may indicate that your self-esteem is based on you being helpful to other people.

Relationships where you are doing much more giving than the other person aren't necessarily bad – lots of family relationships can fall into this category, but they can sometimes lead to the 'giver' feeling resentful or miserable. For relationships where you aren't happy with the balance of giving, you have a couple of options:

- Try to change the relationship. You can do this by giving less, asking for more or talking to the other person about your perception of the relationship
- End the relationship or limit your contact with that person

ACTION STRATEGIES

SUPPORT NETWORKS

YOUR SUPPORT CREW



We need different types of supporter, and different people have different things to offer. If your aim is to become more confident, it can help to have these kinds of supporters:

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- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Practical helpers | For example, a friend with a large network might introduce you to a conference organiser who could give you the opportunity to present to a large group of people. |
| Emotional blankets | These are the radiators – people who help you feel better when you’ve hit a set-back, or encourage you when you’re feeling daunted by a big challenge. |
| Challengers | The people who can offer you tough love, and tell you the truth when you’re not living up to the standard that you have set yourself. |
| Peer role models | People you regard as your peers, but who are further along the road than you. It can be really helpful to know someone who used to suffer lack of confidence but has overcome it. |
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ACTION STRATEGIES

SUPPORT NETWORKS

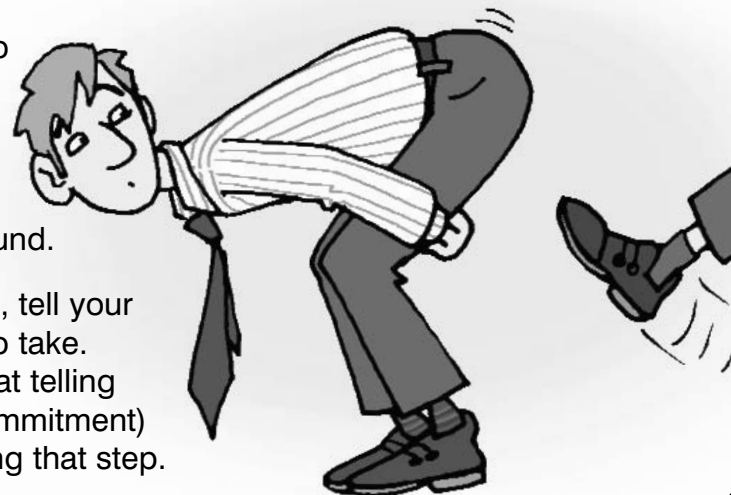
HOW TO USE YOUR SUPPORT CREW



To maximise the benefit of your supporters, tell them what you are trying to achieve (ie, increase your confidence) and what sort of help you would like from them. Ask the **challengers** to kick you up the backside, let the **emotional blankets** know that you might need a bit of 'tea and sympathy' sometimes. But make it clear that you want your supporters to be honest with you on your journey of confidence development.

Consider whether any of them might want to **establish a buddy relationship** – where you provide mutual support to one another. This can work particularly well if you are both working to increase your confidence. Otherwise, spread the load around.

When you are faced with a challenging step, tell your supporter(s) what action you are planning to take. Psychologists have known for some time that telling people what you are going to do (public commitment) increases the likelihood of you actually taking that step.



ACTION STRATEGIES

SUPPORT NETWORKS

THE EMERGENCY PROCRASTINATION BUSTER



Here is a surprisingly powerful technique to help you overcome a challenge that you are finding particularly daunting.

- Step 1** Tell one of your supporters about the action that you want to undertake but keep putting off.
- Step 2** Write out a cheque for a significant sum of money (an amount that you really don't want to give away). Make the cheque payable to a charity whose work you actively disapprove of, or to your least favourite political party. Sign the cheque and date it. The date should be the deadline by which you have committed to undertake the action that you keep putting off. In this example, let's say it's the 31st of March.
- Step 3** Hand the cheque to your supporter and say: *'If I don't come to you on or before the 31st March with clear evidence that I have undertaken the action that I've been putting off, then I want you to post that cheque.'*

About the Author

Peter English

Peter has twenty years' experience of helping people to achieve their potential and get the most out of their working lives. Since 1997 he has run his own consultancy practice and during this time he has coached and trained thousands of people in how to be more effective in their dealings with others.



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