

# How to Overcome Self-Doubt

By Julie Fuimano, Personal Development Expert & Coach



Everyone experiences self-doubt at some point in our lives. For many people, self-doubt can be pervasive, even crippling. It can impact your relationships. It destroys confidence. It causes procrastination or lack of effort. It can be extremely frustrating to live with the reverberating voice in your head telling you you're not good enough to do or have whatever you might want.

Every day throughout the day, doubts creep in. You question everything from your worthiness and deservingness to your abilities and skills. "Can I really do it? Will I be successful? *Can* I be successful? Is it possible for ME?" The day ends hoping for a reprieve only to have these same thoughts repeat tomorrow and the next day and the next. These thoughts have become habits and you have become their slave.

This sounds ominous and it really is! It is very sad that for some reason we do this to ourselves. Much of what we say in the privacy of our minds we would *never* say to another human being. So what gives us the right to entertain these thoughts? There is no benefit to doubting yourself and questioning your ability to the point of not pursuing your dreams. Its only impact is to stop you from living bigger than you are.

There is a huge cost to both the individual – YOU – and to society at large for these negative and self-disparaging remarks in your mind. *You* lose because you don't take risks, you're not as productive as you can be (all of those thoughts and self-questioning slows you down), and you are unhappy because deep down inside you *know* you can *do* more, *be* more, and *contribute* more to the world. Your relationships are not as deep and meaningful because you hide the best of YOU behind your wall of self-doubt, which has you questioning your desirability, your looks, your personality, your deservingness. Society loses because we don't reap the benefits from your talents and skills and abilities that you hide behind your wall of fear and doubt.

Sometimes doubt can be good when it causes us to question our direction and focus: Can you really pull this off? Do you have the ability, the knowledge, and the capacity to complete the task? Those are important questions. But doubt just because you lack faith in yourself won't nurture your success. If you are in your own way, learn ways to get out of your way so you can stop making excuses for not living your life the way you really want.

Self-doubt is grounded in fear – fear of your own greatness, fear of your own power, fear of success. What if you really *are* that brilliant and wonderful? What if you really *can* be wealthy, successful, have the relationship of your dreams? What *then*? You would have to learn to stop doubting.

Here are four steps to overcoming your self-doubt:

1) [Learn to trust yourself again](#) (or for the first time!). If *you* don't trust you, who will? My late ex-husband, John, used to call self-doubt the "DTMs", which stands for Don't Trust Myself. Not trusting in yourself is a huge barrier to success. If you cannot trust yourself, you will have difficulty trusting others, and others will have difficulty trusting you. Start doing little things to build your self-trust like following through with anything you commit to which means, you need to take your commitments seriously and honor your word. You will want to make good choices about what you commit to doing making sure you have the energy, resources, and time to do it. You might ask yourself "why" you are choosing this commitment. Is it out of fear of not being liked, being unable to say "no", or concern over what other people think? Or is it something you *really* want to do? By taking care in your choices of how you use your time and then doing what you say, you start to have faith in you.

2) [Pay attention to your thoughts](#). Over the course of many years, you have learned to doubt who you are and the choices you make. You may have learned these thoughts as a child or when you were involved in an old relationship or had a bad boss. Listen to the messages being played in your head. If the messages in your



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head are saying things to you that you would never say to another human being, then don't entertain them. You are a human being too! And YOU are the MOST important human being in your life. Without you what do you have? Become your own biggest fan! Be curious about how you think and your beliefs. What DO you value the most? And are you living in congruence with those values? Often we run on autopilot and the thoughts that drive our actions are based on what we have been taught to think or value, not what we *choose* to believe or value. By taking the time to consider what you value most and what you want to believe, you can observe your thoughts to see if they support your chosen beliefs and values or sabotage them and then you can choose new and better thoughts.

3) [Never, ever put yourself down](#), not even in the privacy of your own mind. Your negative thoughts are not serving you; they are hurting you. They serve no purpose except to keep you small and wishing for more in your life. You are a part of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars. You have a right to be here and you are amazing! Even when you do things that are not so amazing...

4) [Forgive yourself](#). Being human means that you will make mistakes. Embrace them. They are pointing you in the direction of the work you need to do, the things you didn't know you need to know, and teaching you humility. You have strengths and great assets and you have things that you're not so great at. Spend more time mastering the things you love and the things you are good at and your life will be easier and more fulfilled. When you take a wrong turn – and you will – learn from it, forgive yourself, and move on. By not forgiving yourself, you are abusing yourself by reliving the error over and over again. Thoughts of your past wrongdoing waste precious moments of today. Let go of your pain. There is no reason to hold onto it unless you enjoy the self-torture.

Overcoming self-doubt means that you feel confident, comfortable in your own shoes, and grounded in being YOU. There is less to fear because you know that you're okay and that no matter what, you will make the right choice for you and if you don't, you learn to admit and overcome your mistake in humility. There are no mistakes really. When you stop doubting yourself at every turn, you let yourself off the hook from pretending to be something you're not. It feels good to feel okay being YOU. Now, doesn't that seem a whole lot easier and less stressful? Be YOU and have fun being YOU.

*Julie Fuimano, MBA, BSN, RN, CSAC is named one of the TOP 100 THOUGHT LEADERS in personal leadership development. [Your](#) happiness and success is her business! Her coaching clients experience dramatic and profound results in their productivity, level of confidence, and their relationships. As a certified coach, accomplished writer, and motivational speaker, Julie empowers your personal best and teaches you simple, practical tools for meeting your goals, communicating effectively with others, and enjoying yourself at work and at home. Visit [www.NurturingYourSuccess.com](http://www.NurturingYourSuccess.com) to learn more about coaching with Julie or contact [Julie@NurturingYourSuccess.com](mailto:Julie@NurturingYourSuccess.com) to have her speak at your next meeting or conference. Subscribe to her blog at [www.NurturingYourSuccessBlog.com](http://www.NurturingYourSuccessBlog.com).*

