

Are you a “Can Do” person?

Many Kiwi teenagers dream of being in the All Blacks one day. Obviously we can't all be All Blacks! But we can all be good at something! This article is written especially for teenage readers.

By Dexter H. Faulkner

Andy came home from school, mumbled a greeting, and immediately went into his room. Instantly his mother knew something was wrong. As she knocked on his door, the muffled sniffing from inside stopped. “What’s the matter, son?” “Nothing.” Opening the door, “Really? ...But I think you’re not happy about something.” “I’m not good enough! All the other guys are so much better than me.”

As they continued to talk, Andy revealed how deeply disappointed he was in not making the school rugby team. He had even dreamt of one day making it to NPC level. Gently, his mother pointed out that even if he wasn’t the best footy player, he was good at other things - chess and music, for a start. Also, he was good at managing time, and especially good at diffusing an explosive situation among friends, without anyone feeling embarrassed or hurt. He was good at lots of other things, she reminded him.

So many times we - like Andy - only think about those things that we don’t or can’t do well, and forget the things we can do.

Sounds familiar? Have you ever had one of those days when you had



Photo courtesy Nelson Bays RFU.

about as much confidence as a cat in a room full of rocking chairs?

Many times we lack confidence because we see others who seem to do better at something than we do.

So, how can you develop more confidence in your abilities? Well, the first step in developing the right kind of confidence is to stop comparing yourself with others.

Rather than looking at what others can do, focus on your strong points - those things you do well or like doing the most. The second step, then, is to focus on your abilities.

As Andy’s mother pointed out, he was good at many things. Okay, Andy doesn’t play rugby as well as other guys. Perhaps he needs to practice more or maybe he isn’t as talented in that area of sport. There are books (like *Choosing a Vocation*

and *What Colour is Your Parachute?*) that can help us analyze our likes and dislikes, and point out our strong points. By capitalizing on these strong points, we can be more able to enjoy success in our career or vocation. We can avoid becoming the proverbial square peg in a round hole. We can avoid the frustration of believing “everyone is better than I am”.

Andy may not be the best loose forward around, but he can play a few decent pieces from Richard Clayderman’s latest album and win some chess games with his friends.

Step three in nurturing your confidence is to set goals for those aptitudes you have.

Maybe Andy aspires to be a performing pianist, playing in a world famous concert hall. If so, he needs to work toward that goal step by

step.

Oddly enough, as you practice and develop your abilities, whatever they are, you'll find that there is an important side benefit: confidence.

Confidence allows you to play rugby and not be upset because you don't play as well as someone else. Confidence allows you to try new things realizing that you may not be the best, yet knowing that there are other things you do well.

Confidence can turn a negative "I can't" person into a "can do" positive individual.

Remember, you can build that confidence by:

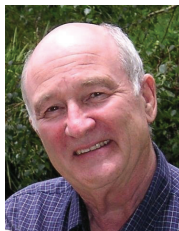
1. Not comparing yourself with others,
2. Focusing on your abilities and
3. Setting goals for your aptitudes.

So what if you can't spike a volleyball? You might play a pretty mean game of chess. And your friends always know they can count on you for a listening ear.

King Solomon, said to be the wisest man that ever lived, made this point, recorded in the Bible nearly 3,000 years ago, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might" (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

You may not do as well as someone else at one thing, but at something else you may really excel. Each of us is unique, and each of us has some important strengths. Concentrate on making the most of your potential, not somebody else's. Go on, you can do it!

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Be yourself!

What type of person would you really like to be?

An outgoing, extraverted "party animal"? A thoughtful, reflective "intellectual"? A real "go-getter"? A stable, cautious, detail-minded, reliable, "behind-the-scenes" worker? A reassuring friend and confidant? A networker? A promoter? A thinker? A source of wise counsel?

The person we each really ought to be most like is... ourself.

There's every chance you're something like one of the above descriptions already. So why not enjoy being that person to the full? Life would be pretty dull if we were all the same. And it gets pretty dull, and fraught with frustration, when we try to fit ourselves into some mould-of-the-moment or someone else's idea of who we ought to be.

God made you to be the person you are, not someone you're not. Think about the things you enjoy, are good at, and naturally tend towards. These are the ways we experience, understand and share life. You don't need to be like someone else, any more than they need to be like you. Sure, we can learn from others' examples and strengths, but we can't be them. Enjoy who God made you to be. Celebrate the good things about yourself.



A "Can Do" person: Abraham Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln suffered a business failure in 1831. He was defeated in an attempt to be elected to the legislature in 1832. The next year, he suffered a second failure in business. He went through a nervous breakdown in 1836. He

was defeated for Speaker in 1838, defeated for Elector in 1840, defeated for Congress in 1843, and again in 1848. In 1855 and again in 1858 he was defeated for Senate, and in 1856 he was defeated for Vice President. In 1860 he was elected the sixteenth President of the USA.

"Whether you think you can or think you can't, you are right."

— Henry Ford

Another way of saying "Can't":

Can
After
Numerous
Tries