

breakthrough

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DEMONS of the
IMAGINATION[©]

by PATRICK O'NEILL

High performance athletes know a secret that spells the difference between success and failure. Personal best performances ultimately come down to one thing – **self-confidence**.

If you believe in yourself, have the confidence to really go after what you want to achieve and can picture yourself achieving it, you are preconditioning your own success.

When you lack confidence, second-guess yourself or hesitate, the chances of failure are increased exponentially. Anais Nin captured the price we pay for the deficit of confidence: "She lacks confidence, she craves admiration insatiably. She lives on the reflections of herself in the eyes of others. She does not dare to be herself."

Self-worth is the source of confidence. It is respect for one's gifts, talents, character qualities and positive contributions. A positive and realistic attitude towards your abilities allows for the pursuit of deeply meaningful personal and professional goals.

Story continued inside...

UPCOMING COURSES

EXTRAORDINARY CONVERSATIONS FOR BREAKTHROUGH RESULTS! FOUNDATION PROGRAM
May 3-5, 2006, Toronto, ON

This powerful three-day program provides individual managers and teams with the practical skills required to create a competitive advantage by building relationships where collaboration, innovation and mutual respect thrive. You will learn how to: become more proactive, listen authentically, and inspire and motivate employees. Most importantly, you will be asked what breakthrough you want to make happen in your workplace, and leave with the tools and a plan to make that dream a reality.

TRIUMPH OF THE IMAGINATION™
A Journey to the Heart of Creativity & Personal Leadership
April 28-30, July 7-9, September 8-10,
October 27-29, San Francisco, CA

In a four-weekend format, Angeles Arrien and Patrick O'Neill address the universal principles that support the alignment of the mind, heart, creative fire and character behind your life dream. Once you've identified your dream (Imagination), the program establishes a framework for you to access practical tools for manifestation (Wisdom), leave with an action plan (Manifestation), and clearly identify the resources, gifts and talents that support success (Recreation).

THRESHOLDS OF COLLECTIVE WISDOM
Seven Principles of Group Dynamics
October 11-15, 2006, San Francisco, CA

In this intensive five-day program, Angeles Arrien and Patrick O'Neill address the universal principles and skills that build and support collective wisdom in families, teams, organizations, and institutions. Collective wisdom is created and fostered by the contribution of individual gifts, talents and diverse experiences to support a common purpose. Revitalize your ability to inspire responsibility, participation, and creativity in yourself and in others.

For more information on these courses, please contact Lynne O'Neill at 416 361 3331, lynne@extraordinary.on.ca

If you know someone who would be interested in receiving a copy of our quarterly newsletters, please send us an e-mail including their name, company name and address to: katherine@extraordinary.on.ca

CORPORATE PROFILE

Extraordinary Conversations helps leaders generate breakthroughs in organizational, team and individual performance.

Since 1988, we have supported large, medium and small organizations to build environments where people can do their best work. Clear vision, commitment and responsibility, open communication, courage and the passion to accomplish meaningful goals lead to extraordinary results.

We have proven approaches that can assist you and your organization to create breakthroughs in:

- *Productivity*
- *Change Management*
- *Teamwork and Collaboration*
- *Conflict Resolution*
- *Leadership Education*
- *Organizational Communication*
- *Individual and Team Coaching*

Equip your organization with the knowledge, the skills and the will to create breakthrough results.

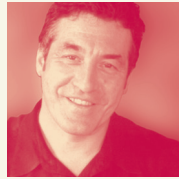
Extraordinary Conversations works with diverse industries including manufacturing, retail, financial institutions, entertainment and service companies. Our clients include Fortune 500 leaders, medium-sized national companies and small entrepreneurial enterprises. Our work has taken us to global corporations in North America, Europe, Asia and Australia, to the townships of South Africa and the peace process in the Middle East.



59 Berkeley Street, Toronto ON M5A 2W5
T: 416 361 3331 F: 416 361 3284
Website: www.extraordinaryconv.com

“To free us from the expectations of others, to give us back to our-selves—there lies the great, singular power of self-respect.”

—Joan Dideon



PATRICK O'NEILL

> Story continued from front cover

Angeles Arrien, an award winning author, cultural anthropologist and corporate consultant has identified three components of self worth – **self-love**, **self-trust** and **self-respect**.

Self-love means that we have a healthy level of affection and compassion for ourselves. We are not overly harsh or critical of our abilities or impacts on others and although we are always striving to do our best, we allow ourselves to learn from mistakes. Seneca reminds us “What you think of yourself is much more important than what others think of you.”

Self-trust is the firm belief in your own reliability and capacity to make a difference. It means that you trust your ability to respond to whatever challenges occur and that your resourcefulness will carry the day. It funds the ability to face unfamiliar circumstances or chart new territory, confident that you can handle whatever happens. “Self-trust is the first secret of success,” writes Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Self-respect is the belief in your own worth and dignity. You value yourself but never from a place of unhealthy pride or conceit. One holds a correct level of respect for their character qualities, contributions, efforts and achievements. You can celebrate your accomplishments and provide a fair and honest assessment of your mistakes for the purpose of continuous improvement.

When we have a healthy regard for the self, there is no need to brag about our accomplishments or demean or diminish ourselves. Neither are we jealous or comparative of others. We are committed to being the best we can be and are able to celebrate the success of others without demeaning them or ourselves.

After many years of counseling leaders at all levels of organizational life, it is still shocking to me to see how prevalent low self worth is, even at the highest levels of leadership. Many of us can fill pages with our deficiencies but struggle to identify our own gifts and talents. The hidden costs of this form of self-sabotage are steep. When we are overly critical of ourselves, we injure our ability to perform.

Here are just ten consequences to leadership of low self worth:

1. **We dream too small...or not at all.**
2. **We are constantly on our own case. Nothing is ever good enough and an unhealthy addiction to perfection takes root.**
3. **We hide from leadership rather than embrace it.**
4. **We are always second-guessing our decisions.**
5. **We mistrust our instincts, knowledge and skills.**
6. **We mistrust the support of others.**
7. **We lose perspective and make even small mistakes catastrophes.**
8. **We micromanage and spread tension and stress to others.**
9. **We are overly critical of others because we are so harsh with ourselves.**
10. **We find no satisfaction in a job well done.**

If that's not bad enough, consider **The Demons of the Imagination**, the parasites that prey on low self-worth! The Demons of the Imagination are the destructive voices that infect our self-talk. They are committed to undermining our leadership and capacity to manifest what has heart and meaning.

The Demons of the Imagination are devoted to keeping us small and robbing our dreams of their potency. They pounce at any sign of hesitation in the mind or heart, lurking at the edge of our doubts and uncertainties, the places of mistrust and shaken faith. When we get down on ourselves, the Demons get dirty.

The Demons thrive on self-pity. They feed on the stories of our defeats, wounds, humiliations and injustices at the hands of the world. The names of the seven Demons are:

I Don't Make a Difference

If we believe that we have no impact on other people or the world, we are already possessed by the first Demon. 'I Don't Make a Difference' is the inner dialogue of self-diminishment and a clever hiding place. Once we agree that we are powerless, we don't have to try. “What can one person really do?”, I Don't Make a Difference asks. “Especially someone like you?”

Other People Will Never Change

The second Demon convinces us that other people victimize us. If only poor character, bad behavior, inferior perspectives, and the self-interest of other people hadn't gotten in our way! “What's the use?” says this Demon. “Why bother trying when others don't?”

The Circumstances are Too Powerful

The third Demon's story is 'The Circumstances Are Too Powerful'. This Demon seeks to paralyze us through the power of the status quo. “What makes you think that things can ever change?” says the Demon. “They never have and they never will!”

Too Much to Do

The fourth Demon's work is to spread overwhelm. It attempts to convince us that life is too much to handle, that there is too much on our plate. 'There's Too Much To Do' looks for signs of fatigue and wavering commitment to gain its entry. “Do it tomorrow...when you are not as exhausted,” says a voice of friendly concern. “Or maybe next week, when you feel better?”

Insufficient Resources

This is the Demon that attempts to seduce us into believing that we don't have, or can't generate, the resources necessary to pursue what we really want to be doing, what has real fire and meaning. The lack of time, money, training, support or luck prevents us from following our heart. “Play it safe! Settle for less...” whispers the Demon. “Don't risk your security for a fantasy that you will never attain!”

Other Obligations

The Demon of Other Obligations recites all of the commitments that we currently have that seemingly interfere with pursuing what our heart is asking us to do. “Your family is depending on you...don't put them at risk! You have a mortgage! You have three kids!” Other Obligations shuts down possibility thinking that could lead to solutions about how to manage our current commitments and still find a way to follow our dreams.

It's Not Fair

The final Demon uses the voice of self-pity to undermine the will when things don't go our way, we suffer a loss, or we have our feelings hurt. “The game is rigged...” it extols. “Why play at all?” Angry, cynical and resigned, we turn away from our dreams convinced that life has betrayed us.

But there is good news.

When we become aware that the Demons require our cooperation to persist we begin to recognize that by building self-worth, they can be exorcized. By placing our allegiance to all of the positive attributes, we diminish the power that the Demons have over us.

Here are ten ways you can defeat The Demons of the Imagination

1. **Identify your positive gifts, talents, character qualities and contributions** to relationships, work, the community and the wider world. Find at least 10 attributes every week that you have successfully applied.
2. **Be open to positive feedback.** Many of us don't know how to accept a compliment. When one comes your way, receive it gracefully rather than dismissing or deflecting it.
3. **Seek out mentors and companions** who help you recognize your gifts and provide helpful coaching to improve your performance.
4. **Monitor your self-talk.** Make sure it is fair and balanced.
5. **Limit the self-destructive voices** of the Demons of the Imagination by limiting their airtime. Many of us allow them to broadcast 24/7. Give them 3 minutes maximum.
6. **Take a positive step everyday** towards a dream, aspiration or goal.
7. **Be creative when facing a problem or obstacle.** A defeatist attitude never creates a breakthrough. Looking at a problem from multiple perspectives usually yields results.
8. **Make your goals more important** than your fears or considerations.
9. **Allow yourself to learn.** Expect to make mistakes and new discoveries when you are trying new things or dealing with unfamiliar circumstances.
10. **Be compassionate** with yourself.