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## Self Confidence is...

We surveyed YAs across the country on what self-confidence means to them. Here are a few responses we received.

One Swami quote I like is, "You are not one person, but three; the one you think you are (physical); the one others think you are (mental); and the one you really are..." "To me, this means we should attempt to focus on who we really are (God) which will give us confidence in our true self. I personally find it challenging to do this (either attributing successes, or more commonly, failures to my own doing) versus staying focused on who I "really am". Minimizing these ups and downs would help limit unnecessary expenditure of energy and increase my confidence.

# Leading a Spiritual Life: Self Confidence

April 2012

*"Once upon a time, there lived a young boy who was born in a poor household. He came from a very poor family and could not afford to have a decent dress and books. He was so poor that he had to study under streetlights. His mother used to support him with the meager amount of money she earned by mending old and worn-out clothes. One day his classmates, who were rich and wearing fine suits, boots, and hats, made fun of him and heckled him, saying that he did not deserve to walk along with them in that poor attire and that he should walk on the footpath. He came home crying and poured out his agony to his mother, explaining how he was insulted and humiliated. His mother consoled him saying, "My dear son! Do not get affected by praise or blame. Understand the situation at home. Your father cannot afford to spend money on your education. Develop self-confidence. That is your property." These words made a lasting impression on the tender heart of the boy. He inculcated self-confidence and self-respect, with the constant support and encouragement of his mother. He eventually went on to become the President of the United States by sheer hard work and self confidence which his mother encouraged him to develop all through his life." [Baba, 21 Feb 2009]*

Can you guess who this person is? This person was none other than the great Abraham Lincoln. Imagine what we can achieve with Self-Confidence as the foundation for an ideal life! History is replete with examples of great souls who have achieved the seemingly impossible and surpassed the insurmountable through sheer will of the Self manifested as Self Confidence. As Swami Vivekananda once said, **"To Succeed, you must have tremendous perseverance, tremendous will. "I will drink the ocean", says the persevering soul, "at my will mountains will crumble up." Have that sort of energy, that sort of will, work hard and you will reach the goal."**

Swami has exhorted on several occasions, Self Confidence is the basis, foundation and manifestation of the force of the Pourusha (vitality, adventure and aspiration) in human beings. Swami has said to His students, **"You should consider self-confidence as the most important asset in life. Without self-confidence you can never attain bliss. Therefore, try to develop self-confidence in order to lead a good life...You should also set ideals in the society by developing self-confidence and by sharing your love with others."** -SSS Vol 34 Chapter 23

In this newsletter, let us delve deeper into Swami's message for the youth on the topic of self-confidence.

## Examples of People who achieved great success through Self-Confidence



**Mother Teresa:** Motivated by the Self within to be of service to humanity.

### Harriet Tubman:

Self Confidence stemming from faith in God



### Martin Luther King Jr.:

With Self Confidence, he became the leader of the American Civil Rights movement.

**Hanuman:** Only when Lord Rama reminded Him of his innate power that he developed Self Confidence and courage to cross the entire ocean in one leap.



**Prahlada:** Despite all odds, including opposition from his father, young Prahlada persisted with faith and confidence that God is in all and exists everywhere.

## II. Understanding the Topic: What is Self Confidence?

### Why is Developing Self-Confidence Important?

Swami says self confidence is the foundation. When we have complete and unwavering faith in the Self (Atma), we are able to surrender and let ourselves become a hollow flute for the Lord to play. In the process, we also progress towards the goal of realizing our inherent divinity.

What are some other benefits of cultivating Self-Confidence?

#### 1) Leads to internal peace and happiness

It is absolutely necessary for every individual to search his conscience. It is in this context it is said that one should essentially have faith in one's own Atma or have self-confidence. Only when one develops self-confidence will he be able to develop peace of mind experience the satisfaction or Ananda of the Atma; and then he will sacrifice everything else. [Summer Showers, 1974, part 2, page 189-190]

#### 2) Promotes Love for Divinity Within

"One who lacks faith can never understand God. Yad Bhavam Tad Bhavathi (as are the thoughts so will be the result). How can one who has no faith in himself trust others? What is the use of one's life if one cannot believe anybody? So, first and foremost, develop self-confidence. When you have self-confidence, you will love society. One who loves society will be loved by God." Divine Discourse, Dasara Celebrations, October 24, 2001.

#### 3) Leads to Success in All Areas of Life

"Cultivate Divinity and be fearless. When you face difficulties with courage, you are bound to succeed. Hence, have confidence in your Self and achieve success in all areas of life." - Sathya Sai Speaks Vol. 30

#### 4) Self - transformation starts with faith in the divine

One the occasion of Mahasivarathri 2006, a few Students were preparing to distribute the calendars and other mementoes for devotees and Students inside the Mandir. Swami suddenly entered the Mandir and was lovingly admonishing the boys for the apparent delay in distribution of Prasadam as lakhs of devotees had assembled outside. In their attempt to appease Swami, the boys surrounded Swami and were attempting to appease Him with their "Devotion". Swami suddenly posed the question to the boys as to **what Devotion really meant?** The boys prayed to Swami to enlighten them and **Swami revealed "True devotion is transformation. Not transformation of others, but transformation of your Self"**

*"Who is a real human being? One who does not undergo a change; one whose faith in the Atma Tathwa (Self) is firm and steady. That is self-confidence. One who develops that self confidence can find a place for themselves permanently in the history of the world."*

Mahashivarathri, 21 Feb 2009

# III. How do we practice being aware of the Self 24/7?

## Practical Tips on building Self-Confidence:

### 1) Listening to the inner guidance



- Keep Swami with you always. One way is to keep a picture of Him with you and remind yourself that He is always with you and around you.
- Learn to converse with Swami. Make Swami your best friend! He knows our deepest secrets. Remember, Swami is the Eternal Witness.

### 2) Following the guidance received

- While making important or tough decisions try to turn inwards, look into your conscience, and listen to Swami's voice guiding you
- With self confidence, feel God within and act knowing that nothing can harm you in any way or form.
- When you face obstacles, call upon Swami and face the challenge without fear.
- When you feel fearful, remember Swami is within and act with confidence. Know His confidence is your confidence.



### 3) Accept the results as His will

- Be detached from the result of your action, just do your task with self confidence, and know that the Baba within is performing the task.
- When you do something do not expect results or be attached. Take whatever comes with equanimity and have faith in Swami when He says that whatever happens is for the good.



## Self Confidence is...

"Have Swami in heart and do action consulting heart with full confidence. Doing any right action with full faith and no results attached."

"It means confidence that you can go forth without any fear or anxiety and give your best...knowing he is with you...in you..above you..below you ..around you."

"Self confidence, to me, is knowing that Swami is the ultimate doer. Knowing this, I should not expect anything from my actions and strive to become detached from the result"

"Self confidence means doing anything with confidence that swami is the doer"



"Self confidence cannot be purchased or obtained through learning. It is based on deservedness. To attain deservedness, develop divine thoughts. If you have faith in God, He will protect you in the face of all adversities. He is always with you, in you, above you, beside you, around you." - Sathya Sai Speaks Vol. 32

# IV. "Being your-Self": A perspective from an SSSIHL student

"This college has not been established just to prepare you for earning degrees. The main purpose is to help you to cultivate self-knowledge and self confidence, so that each one of you can learn self-sacrifice and earn self-realization." - Mission Statement of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning (Deemed to be University)

Often Swami has asked Students if they are Swami's Students or the University Students. Truly speaking, the Universe can be considered as His University where we are all His Students and in light of this, Swami has often emphasized that to His MBA Students that true M.B.A. is beyond the degree and more towards unison of the Mind, Body Atma and having one's Mind on Baba Always. It can be inferred that Self Realization is nothing but the realization of the Truth that God or the Self is the wire-puller and Pourosha aspect who transcends the mind-body-intellect complex yet at the same time enables each and every action in one and all. In an interview to a teacher who questioned Swami as to whose will prevailed in mundane actions, the Teacher lifted a pen from his pocket while indicating to Swami it was "he" and not "He" performing the action. To this, Swami simply smiled and asked the teacher to lift his hand the second time – which was just not possible for the Teacher, re-

emphasizing the above concept of the Self being the motivator of every action.

In the Golden Triangle of Hostel-Institute-Mandir, for every Student, the Hostel has played significant role in shaping the "Self" of every Student. One such example is the Self-Reliance department within the Hostel, where every Student is assigned a responsibility which goes into the upkeep of the Hostel ranging from but not restricted to serving food in kitchen, repairs, banking and stores management. Many a time, these self reliance departments are outside the "comfort zone" of a Student and literally help build the Self Confidence aspect which strengthens the character at an individual level. Also the emphasis on community living, where every inmate shares all the Hostel resources with at least ten others in his room, helps foster the true feelings of "Sharing and Caring". When one is truly imbibed in this unity and selfless aspect, feelings of self-satisfaction dawns, which ultimately help us, progress towards the goal of Self Realization.

Also the programs by Students, be it a Mandir program or a Sports Day event, is a loving expression and dedication of their innate capabilities built on sound foundation of self confidence with the goal being towards satisfaction of their Divine Chancellor & Master who is represented as the Inner Self. When these events are rendered with the sole objective of expressing love in unison to God the end result is an incomparable feeling of Self Satisfaction or happiness that enables each Student to live every moment in the bliss of Self Realization.

The Truth that dawns in every experience be it the Hostel, Institute or Mandir, is that, the true enabler of all actions who is literally hand holding us through the states of being ranging from self confidence through self realization is none other than

the Supreme Self who is also the indweller in our hearts.



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The main purpose is to help you cultivate self-knowledge and self-confidence, so that each one of you can learn self-sacrifice and earn self-realization.  
”

## Self Confidence is...

"I feel that faith and self confidence are inter-related. That if I do my part, Swami will not fail me."

"Self-confidence or aatma-vishwasam is confidence in the infinite aatma or the divinity within each one of us. It is the ability to tune into that inner guidance to not only know what is right but to derive the strength to do it. "

“  
...true M.B.A. is beyond the degree and more towards unison of the Mind, Body Atma and having one's Mind on Baba Always  
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# V. Individual Reading of Prema Vahini



## The story behind Prema Vahini

It was February 1958, Bhagawan at the age of 32 years, started a monthly magazine, aptly named as 'Sanathana Sarathi' to spread His message of love and divinity. The very first article in the inaugural issue was written by Bhagawan, 'Prema Vahini', or the 'Stream of Divine Love'. For twenty-five months till February 1960, Swami assiduously penned for mankind the challenges and characteristics, norms and nuances of Divine love. As Prof.Kasturi, eloquently expressed, "while reading the book you are in touch with the very source of Prema; while translating its message into action, you are visibly led by the Grace of the Lord Himself; while enjoying the thrill of Sadhana (spiritual discipline) prescribed here, you are responding to the majesty of the very Ocean of Mercy."

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## Activity:

1) Similar to the passage in Chapter 7, Swami says "you take *one step*; I will take *hundred steps* toward you." This activity is a meditation. Close your eyes and ask Swami to think through you while meditating. When meditating, consider a time when you were tired, felt defeated, or felt weak but yet took "one step or surrendered" to God and felt in return that God took a hundred steps toward you. Take yourself back to that moment and re-live the feeling you had when God took a hundred steps toward you. As mentioned in Chapter 7, imagine that God is the sun that rushes in to your being and overwhelms every part of you.



2) Consider repeating this meditation as your "one step" in any moments over the next three months in which you feel tired or weak and reflect back on your experiences with this activity.

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**After reading Chapter 1-7 of Prema Vahini, test yourself by answering these questions:**

1. Attaining which of the below will help us find human happiness or peace?  
A) flawless character  
B) wealth  
C) Marriage/Social status  
D) Job promotion
2. How can one attain discrimination?  
A) Reading the Prema Vahini  
B) Listening to Swami's discourses  
C) Visiting Churches/Temples/Mosques  
D) Practicing values in life
3. What does "Samadrishti" mean?  
A) Seeing all beings with as much love and faith as one has in oneself  
B) Seeing evil in all beings with the intensity in which God loves us  
C) One-pointed steadfastness to reach worldly goals  
D) Gaining knowledge of the world with extreme focus
4. What is the main spiritual practice (sadhana) referred to in these chapters?  
A) To search for faults and weaknesses within thyself and strive to correct them  
B) To search for faults and weaknesses in others and strive to make them aware of them  
C) To experience deep invigorating, refreshing sleep, akin to Samadhi  
D) Practice Yoga every week through gym membership
5. Identify the most accurate statement on Bhakti, Jnana, and Seva:  
A) Bhakti, Jnana, and Seva are separate paths to God  
B) Bhakti, Jnanam, and Seva are to be attained in this order  
C) The three cannot be separated and each has its sweetness, weight and shape  
D) Bhakti and Jnana are more important than the path of Seva
6. When will sleep be nothing but a state of Samadhi?  
A) When man eats, drinks, toils and sleeps  
B) When each little act is an offering to the Lord  
C) When we donate our old clothes to the needy  
D) None of the above
7. When will life be verily bliss?  
A. When we look at life as a discipline and reprimand ourselves for each mistake  
B. When we rejoice in newer and newer opportunities to serve the Lord  
C. When we eat copious amounts of our favorite meals at breakfast, lunch, and dinner  
D. All of the above
8. What does God want from us?  
A. Success in all our worldly endeavors  
B. Performance of seva with the knowledge that "the individual is the doer"  
C. Contemplation on what could have possibly been our previous karma  
D. Viveka to pray to the Lord, the jnana to remember Him
9. What does Swami say are among the lessons one must learn in life?  
A. The impermanence of created things  
B. The role of Man as the servant  
C. God is the Master who is worshipped  
D. All of the above
10. How does one eliminate the feeling of mine and thine?  
A. Feel oneness.  
B. Strive to be like our peers who we admire.  
C. See the Diversity in Unity.  
D. None of the above.

**\*\*The answers** to these questions can be found in the study circle supplement PowerPoint\*\*

**Scoring:** If you score 10/10 correct, you are an absolute spiritual rock star. If you score an 8 or 9 out of 10 correct, read the Prema Vahini Chapters 1-7 another time. If you score 7 out of 10 or less, it seems you need some "Samadhi sleep" and then give the quiz another go.