

In this day and age of video-gaming and SNS, more and more young people are becoming less confident about themselves and are trying less things due to a lack of interest. According to the National Institute of Health in the United States, children between the ages of 8 and 17 spend at least two hours a day playing video games and accessing the Internet. The National Institute of Health states that spending long hours playing video games and engaging in Internet activities can lead to a decrease in physical well-being, but also negative changes in social behavior. Two common negative changes are a lack of confidence when speaking face-to-face with peers, and also a lack of interest in trying new things. Having confidence to speak to others and to try new things is a crucial part of being a member of society and for maintaining a healthy mental state. In this presentation, I would like to share how I was able to build up my confidence by trying new things.

When I was in elementary school, I hated the school play that was held every year because everyone had to say at least one line in the play. Every year when I got the script, I always counted the lines of each role. Why? Because I wanted to choose a role that had the least lines. I lacked confidence speaking to an audience, but also, I was deathly afraid to try something new. That all changed in Grade 6.

It was November, and it was time for the annual play. We were to choose roles again for the upcoming play, but this year, the organizing teacher decided to show all the students the play performed by professionals. As I watched the play, I saw how confident the actors looked and the wonderful response of the audience. At that moment I thought maybe I could be like one of those actors and I decided to challenge a bigger role. The role I wanted had 21 lines which was a lot. But I thought this was my chance to change myself rather than being afraid to try. So, I decided to join the audition. And can you believe it! I won the audition! Once the practices for the play started, I practiced every day in front of the mirror. On the day of the play, I was nervous, but I tried my best and the play was a success. Soon after the play, I found myself talking more to my classmates due to an increase in my confidence. I decided to try other things. For example, I tried singing in front of everyone in school, being a conductor for the chorus contest, and even speaking in a speech contest.

There is one more recent story that I want to share with you. In March 2024, I was selected to be the conductor of the song "Auld Lang Syne", which was going to be sung at the graduation ceremony. When I was first told about this honor, I thought everything would be easy because of my past success. I was completely smug, which means being overconfident and a bit arrogant, and I didn't practice a thing. As a result, I made many mistakes. After my failed attempt conducting, I was expecting to get bashed by everyone because of my poor conducting and smug attitude and thought about quitting. But, instead of being angry with me, my classmates were completely supportive. This is when I realized that trying new things and not quitting if you fail was important for building confidence. I also understood the importance of not being overconfident.

Gaining confidence can sound a bit difficult. But, like my experience, if you believe in yourself even once, take a step forward, and try your best, you can change your whole life. If I hadn't taken that first step when I was in the 6th grade, I wouldn't be here speaking to you today.

So, ... take a chance – choose a role with more lines – sing in front of the class – get off your video game – close your TikTok ... and ... gain confidence. By the way, do you want my autograph? Oh sorry! I was getting smug!

Thank you for listening.

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Hey! Do You Want My Autograph?