UFYB 450: How to Create Self Trust

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With Your Host

Kara Loewentheil

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What does it mean to trust yourself? Most of us unconsciously think that it means knowing that we're always making the right decision, knowing that our future self will behave perfectly and carry out everything our current self wants. The problem is that this is an impossible standard. Your brain cannot predict the future with 100% accuracy. So if you tell yourself that certainty about making the right decision, about how you'll think, feel, and act in the future, is a requirement for self-trust, you're setting yourself up to never be able to trust yourself. And that is going to erode your confidence and your ability to create what you want in life.

So on this episode, we're going to get into what self-trust really is. I'm going to give you a much better definition of it. Talk about why it matters, and I'm going to give you some specific concrete steps you can take to start creating more of it. Let's get into it.

Welcome to UnF*ck Your Brain. I'm your host, Kara Loewentheil, Master Certified Coach and founder of The School of New Feminist Thought. I'm here to help you turn down your anxiety, turn up your confidence, and create a life on your own terms, one that you're truly excited to live. Let's go.

All right, so let's just start with why self-trust matters. Why am I talking about this? So, one initial reason is that a lack of self-trust just does not feel good. It's painful to tell yourself you can't trust yourself. And it's a form of self-criticism or even self-abuse that many of us don't even spot. We don't even think it's negative. We think it's like a weather report, that we're just reporting that we can't trust ourselves, just like we're reporting that it's raining outside right now. We don't even realize how negative and kind of cruel it is to constantly tell ourselves that we just can't rely on ourselves and we just can't trust ourselves.

So that's bad enough, but it's not just the emotional suffering that is the issue. It's that a lack of self-trust holds us back in life. And that's because of the relationship between self-trust and confidence. One of the major

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reasons that we don't feel confident in making decisions or taking risks is that we believe we can't trust ourselves. We can't trust ourselves to make the right decision. We can't trust ourselves to know that it will work out perfectly. We can't trust ourselves to never feel regret. We can't trust ourselves to not make mistakes. We can't trust ourselves to not beat ourselves up in the future.

So in order to make confident decisions and take risks and show up fully, we actually have to have self-trust. Women, though, are methodically alienated from themselves and their own self-trust by society. We're socialized to be quiet, to go along, to second-guess ourselves, to give everyone the benefit of the doubt, even if they're doing something obviously sexist or malicious to our face, to assume we deserved or caused anything that goes wrong, to overvalue authority and other people's opinions, and to undervalue our own perceptions or desires or needs or wants or really just anything about ourselves.

We're essentially taught to constantly throw ourselves under the bus for almost any reason. And we're taught to take over-responsibility for things we can't control. So anytime anything doesn't work out the way we want, doesn't go perfectly, we blame ourselves. And we're taught to do that. And then we think, oh, I can't trust myself. Look, I made this decision and it didn't work out perfectly, it didn't work out the way I want. There was some negative consequence, and we take way over-responsibility for everyone and everything else involved. And then we tell ourselves, see, I can't trust myself. I can't trust myself to make the right decision. I can't trust my own perceptions. I can't trust my own thoughts. I can't trust my own read of what's going on. Right? Women are really socialized into this way of thinking.

And so in order to create the self-trust that we need to be able to live bigger lives, we need two things. One is to understand what healthy self-trust actually is, and two is to know how to create it. So that's what we're going to be talking about today.

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So first, let's define self-trust. It is not defined as always knowing that you will make the right decision and everything will work out perfectly. That is how you are subconsciously defining it. I know you don't think that's how you're defining it. Like if I asked you what self-trust for someone else, especially, you wouldn't say, they should be perfect and never make a mistake. But if I ask you why you don't have self-trust, what you're going to tell me is a bunch of times that you made a wrong decision according to you, that you made a mistake according to you, that something didn't work out the way you wanted, that you didn't perfectly follow through on something. Right? Those are going to be your brain's reasons that you quote-unquote can't trust yourself.

Real self-trust is not knowing that you are making the right decision. If you define that as I can be 100% sure the decision will work out perfectly in the future and I'll never have any negative thoughts or feelings. Real self-trust is not about external circumstances and controlling them or guessing them correctly. Real self-trust is about your relationship with yourself. It's about being able to rely on yourself to deal with whatever does actually happen in the future.

Sometimes that means solving a problem, changing your behavior. Sometimes it means supporting yourself mentally and emotionally through circumstances you can't control. Problems you can't solve in terms of like actions changing the outcomes. But you need to know how to support yourself mentally and emotionally. Let's think about like someone you love being diagnosed with cancer. You're not going to be in control of what that outcome is. In that scenario, being able to trust yourself to handle things doesn't mean to solve that problem by fixing their health. It means to be able to support yourself mentally and emotionally and rely on your own resilience through those circumstances.

So either way, though, confidence is the result of trusting yourself to figure it out as you go. Confidence isn't already knowing what you need to do, what you need to think, what you need to feel, what could possibly go

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wrong in every scenario, and what are all the actions you would take. That's not what you need to have self-trust. It's not about self-trust in making the right decision or doing the right action even. Self-trust is about being able to rely on your own resilience and capacity to handle what happens. Right? Having faith in your own mind to be able to deal with whatever comes up. It's sort of faith in your own competency almost. Not in terms of like skills at work necessarily, although that could be part of it, but in terms of knowing that you are a person who is capable of dealing with or handling whatever challenges arise.

So how do we build self-trust? What we think we need to do is make enough correct decisions in a row to earn our self-trust. But that's not how it works, right? You can't make enough right decisions to prove to yourself that you're trustworthy. Because number one, no one can make all correct decisions, especially because there's not really such a thing as a correct decision, right? It's all in what you decide to think. So you can marry someone, realize that you should not have, right, that you made that decision for reasons that actually weren't great, get divorced, and you could tell yourself it's a huge mistake and that you can't trust yourself to pick your next partner. Or you can tell yourself it was an important learning experience and you're glad you went through it, and now going into the next phase of your life, you have a much better idea of what you're looking for.

It's not the specific relationship or divorce that causes one of those two thought patterns, right? It's just about what you decide to think. It's what your unmanaged mind says, and then what you decide to think on purpose. So if you have a brain that's always looking for evidence that you make mistakes and you're untrustworthy, you're never going to be able to prove otherwise to it because your brain can always find things to call mistakes. So if you are living out this thought pattern of I can't trust myself because I make bad decisions, there's no amount of like quote-unquote good decisions you can make that will convince your brain to change that story. Because your brain is the thing that decides if the decisions are good or

not. And if it believes you make bad decisions, it will always look for evidence to support that.

So we're not going to be able to good decision our way to self-trust. That's not what will work. We cannot just make enough good decisions to finally trust ourselves. Instead, we need to think about self-trust as a form of confidence. And after this quick break, I'm going to break down for you what those skills are that build self-trust, going to give you some examples from my own life, and then I'm going to tell you how you can practice it starting right now.

So if we think about self-trust as a form of confidence, then it's not surprising to hear if you've been listening to the podcast recently that the four confidence compass skills are the foundation of creating self-trust as well. The reason that I am confident and that I have full trust in myself is not because I think I always make the perfect decision. It's because I know I have the skills of the confidence compass. And that framework is what builds emotional resilience and a strong relationship with myself. So let's go through the confidence compass and talk about how each of these skills that you can practice creates more self-trust.

So the first skill is self-knowledge. And there are two levels when we're talking about self-knowledge and self-trust, right? The first is just understanding, having the self-knowledge to know what are we even talking about when we talk about self-trust. Becoming aware of the unconscious dialogue we have with ourselves about whether we're trustworthy and why and why not. Becoming aware of the unconscious requirements we've had to earn our own self-trust. So this is an inquiry you can do right now, right? What have you been telling yourself about trusting yourself? What have you been telling yourself you'd have to do to deserve your own self-trust? Right? What quote-unquote evidence have you been using against yourself to tell yourself that you can't have self-trust?

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So becoming aware of our belief that we need to be perfect and always make the right decision, all of that is self-knowledge. Self-knowledge is also important of self-trust because when you don't know why you do what you do or what you really think or feel, when your thoughts are all jumbled or opaque, and then that means that you're also feeling in ways that you don't understand, and then you're acting impulsively or you're avoiding or, right, you just are not managing your mind, then it makes sense that you don't trust yourself. You don't even really understand what's going on under the hood.

If you had somebody else in your life who seemed to have really unpredictable thoughts and feelings and actions and they didn't really seem to know why they did the things they did and they weren't trying to figure it out and you could never understand why they were being the way they were being, you would not trust that person. Right? That is inherently volatile and doesn't have the transparency you need for trust. So understanding yourself is a really core component of self-trust because it creates that transparency and awareness and emotional safety, or at least part of it, to be able to start building that self-trust.

The second confidence compass skill and the other piece that you need for the emotional safety is self-compassion. And self-compassion is absolutely crucial for self-trust because one of the things we need to have self-trust is the knowledge that we have a positive relationship with ourselves and we can rely on ourselves for support. Again, just imagine a trusting relationship with someone else. If someone else is mean or abusive to you when you have a problem or you have a challenge or something doesn't go the way you thought, or you feel unsure or whatever, if you were feeling uncertain and you bring it to someone they're like, well, you better make the right decision because you always fuck things up and you're always making bad dumb decisions and you're going to ruin your life if you do it wrong. Like that's not someone that you trust. Right? You don't feel safe with them.

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Self-compassion is essential to self-trust. You have to have self-compassion in order to be able to have a trusting and safe relationship with yourself. That self-compassion is what allows you to take risks and learn and grow because you know that you have that safe home base to come back to, that trust that you're not going to beat yourself up. One of the reasons we don't have self-trust is that we are in this kind of abusive cycle with ourselves where we try to do things perfectly, and then when we don't, we beat ourselves up, and that is not a model that creates trust and safety.

So that self-knowledge, self-compassion, both crucial to self-trust. The third confidence compass element is self-belief. And self-belief is important to self-trust because one of the elements of self-trust is not trusting your future self to know all the answers, but trusting your future self to be able to deal with what happens, right? That's what we've been talking about throughout this episode. The idea that self-trust is really trust in your own resilience and capacity, not in your own perfection. And being able to believe new things, build new beliefs, practice new thoughts, be in charge of your mental and emotional state is a core piece of trusting yourself to deal with whatever comes up.

When we don't have self-trust, we are at the mercy of our future brains, and that's really kind of who we don't trust. You can think about it that way. Like when we don't have self-trust, it's partly we don't trust our future selves to not be really mean to us. So being able to trust that we're going to choose what to think on purpose, that we are not going to beat ourselves up, or if we catch ourselves doing it, we're going to redirect. Right? Knowing that we have the skills that are required for self-belief is a big part of building self-trust.

Again, if you think about someone else, if you go to someone and you know that whatever you bring them, they believe in you, they love you, they support you, they're going to give you some, helpful perspective and ways of seeing things, that person you always feel better after you talk to them because they just help you see things in perspective and they remind you

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that you are strong and capable. That's the person you want to be for yourself, and you need self-belief to do that. You need the skill of changing what you think and believing new things about yourself in order to be that person for yourself.

Deliberately choosing those beliefs is part of how you also demonstrate that reliability and safety to yourself, that when you do need those skills, you use them. And so you build that trust with yourself that yes, I am someone who will coach myself, will manage my mind, will practice new thoughts. That's how I know I'll be able to deal with whatever comes up.

And the last element of the confidence compass is self-actualization, right? And that's having the trust in yourself to actually do things and carry through. Now, most of us want to skip straight to this. Our thought process is like, I can't trust myself because I don't always follow through, so in order to have self-trust, I just need to follow through perfectly. But obviously, that is not a thing you know how to do. That's why you're not doing it. And the reason that you don't follow through, if that's what is going on with you, with your self-trust, is because you don't have the other three elements in place. You don't have self-knowledge, self-compassion, and self-belief. Those are the things that allow a person to self-actualize, take action, and follow through.

So you build self-trust by proving to yourself that you can take action even when you're uncertain and that you will keep aligning your actions with your evolving understanding and goals. You prove to yourself that you can self-actualize by working on those three other skills that will lead you to be able to take different actions. So when you practice those skills and then you find that you're able to take different actions and you produce different outcomes in your life, that's like this virtual cycle that builds your self-trust.

So these four elements of the confidence compass are what create self-trust. They allow you to rely on yourself in any circumstance that might come up because you know who you are, you know how to support

yourself, you know how to take responsibility for what you're thinking and your mindset which determines how you feel and act. You know how to create those new beliefs, right? And you know how to harness all of that to actually show up and take the action that's needed to deal with whatever has happened in the future. Right? Whatever the outcomes of that decision that you're afraid to make, whatever is the difficult thing that has to be done in that hard circumstance that you're afraid to face, that you don't trust yourself to handle. The four skills of the confidence compass are what allow you to have the self-trust to know that whatever it is, you're going to be able to handle it.

So let's talk through just a few examples of the difference that self-trust makes and how it's different to have a deep self-trust versus the kind of external perception of confidence. So for example, when I started my business, people might have looked at that and thought, oh, she must feel confident because she knows what she's doing, or certainly looking retrospectively, you might think, oh, she must have felt confident because she knew it would succeed, right? Look, it's been a big success. Of course she felt confident because she knew she was capable of that.

That is not true. I did not feel confident because I knew it was going to succeed. I felt confident because I trusted that I would do my best to figure things out. And I knew that if I failed, I wasn't going to emotionally abandon or abuse myself. You can't take risks with someone you don't trust to be kind, and that includes yourself. So what allowed me to start the business was not the confidence that it would be a big success. It was the self-trust that I trusted myself to coach myself and keep moving forward on whatever came up. And I had to practice believing that about myself, right? That wasn't necessarily based on the past. I didn't have any experience of doing this in the past.

I couldn't say to myself like, well, look at all the times that you did build a successful business before and you did figure out business challenges. I didn't have any of that. But I trusted myself to be resilient and resourceful,

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and I practiced believing that about myself. Now, that was a choice. I could have looked at my past and seen a lot of places that I hadn't followed through or I hadn't finished things, or I had given up on stuff. But I didn't focus on that. I focused on the places I had demonstrated resourcefulness or resilience, and I amplified that in my own mind as my identity to build that self-trust.

Or take a more recent example, I got married last year and I did not get married because I felt confident that our relationship would work forever or that he was like the one in a cosmic sense. The future is very unknown. I hope that we'll be together a long time. I chose him and built this relationship based on my values, based on my at least current priorities, based on what I know about myself and what I know about him and why I think our relationship has a lot of potential. But people change. Who knows what's happening in the next 40 years. So I didn't make that decision based on confidence that like this was the capital R right decision that would prove to be perfect in forever.

I was able to make the decision because I trusted myself in making that decision. I used my values, I did my research, but ultimately I knew I have my own back in this. If this doesn't quote-unquote work out, if I later on have thoughts and feelings that I've coached myself on and I choose to keep that lead me in a different direction or if he decides to go in a different direction and I don't have any control over it, either way, I trust myself to handle that.

Not that I'm going to feel fine, I might feel terrible. I might have a lot of emotions, but I trust myself to do the self-knowledge work to truly understand what's going on with me. I trust myself to be kind to myself whatever happens with our marriage. I trust myself to build the beliefs I need to cope with whatever is going on, whether that's if my feeling shifts, if his feeling shifts, if something external happens that we can't control. And I trust myself to self-actualize and take action, right? I know that I won't let

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myself just be miserable and unhappy for years and do nothing about it. So I trust myself to deal with whatever comes up.

So those are examples from my life, but this is true anytime you try something new. There are so many examples in your own life you can think about, like maybe you're considering making a financial investment, like investing in stocks or buying real estate, or putting money into a course or a program or a certification to develop your career, or going to school for an advanced degree, right? You can't know in advance what's going to happen. It's trusting yourself to be able to deal with whatever comes up. Or you want to start a creative project, writing a book, starting a blog, you want to go back to something you used to love doing and you gave up.

It's trusting yourself to deal with whatever happens, whatever feelings come up, whatever self-knowledge you need to explore, whatever new habits you need to be able to build with self-knowledge and self-compassion and self-belief. In any of these scenarios, there's no guarantee of success. So it's not about trusting yourself to do it perfectly. It's about trusting yourself to show up, learn something, adapt, respond, and support yourself with compassion.

So here are a few practical steps that you can start taking now to build your self-trust. So the first is developing that self-knowledge. Get a little bit curious about your own thoughts and beliefs. Sit down and write for a few minutes and explore how have you been defining what self-trust means? What are you telling yourself now? What are your current thoughts about your ability to handle challenges or be resourceful? What's your story about making mistakes or making decisions or not following through on things, right? What identities have you built around those things with your thinking?

You can practice practicing self-compassion. The next time you make a mistake, right? You can notice what is your self-talk like? What is something kinder you could say to yourself? How would you want someone

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you loved to respond to you in that moment or how would you respond to someone else you loved who was in that moment?

You can practice strengthening your self-belief. So make yourself a list of past challenges you've navigated, things and times you've been resourceful or resilient, times you've figured things out, any times you have been self-compassionate, been able to support yourself, start gathering that evidence that you have that skill and can keep strengthening it.

And then you can try to take some intentional action, right? Take a small action to follow through on something and prove to yourself you can do it. But do not try to do that without doing one through three. It's just setting yourself up for failure. If you are someone whose self-trust issues are around not following through and not doing what you say you'll do, it's because you don't have skills one, two, and three in place. It's because you don't have self-knowledge, self-compassion, self-belief in place. So you have to practice those and build those or you're not going to get any different outcome when it comes to self-actualization.

If that describes you, if you know that you're always just trying to do things differently but you haven't built up the three skills that allow you to, then I also want you to consider coming to join us in A Confident Life. This is a new yearlong program that I am running that will teach you the depth you need of these four confidence compass skills in order to create a truly authentic life. And part of that life is a deep self-trust. You can learn more by going to unfuckyourbrain.com/life, or text your email to +1 347-997-1784 and use codeword life.

I promise you that when you have self-knowledge, self-compassion, and self-belief, self-actualization becomes a breeze. But without those three foundational skills, it is nearly impossible to change your behavior in a consistent, sustainable, and enjoyable way. So all of y'all who are listening to this and realizing you need more self-trust, I want you to know that it is something you can build with yourself by building those four skills, but it is

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not something you can ever create just by doing better, being more perfect, making all the right decisions.

That's magical thinking. And if you want self-trust and you want to be able to take bigger risks and put yourself out there and live a bigger life, you have to take responsibility for creating that self-trust. You have to take responsibility for creating that self-confidence. It is not going to come from the outside world and it's not going to come from just magically waking up perfect tomorrow. You got to come build those skills yourself in a confident life. Unfuckyourbrain.com/life, or text your email to +1 347-997-1784 and the codeword is life. We are going to go deep this year and those of you who join me, you're going to have a totally different brain by the end of 2026. Let's fucking go.

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