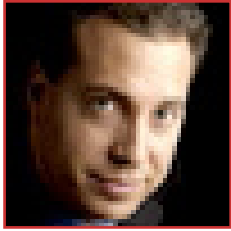




FIRE UP YOUR CAREER



## Build the Confidence of a Champion

[By Keith Rosen, AllBusiness.com\*]

Do you lack confidence? Suffer from low self-esteem? There's no room at the champion roundtable for doubt or anything less than a winning attitude. So how do these top producers do it? How do so many of them go from initially lacking the confidence to close a deal to having an extreme abundance of self-worth?

Here's the secret to boosting your confidence today: make confidence a choice. I know what you may be thinking: "It sounds too easy, and it has to be more difficult than this." Well, it depends upon the foundation and the strategy with which you build your confidence. Here's one story that will introduce you to a whole new set of tools for confidence:

"So, I guess you could sense a change in the tone of my prep form that I sent you for our sales coaching call today?"

It was Denise calling in for her 7:00 a.m. coaching call. Prior to each coaching call, clients email me their objectives for the call and their week in review. This way, they stay focused and accountable to their commitments and have the opportunity to celebrate their wins each week.

She was right. "If you are referring to the sentence where you wrote, 'I feel like getting out of sales completely and getting a mindless job somewhere else, maybe the government,' or the sentence 'Maybe I'm not cut out for this,' then, yes, I do sense something else may be off here," I said.

Denise and I had been working together for about seven months at this point. She'd made incredible breakthroughs in terms of both her performance and her attitude. As a result, she was offered a promotion from regional sales manager to national account manager. With this promotion came a territory change as well as a new type of prospect. Her average sale used to be about \$10,000 to \$20,000; now her average sale was approximately \$250,000.

"What caused this sudden change in attitude?" I inquired.

"Well, you know how we've been talking about the prospects that I've been filling in my pipeline? At this point in time, many of those prospects should be converting into sales. So I started making my follow-up calls as scheduled. Nothing but 'Call me next week' or 'Now's not a good time' or 'If you would like to leave a message...' I guess you could say that I'm getting a bit antsy. I want some of these deals to close already so that I can post some positive sales numbers towards my quota. As you can probably hear, I'm a little nervous. What if these deals don't close?"

"You tell me, Denise. What if these deals don't close?"

"I can tell you this, Keith: it won't be a good thing! Maybe I never should have taken this national account position. I knew it was going to be a big change from regional sales, but I didn't anticipate such a change in the length of my sales cycle."

"Maybe. Am I sensing some doubt in you?" I asked curiously.

"Oh, absolutely," Denise exclaimed.

"And what, may I ask, are you doubting?" I responded.

"Myself," Denise said quietly in a deflated voice. I could hear her confidence waning. It was as if someone reached inside her soul and ripped all of the self-worth out of her.

She continued, "And I know it's just a matter of time until Lewis, my boss, calls me with some bad news like 'Denise, we really expected a lot more out of you. We thought you'd be much further along than you are. Denise, you're fired!'"

I always find it amazing how creative our minds can be when it comes to visualizing our consequences and fears. I shifted gears. "Denise, I'm curious about something. Didn't you recently start this position?"

"Yes, about four months ago."

"And isn't it true that you've already closed and up-sold some big accounts?"

"Well, yeah, but that was, like, a month ago, and I haven't sold anything since. Besides..."

Before the next excuse came out, I interrupted, "And isn't it also true that you've gotten at least two deliberate and intentional accolades from both your new boss and his boss about how thrilled they are with what you have done so far?"

Silence.

"I'm sorry, Denise, but can you speak up a bit? I wasn't able to hear you," I said sarcastically yet in a way that still made Denise feel empowered and supported.

"Denise, what are you hearing in what I've just shared with you?" I asked.

"That maybe I'm being a bit too hard on myself," she reluctantly admitted.



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"Does that feel true for you?" I reconfirmed.

"No, Keith, this is right on the money."

"Well, are you ready to hear a little more that may also be right on the money but just a bigger pile of money?"

"Hit me!" she exclaimed. "I'm ready for it."

### Fueling Self-Doubt

I continued. "You had mentioned that your confidence has been deflated as a result of what you perceive as low productivity. Because you haven't brought in any new sales recently, you doubt yourself and your abilities. Is that accurate so far?"

"Yup."

"So, can I then conclude that you measure your self-worth by what you produce? That is, if you are closing new business practically each week, then your confidence would skyrocket to an all-time high."

"That's for sure!" Denise exclaimed.

"Conversely, where you feel like you are now, where you haven't sold—it's affecting your confidence and the faith you have in yourself."

"No question there."

"Denise, what does the word 'confidence' mean to you?"

I could hear her thinking. "I don't know. I guess confidence means being in control. It's when I have control over something. It's a feeling of control and a belief in what I can do," she replied.

"So, in essence you are only worth as much as you've sold recently? Wow! That must be an interesting roller-coaster ride of emotion you're on."

"You can say that again, Keith!"

I continued. "So, basically, if you sell, you're feeling great. You're in a positive state of mind. You're in a good mood and feeling a strong sense of worth about yourself. Conversely, if you don't sell or don't get the appointment or get in touch with a certain prospect that you've been attempting to connect with, you're feeling pretty lousy about the day and about yourself. Denise, is this strategy of yours working for you?"

"Well," Denise began, "I don't know if I would necessarily say this is working for me. After all, it's certainly causing way too much stress and anxiety. And it also keeps me from enjoying my family and maintaining my peace of mind."

"So, would you be open to hear what I'm seeing and a new way of thinking that would remove your self-doubt as well as the stress that follows—permanently—so that you can start enjoying your life more?" I inquired, getting permission to continue our conversation and share some truths with her that I see.

"C'mon, Keith. We've been down this road before. Just lay it on me. I'm open to another way of thinking if it's going to keep me sane, happy, and employed."

"Of course. Consider this: do not allow external situations to dictate your internal condition."

"Wow, that's heavy. Is this another Keithism?"

I smiled. "Let me explain. You mentioned earlier that confidence is a belief in yourself. Where do we adopt these beliefs we have about ourselves? From our experiences and from other people. At some point during our life we learned the wrong lesson based on an experience we had. And the lesson was that if you want to be successful, you need

to acquire things. You need to prove yourself and your self-worth. And those things you can acquire can be anything from money to cars to homes to toys to clothes to, in this case, sales, because if we acquire these things, if we create these things or work hard to achieve them, then we will be successful based on our current definition of success. And if we're successful, then we've proven ourselves. And if we've proven ourselves, then, boy, won't our level of confidence continue to rise.

### A Tip from Your Executive Sales Coach

"Let your peace of mind, happiness, confidence, and self-worth be a choice you make consciously rather than surrendering your power by allowing external situations to dictate your internal condition for you.

"Now, keep in mind that, based on this model, your level of self-worth and confidence has become conditional. That is, it goes up and down depending on what you've achieved or produced rather than what is truly important: who you are."

"That's pretty much true for me," Denise said.

### Make Confidence a Choice

"Conversely, what if we don't allow external situations to dictate our internal condition? What if your confidence is simply just a choice you make about yourself? A belief in yourself?"

"Let me say this in a different way. What if you could choose to be confident, choose to have faith in yourself, and adopt an unwavering belief in your abilities, regardless of the outcomes of each day? Consider for a moment that you have already proven yourself, and all of your future accomplishments are achieved as an expression of what you value or the value you want to deliver to others.



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“If you can believe in this, your confidence now becomes unconditional, as it is now based on who you are and the quality of the person you are, not simply what you do or what you produce.

“The value you deliver isn’t only reflected in the number of sales you make. Your value isn’t what you do but who you are and the quality of person you have become and are continually evolving into. Who you are is consistent, who you are is a choice, who you are is something you control 100%. That’s why who you are is always more important than what you do.

“That’s why the true definition of ‘confidence’ is having an unwavering faith or belief not only in yourself but in each experience you have. And that belief is this: regardless of the situation, regardless of how bleak it may look or how difficult it may be, it will all work out in the end without the evidence to support it. It’s trusting in yourself without any proof to back up your conviction.”

“Hmm, interesting,” Denise said after a few moments. “I can see how this makes sense, but you can’t sit there and tell me that your attitude doesn’t change when you’re making sales each week!”

“I can certainly understand that, Denise, and you are right. For most salespeople, meeting or exceeding their sales goals has a very clear and measurable effect on their attitude. However, like most people would agree, the feeling of satisfaction you experience from closing the sale does not last. Conversely, it is fleeting until the next sale.

“And doesn’t this support your old model of thinking? You’re putting yourself back into the confidence trap, surrendering your ability to control your level of self-worth by choice and instead allowing your experiences to dictate how you feel about yourself.

“Challenge your way of thinking, and let your confidence be a choice based on an unwavering belief in yourself and in your

abilities without needing the evidence to support it.”

**About the Author**

Keith Rosen is an engaging speaker, master sales coach, and well-known author of many books and articles. For his work as a pioneer and leader in the coaching profession, *Inc.* magazine and *Fast Company* named Keith one of the five most respected and influential executive coaches in the country.

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