

Level 6B

Confidence, Comparison, Mastery & Reset Strategies

The Four P's of Confidence

Confidence is not simply something we either “have” or “don’t have.” It is something we can build and strengthen through our actions, experiences, and mindset.

1. Preparation

Confidence grows when we know we have prepared.

Preparation includes both:

- Physical preparation: Practicing skills, rehearsing, training, conditioning, and developing the physical abilities needed for performance.
- Mental preparation: Visualizing, using mental routines, setting intentions, practicing focus, preparing for challenges, and developing strategies for managing pressure.

2. Past Experience

Look back at times when you have performed successfully.

This does not mean that every past experience needs to have been perfect. Instead, reflect on moments when you:

- Handled a challenge effectively
- Performed well under pressure
- Recovered from a mistake

3. Passion

Confidence can grow when we reconnect with why we participate.

Reflect on the value, meaning, enjoyment, and purpose you find in your art form, sport, or performance activity.

Ask yourself:

- Why does this matter to me?
- What do I love about what I do?
- What makes the effort worthwhile?

4. Persistence

Confidence is built through repeated action.

We can use these strategies again and again—not only when we feel confident, but especially when we don't feel confident.

Remember:

Confidence is both an emotion and a behavior.

Sometimes we feel confident. Other times, we may not feel confident at all, but we can still behave confidently.

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Comparison

Comparison is a normal part of being human. We all compare ourselves to other people, and comparison can have both helpful and unhelpful effects.

There are two common types of comparison:

Upward Comparison

Comparing ourselves to someone who we perceive as being ahead of us or performing at a higher level.

Potential positives:

- Motivation
- Inspiration
- Learning from others
- Identifying areas for growth
- Seeing what is possible

Potential negatives:

- Putting ourselves down
- Feeling inadequate
- Losing sight of our own progress
- Focusing exclusively on what we lack

Helpful reframe:

Instead of “I’ll never be as good as them,” try:

“What can I learn from them?”

Downward Comparison

Comparing ourselves to someone who we perceive as being less advanced or successful than we are in a particular area.

Potential positives:

- Gratitude
- Perspective
- Greater appreciation for our own progress
- Increased confidence in ourselves

Potential negatives:

- Putting other people down
- Feeling superior
- Using someone else's struggles to make ourselves feel better

The goal is not to eliminate comparison. Instead, we can become more intentional about how we use it.

Ask yourself:

Is this comparison helping me learn, grow, appreciate, or reconnect with my values—or is it pulling me away from those things?

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The Mastery Curve

We often imagine that improvement should look something like this:

Practice → Improvement → Improvement → Improvement

If only it worked that way!

In reality, performance and improvement often look much more like a staircase.

We may experience:

Progress → Plateau → Progress → Plateau → Progress

The Plateau

Plateaus can be frustrating. We may practice and work hard without seeing obvious improvement.

It can be tempting to think:

- “I'm not getting better.”
- “Maybe I'm not good enough.”
- “What's the point?”

But plateaus are a normal part of mastery.

During these periods, important things may still be happening beneath the surface. We are consolidating skills, adapting to challenges, and developing the ability to continue working even when improvement isn't immediately visible.

In the long term, learning how to navigate plateaus can help us become more resilient and stronger performers.

Remember:

A plateau is not the absence of progress. It is part of the process of progress.

When you hit a plateau, the goal is not necessarily to force immediate improvement.

The goal may simply be to stay engaged.

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Stop. Reset. Refocus.

Sometimes our biggest challenge isn't the performance itself—it's getting stuck in our own thoughts.

We may find ourselves:

- Ruminating about a mistake
- Replaying something that happened
- Worrying about what might happen next
- Criticizing ourselves
- Getting caught in an unhelpful thought loop

When this happens, use:

STOP → RESET → REFOCUS

1. STOP

Notice that you are getting stuck.

You don't need to argue with the thought or make it disappear.

Simply recognize:

“I'm caught up in an unhelpful thought loop.”

2. RESET

Take a moment to interrupt the cycle.

Use whatever reset strategy works for you:

- Take a breath
- Relax your body
- Feel your feet on the ground
- Use a brief cue word
- Let the thought be there without engaging with it
- Reconnect with what is happening right now

3. REFOCUS

Bring your attention back to what matters in this moment.

Ask:

“What do I need to do right now?”

Then take the next useful action.

The goal isn't to eliminate every unhelpful thought.

The goal is to notice when you're stuck, reset, and return to the performance.