

Unconditional Confidence

How well we play the game is often a reflection of confidence. We'd all like to have the feeling that every pass will find its mark and every shot will beat the keeper. It is important to recognize that there are three kinds of confidence.

False Confidence: False confidence doesn't help at all. It's just talking big, kidding ourselves. It can lead to taking unrealistic chances, usually with unsuccessful results. We may be trying to impress others into thinking that we are better than we actually are. The truth comes out in no time during the course of an important match.

Conditional Confidence: This kind of confidence depends upon recent results. We are confident "on the condition" that we continue to play well. When things go well, our confidence can build until we feel like we can strike every shot. However, if things go badly, we start questioning our ability. We start asking, "What's wrong with me"? From there, down we go. If we are worried that we might make a mistake and we actually do, we feel even less confident the next time we are involved in a play. It's a self-fulfilling prophecy. The antidote to this dilemma is unconditional confidence.

Unconditional Confidence: Unconditional confidence arises from connecting with our basic goodness. We believe in ourselves as decent people and in our athletic skills for our level of play. This doesn't mean that every pass or shot will be perfect. **It means that we can handle whatever the result is.** With unconditional confidence, our self-worth as a human being doesn't depend on how well or poorly we play the game.

We see our nature and our abilities as basically good and the difficulties that we encounter as temporary experiences only. Instead of assuming something is wrong with our game, we reflect on what may have interfered with our intention on that particular play. This approach makes it possible to quickly turn things around and play well again.

Unconditional confidence takes a big perspective, independent of moment-to-moment results. The bigger the perspective we have, the better we can ride the inevitable ups and downs within a game, or several games, or even longer. We can handle difficulties with a sense of humor, knowing that these things come and go. We can regard experiences of success with a sense of humility, since these also come and go.

**Whatever we encounter, we can be fearless in the moment.
That's the expression of true confidence.**