



## The ABC of Self Confidence

*Act it until you Feel it*

By Dr. Petro Janse van Vuuren

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## Contents

1. Act it
2. Breathe
3. Centre
4. Drop your voice
5. Energise
6. Feel it

## Introduction

### Act it, until you feel it

By mastering the simple techniques in this pocket manual you can **act** confidently in front of others – even when you actually feel stressed or self-conscious.

Once you appear confident and you can capture your audience for hours on end if needed, you will **feel** confident and be able to flow allowing the power of your personality to permeate through your body and your words.

**By taking control of your body, you can take control of your feelings.**

*However...*

**If you already feel confident**, but your body is not trained in the correct techniques, this confident feeling may not carry further than your own skin. You may appear *self-conscious, feeble, and unprofessional, like you don't really care, disinterested or simply boring.*

### Match the *feeling* with *actuality*

In order for you to feel and appear confident, flow with your own energy and respond to the energy of your listeners, you need to not only take note of **the ABC of self confidence**, but *master* it.

Good luck.

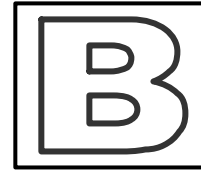


## Act it

When you are feeling stressed, rushed or self conscious in any situation, alone or among people, let your body help you feel confident

1. **Straighten up** – lengthen your spine and stand, or sit up straight.
2. **Open up** – roll back your shoulders, open your hands and let them rest by your sides.
3. **Head up** – lift your head and look straight ahead. Do not let your head hang.

Like the ring master in the circus, your body must say: “Attention, everyone, you are about to meet someone amazing!”



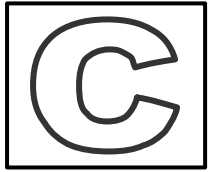
## Breathe

Stress or self consciousness causes you to breathe quickly and shallowly through your mouth. Take control of your breathing.

1. **Close your mouth** – breathing through your nose calms you down.
2. **Deep breath in** – let the breath fill your stomach not your chest.
3. **Slow breath out** – Count at least up to 5 as you let the breath ease out.

“Deep breathing will lift your spirit. No more feeling weighed down” predicts the fortune teller.



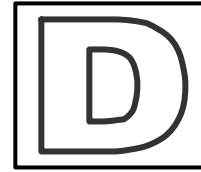


## Centre

Self consciousness makes you feel and look off balance and uncertain. You can fix it by knowing how to stand, where to look and what to think.

1. **Centre your weight** – plant your feet a short distance apart, stand still and DON'T SWAY.
2. **Centre your eyes** – for 1 person, look them in the eyes. For an audience, look into the middle of the group towards the back.
3. **Centre your thoughts** – Find one good thing about the situation and focus on it.

Take the tight rope walker's advice: "if your feet, your eyes or your thoughts wander, you will fall."



## Drop your voice

A self conscious voice sounds higher and thinner. A Deeper voice builds trust, closeness (intimacy) and is more powerful when you speak loudly.

1. **Relax your throat** – A tight throat makes the voice tight.
2. **Tighten your stomach** – Your tummy muscles (diaphragm) support your voice and give it power.
3. **Deepen your voice** – Speak from your chest, not your throat.

The fire breather's secret: "A warm deep voice lets your listeners glow, but a high thin voice leaves them cold."



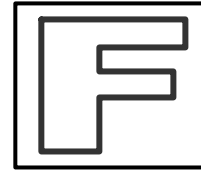


## Energise

Enthusiasm, energy and excitement is contagious. Even when people don't agree with or understand you, they will be impressed by your energy.

1. **When you speak** – Smile and use your hands.
2. **When you listen** – Watch the speaker and listen closely.
3. **When you answer** – Agree with something they said and build on it: "Yes, and..."

"When the whip cracks, the lion moves, whether he feels like it or not," the lion tamer laughs.

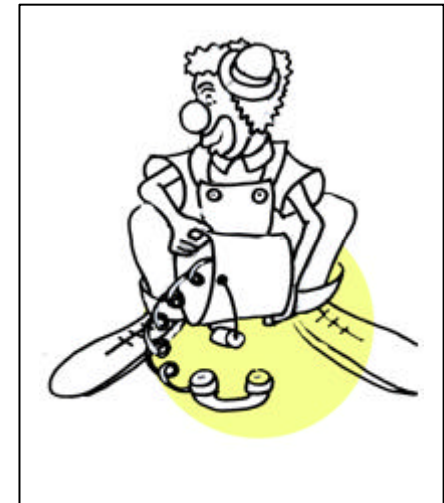


## Feel it

Feeling confident comes from acting it in situations where you feel self-conscious. This also builds your self-esteem.

1. **Act it** with your body.
2. **Breathe** deeply and slowly.
3. **Centre** your body, voice and thoughts.
4. **Drop** your voice.
5. **Enunciate** with care
6. **Feel it** as you flow.

The clown knows that: "Overcoming your fears builds your self esteem and you can feel good about who you are even when you make a fool of yourself in front of others."



## The ABC of Self Confidence Workshop

Dr. Petro Janse van Vuuren is an Applied Theatre Practitioner. She is an expert on using theatre techniques to build character and self esteem.

- Petro has been training and **coaching presentation skills for the last 18 years** both as an actor trainer and presentation skills teacher.
- She honed her skills first as school drama teacher and then **as actor and director at the University of KwaZulu-Natal**. Here she reinterpreted her classic training for a **more contemporary performer**.
- In addition, Petro is a **skilled performer and speaker** who uses her own voice daily with skill and power.

Petro has taught her 6 week course in the ABC's for self confidence to a variety of people including

- **Performers** who wanted to move their audiences to both tears and laughter.
- **Lay preachers** from the Lutheran *Seminary* who needed to speak with authority and interest,
- **Professors in Micro-biology** who needed to keep their classes interested and awake,
- **Environmentalists** who had to present policy altering proposals,
- **RAP artists** from local band RIP who needed 'lang lange' and the ability to present themselves with vocal confidence

Petro will present the ABC of self confidence as a 2 hour introductory workshop, a full day workshop or a six week intensive course.

For more info go to [www.playingmantis.net](http://www.playingmantis.net)

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