

The Seven Different Kinds of Confidence Every Woman Needs

 BY PATRIC SHAW

❖ No one is born knowing how to  dress like Heidi Klum or  debate like Rachel Maddow. Not even  Heidi and  Rachel. Which is why they're heading up your  all-star confidence team.

From fashion and sex to work and  play, we've got you covered. ❖

Interviews by
Genevieve Field



how to have confidence...

...IN WHO YOU REALLY ARE

BY TRACEE ELLIS ROSS



I used to think the key to finding self-confidence lay in perfecting myself. If I was more this or less that, I would never be sad or feel pain again. But confidence doesn't emerge in one defining moment. It's a never-ending journey! Here's a look at mine:

Step 1: I made friends with my hair.

In my teens I tried to wear my big, luscious curly hair straight. I slept with huge curlers, got up early (with a stiff neck) and stayed up late trying to master my 'do. Every day I punished my hair with heat and products until one morning I woke up and realized I was tired and so was my hair. I called my mom [Diana Ross] in tears, and she said, "Honey, just let it do what it does." Now it's curly; sometimes it's wavy or soft or sweet or tough. But it's always Tracee.

Step 2: I took a deep breath.

My personality can be loud and silly. That's helped me get work as a comedic actor and set me apart from the sea of faces in Hollywood. But my exuberance hasn't always been a plus in the dating department. When I was nervous or liked a man, I used to get louder, more giggly—basically, I'd turn into a 12-year-old. Finally, a good friend lovingly suggested, "The next time you feel like your personality is running the show, take a deep breath and trust that you are enough."

Soon after that, someone I'd had a crush on for ages approached me at a party. I felt myself about to launch into high-wattage mode, but I took a deep breath instead—just the opening he needed to (finally!) ask for my number.

Step 3: I gave myself a break.

This year I received two NAACP award nominations for my work as lead actress and director on *Girlfriends*, a show I'd worked on and loved for eight years. The morning of the ceremony I woke up with a terrible flu. I braved it anyway. I put on a simple but elegant dress instead of the dramatic beaded one I'd planned on. Then I won the award for Outstanding Actress. I am so grateful that even with a head that felt the size of a balloon, I was there. If confidence is not within your reach, grace and humility make lovely substitutes.

TRACEE ELLIS ROSS recently appeared in the film *Labor Pains* and teaches self-esteem workshops for young women.



I have these big old nasty scars on my torso.

I was burned while trying to cook for myself at age three because no one else would, and for a long time I was ashamed of those scars, not just because they were ugly, but because they reminded me of my childhood, of scrounging for food and fending for myself. I had long kept quiet about that past, even after I'd achieved some success. But when I started dating a man named John who had a

...IN YOUR OWN SKIN

BY JEANNETTE WALLS

comfortable upbringing, I figured I'd better warn him in case he ever saw me naked.

"Don't ever apologize for your scars," John said. "They're a sign that you survived, and that you are tougher than whatever it was that tried to hurt you."

"I'm just sorry that I'm not smooth like most people," I said.

"Smooth is boring," he said. "You've got texture."

I ended up marrying John, and he convinced me to confront my past by writing a memoir. I expected my story to be met with disgust and ridicule, but people actually described it with words like *admirable* and *inspirational*. Seeing myself through their eyes—texture and all—helped me realize that this past that had for so long shamed me was actually a hard-earned

gift, if I was willing to receive it. Once, I told a group of readers that story about John's insisting that I had texture. Afterward, an elegant woman came up to me, diamonds flashing on her hands. "Sweetie, there is no such thing as smooth," she said. "You look close enough, silk's got texture."

She's so right. We all have our texture. Some of us are lucky enough to have the silky texture, and some of us are lucky enough to have texture that's a little rougher. Confidence doesn't come from thinking that you're perfect or flawless. That's arrogance. Confidence comes from appreciating the beauty of your texture.

JEANNETTE WALLS is the author of *The Glass Castle* and *Half Broke Horses: A True-Life Novel*.



...IN YOUR STYLE

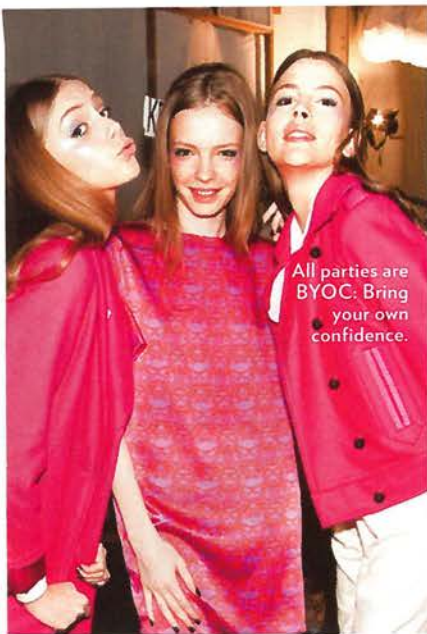
BY HEIDI KLUM



The first step to having fashion confidence is simpler than you might think: Know yourself.

Don't follow the trends; follow your instincts. A fashionable woman wears the clothes; a fashion victim lets the clothes wear

her! So choose a few basic pieces that are flattering to your figure, clothes that you feel good in. And since some people are naturally more flamboyant, and some are quieter, don't try to be the opposite of what you are—embrace your body and your spirit. Then, when you're ready to take your style up a notch, step out of your comfort zone a bit with an accessory or just one piece that's you but *more*—more sophisticated, more rock 'n' roll, more feminine, more of whatever you'd like your style to be. I think fashion should be fun, and I'm willing to take risks. Sometimes that means others don't like what I wear, but as long as I'm being true to myself, I don't care. When I'm not feeling as confident as I'd like, I have two secret weapons: One, I wear super-high heels. They always make you look sexy and even change your posture and the way you walk. (Just make sure you *can* actually walk in them!) Two, I always smile. It's the best accessory, and most times, people smile back. HEIDI KLUM is the host of *Project Runway* and the subject of a new photography book, *Rankin's Heidilicious*, by Rankin.



All parties are BYOC: Bring your own confidence.

...AT ANY PARTY

BY SUSAN FALES-HILL



Have fun! I don't know where people got this idea that walking into a party is like walking onto a battlefield. My mother, Josephine Premice, was a Broadway actress of Haitian descent. She used to say, "Make everyone feel special. Look them straight in the eye and give them warmth and attention." My parents were always the life of the party. You can be too. Start by telling yourself what they always told me: "You're the most interesting person in the room. At least we think so!" Opening

yourself up to others makes for a richer life, even if you're snubbed sometimes. That's OK. If this economy has taught us nothing else, it should be that we're all human, and no one is better than anybody else. So stop thinking of people you don't know as strangers, and you'll find that walking into a party alone can be great. You're going to see more. You're going to hear more. You're going to observe more. But don't beat yourself up if sparks don't fly with everyone. You are not responsible for reviving a conversation that has died. Just say, "Gosh, it was so nice talking to you," and gracefully move to more fertile ground. There are billions of people in the world. Next! *SUSAN FALES-HILL is the author of the upcoming novel One Flight Up.*

...UNDER EXTREME STRESS

BY DANICA PATRICK



When I'm driving a race car, I can't allow myself thoughts like, I'm not going to make this corner, or, I'm going too fast.

The second I think that way, it's over—just like a job interview is over the instant you tell yourself, "I'm not good enough." I've listened to recordings from my old races and I'd be swearing and yelling; my performance suffered. You'll never succeed if you're distracted by anger or pride. My best races now are my quietest, when I don't let emotions get the best of me. But I still get nervous—and that can be good *if* it doesn't come from feeling unprepared. It means something matters, that you're hoping for the best. Just learn to channel a case of the jitters into killer focus. Here's my pre-race secret (would you believe I learned it in yoga?): First, relax your jaw—it's where you hold a lot of tension. Then, take three deep, slow breaths, feeling the air fill your lungs. Now throw back your shoulders...and go for it. *DANICA PATRICK placed third in the 2009 Indianapolis 500—the highest finish by a woman in the event's history.*



My favorite American advertising slogan of all time is: "Never let them see you sweat." I am new to this business of being a television personality, but I do have some tried-and-true tricks for exuding confidence on the air.

First, do your homework. I give myself plenty of time to study up on whatever subject matter I'm covering. It's not as intimidating to talk to a global policy expert if you've spent the whole day reading up on their field. What is intimidating is trying to hold court on a subject you don't know anything about. So don't try to punch above your weight class.

Ask real questions that are firmly rooted in what you *do* know. If somebody's talking about string theory, don't be afraid to



...IN BED

BY SADIE ALLISON

As a sex counselor and educator, I've talked to hundreds of gorgeous women who lack the confidence to initiate sex, to ask for what they want in bed, to be touched where they think they're "fat" or even to leave the lights on. Sometimes these insecurities are deeply rooted and call for counseling. But for most of us, becoming sexually assured can be as easy as trying little things that make us feel more beautiful in the moment. Number one, take a cue from guys. Trust me, he's not tripping out on any of the stuff you're tripping out on. He's probably just looking at the roundness of your butt and enjoying how it feels under his hand. There are also positions that will make you feel more confident instantly. Spooning makes just about any woman look curvy and voluptuous in that Vargas girl way. Cowgirl position—you on top—gives him a great view and lets you get turned on by seeing him so into it. If all else fails, close your eyes and be really in the moment. The more you concentrate on your pleasure, the more you'll feel.

SADIE ALLISON is the founder and CEO of Tickle Kitty, Inc., and the author of Ride 'Em Cowgirl! Sex Position Secrets for Better Bucking.

...IN WHAT YOU THINK

BY RACHEL MADDOW

say, "Is this about string, or is this about math?" If you're talking to a military figure describing a fight in Baluchistan province, don't be afraid to say, "What country is Baluchistan province in?" Or, "What was the fighting about there?" Sometimes the very basic questions end up being the smartest questions, so ask what you're really wondering. It's also vital to pay attention to the answer you're hearing instead of just focusing on your own next question.

Also, don't be afraid to say what's on your mind. I remember one time on Tucker Carlson's show back in 2005, he said that Democrats who were against the Iraq war agreed with bin Laden. I was so mad at him for saying that, and on the show I just said, "Tucker, I'm mad at you," which prompted a great

honest debate we might not have had if I'd swallowed my emotions. But it's important to remember that being mad can sometimes undercut your ability to communicate. One thing I've learned about arguing is this: At the moment you most want to yell, make yourself speak slowly and quietly. It can help calm your emotions a little bit, and it makes people take you more seriously. Anybody who's still screaming at you while you're speaking calmly is going to look like an idiot; they're also probably going to feel like an idiot and stop doing it.

The time I felt most confident in my whole life was when I fell in love with my partner. The confidence came from feeling all doubt fall away. That's the purest kind of confidence I know. *RACHEL MADDOW is the host of The Rachel Maddow Show on MSNBC.*