

Sue Atkins
The Parenting Expert

Parenting Made Easy System

**iCAN CONFIDENCE PARENTING COURSE
FOR KIDS AGED 7-13**

DAY 2: IT'S ALL ABOUT CONFIDENCE!

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www.sueatkinsparentingcoach.com

In a nutshell – In this session, It's all about confidence. I'll show you ways that will help you feel more confident about your role as a parent, and how you can build and nurture your child's confidence at the same time ...

Welcome back!

What is confidence?

So what is confidence?
Have you got it?
Can you lose it?
Or can you develop it?

Confidence is not some miracle pill you can buy in a health food shop, but I do believe it's like a muscle, that can be built up over time with practice. At its core, confidence is the ability to take appropriate and effective action in any situation, no matter how difficult or challenging it appears to you.

So how can you tell if you are a confident parent? Well here are some ways that might help you to recognise if you are:

- You generally feel centred and balanced.
- You feel relaxed in most situations with your kids.
- You are proactive rather than defensive.

- You know that you are able to handle whatever life throws at you, even if you can't control it.
- You're able to laugh at yourself and not take things too seriously.
- You know that everything will turn out ok in the end, no matter how long it takes.

So how does the list above make you feel? Confident? Wobbly? Or a mixture of both? Whatever the answer, it's just fine.

Any measure of confidence is difficult to assess, especially because the people around you will form an opinion about how confident you are, based on your outside actions. But only you know deep down how you feel on the inside. How you feel will differ in different situations. You may feel really confident at work but unsure with your children. Or you may have suffered a blow to your confidence through something like a divorce.

The secret to confident parenting is to take small baby steps in the right direction and allow yourself to make mistakes. Remember Rome wasn't built in a day so forgive yourself if you wobble or make mistakes. The secret is to stay optimistic and to focus on the bright side when you hit a setback. Don't expect to be a perfect parent! They don't exist, except in films. Treat each day as a learning experience, rather than pretending that you are an expert with nothing new to discover. And be willing to take risks.

Now it's your turn!

Here's a quiz to assess your current parenting confidence. You may like to get a piece of paper and a pen to jot down your answers.

Read the 20 statements that follow, and think about whether you strongly agree, agree, feel neutral, disagree or strongly disagree with each one.

Completing this quiz gives you a very simple idea of some of the main areas in your life that are affecting your confidence right now. There are no right or wrong answers. You can do this quiz regularly so that you can see how you have changed and developed.

Give yourself some time to think properly about each answer:

1. I have a really clear sense of what's important to me.
Strongly agree / Agree / Feel neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree
2. I know what I want to achieve in my family life.
Strongly agree / Agree / Feel neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree
3. I never beat myself up about what I do or get wrong with my kids.
Strongly agree / Agree / Feel neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree
4. I can stand back and always think clearly when things get emotional or out of hand.
Strongly agree / Agree / Feel neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree
5. I enjoy bringing up my kids.
Strongly agree / Agree / Feel neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree
6. I'm known for being optimistic in my family.
Strongly agree / Agree / Feel neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree
7. I see myself as an enthusiastic parent.
Strongly agree / Agree / Feel neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree
8. I respect myself and the people around me.
Strongly agree / Agree / Feel neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree
9. I have a clear idea of my strengths and weaknesses as a parent.
Strongly agree / Agree / Feel neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree
10. I know what others in my family see as my strengths.
Strongly agree / Agree / Feel neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree

11. I include others in the family before making decisions where it's appropriate.
Strongly agree / Agree / Feel neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree
12. I see both the bigger picture and the smaller details in family situations.
Strongly agree / Agree / Feel neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree
13. I enjoy doing new things and taking on new challenges.
Strongly agree / Agree / Feel neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree
14. I embrace the idea of learning new things and learning new ways to do things.
Strongly agree / Agree / Feel neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree
15. I'm able to handle stress easily.
Strongly agree / Agree / Feel neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree
16. I have a balanced view of taking risks in life.
Strongly agree / Agree / Feel neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree
17. I can make decisions and take action easily.
Strongly agree / Agree / Feel neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree
18. I take care of my health.
Strongly agree / Agree / Feel neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree
19. I often think about the deeper meaning of life.
Strongly agree / Agree / Feel neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree
20. I know that I'm here for a reason and I know the direction I am going with my kids.
Strongly agree / Agree / Feel neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree

Now, let's work out your score.

Give yourself:

5 points for each strongly agreed statement

4 points for each agreed statement

3 points for each neutral statement

2 points for each disagreed statement

1 point for each strongly disagreed statement

Between 20 and 40

Your confidence may be at a low point at the moment, but don't worry it won't stay there for long. By doing these exercises regularly and you'll start to feel far more confidence soon.

Between 40 and 60

You're nearly in the right zone, but you may be feeling a little uncertain or confused about your parenting. Just give yourself time to relax and work on the areas that need your attention and you'll be amazed and really pleased by the progress you can make.

Between 60 and 80

Well done! You are pretty confident in most family situations and there are only a few areas that bring you down at the moment. Pat yourself on the back.

Between 80 and 100

That is brilliant! You are a really confident parent and you are clear on what is important to you, so celebrate your successes and keep going.

Your Inner Voice

Most of us are our own worst critics and we beat ourselves up with a negative inner voice inside our head. It's time to turn that loud negative inner voice down. Apart from anything else, it is only contributing towards your lack of confidence.

I want you to use your imagination, just for a minute. I want you to imagine you have a control knob for that inner voice. Take the time now to turn it down – Go on, turn it down even quieter. If you're feeling brave – turn it off completely. How does that feel?

You have the ability to turn your inner voice down anytime you like, it's there to protect you from making a fool of yourself, stepping out of line or taking too much of a risk. But it can really hold you back and cripple your self-belief. So turn it off or turn it down and turn up your quieter inner voice. That nurturing, kind voice that whispers to you – 'you're really great at this', 'you're really kind' or 'you're really doing a great job!'. This is the voice you should be listening too more often, so go on, be brave and turn this gentle encouraging and positive voice up.

Successful parents stretch themselves, and they are curious to see how great they can become. They keep their eyes firmly fixed on the destination of their parenting, which is to bring up happy, confident and well-balanced adults. And they work out what values and principles are important to them, so that they can pass them on to their children.

What Matters to You?

Take a few minutes now and think about and write down your top five values or principles in your life? Things like: telling the truth; doing your best; being polite; getting a good education or having a go at new things. Whatever you feel is your philosophy and your principles.

Make a note of them here:

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

Think about the ways that you pass these important values on to your children, by the way you act, what you do and what you say. Are your values the same as your partner's? Why not sit down and have a chat together and find out? Your kids will really benefit if you send out the same important messages.

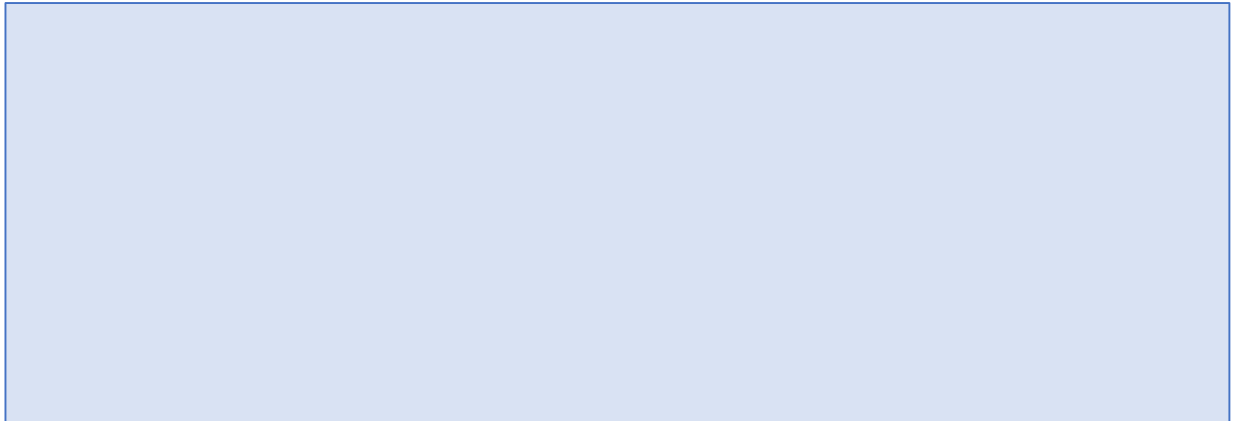
Now that you have worked out what really matters in your family life you have a map to help you get to your destination. So gather your wits about you, jump down from the fence and make a commitment to becoming a more confident and assertive parent, in control, full of energy and much happier.

Recognising Successes

Another important thing to do as a parent is to stop and pat yourself on the back from time to time, as it builds up your confidence and your sense of achievement. Most of us never stop to think how we are doing, but it's really important to do this regularly, as it makes you realise how well you are doing, instead of beating yourself up all the time feeling guilty.

Now it's your turn!

Get a piece of paper and a pen and write down every success that you've had as a parent so far, right from giving birth or changing a nappy for the first time. Acknowledge the everyday successes as well as the big moments and keep on writing and writing and writing, and take a bow. You deserve this moment!



Now keep this paper near you and when you feel your confidence wobbling, take it out and have a look at all your successes. And just keep on adding to this success sheet over the months and years ahead.

A Quick Recap

- Confidence is like a muscle that you can build up over time
- Only you really know how confident a parent you are
- Baby steps! Everyone is allowed to make mistakes, have a wobble or suffer a setback. It's normal!
- Turn down your negative, nagging inner voice and turn up the quieter, friendlier, more forgiving one
- Allow yourself a pat on the back from time to time

Next time ...

We will consider your parenting and personal values. I'll help you identify what values or principles are important to you, which is important because successful parents are very clear about what's really important to them, and what's non-negotiable. It will also help you to consider what values you would like to pass on to your children ...

See you then!



Sue Atkins

As seen in:



THE  TIMES



theguardian

BBC
RADIO

Daily  **Mail**

BBC

The Daily Telegraph

this
morning

PSYCHOLOGIES

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