

# Dr. Sharon Melnick

## Shaping Your Self-Confidence

### PODCAST SHOWNOTES

Today's show is all about confidence. Over and over again, listeners tell me that they have issues related to self-worth, and so I wanted to take a step back from the specifics of physical health to focus on how your confidence plays into your happiness and success. Our guest today will explain how our confidence becomes our "emotional oxygen" and how you can quickly shift your self-image towards something more positive and productive.

Dr. Sharon Melnick is a leading authority on business psychology, stress resilience, and women's leadership. Her methods are informed by 10 years of research at Harvard Medical School and field tested by over 17,000 clients and training participants. As CEO of her firm Horizon Point Inc, Sharon Melnick, PhD is an internationally renowned speaker and sought-after trainer. She's the best-selling author of *Success Under Stress*, and she has a new book, *Confidence When It Counts*.

#### **Thank you for joining us, Dr. Melnick!**

#### **Few people are talking about confidence. Why is it so important?**

This is what makes you successful in business, likeable, happier, attractive, more productive – it's the number one thing that career women want to advance their careers. Though you need both, *confidence* is more important than competence when it comes to career advancement.

#### **What about people who are not career women or professionals?**

When you don't have confidence, you feel like you have less control in your life, and that activates your stress response.

Scientists estimate that the average person has about 60,000 thoughts a day. I've asked lots of women, "What percentage of your thoughts move you towards the confident image you want and what percentage of your thoughts move you further away?" Even if we take a very conservative estimate (70% positive/30% negative), that's still about 20,000 thoughts a day that move you away from the confident person we all want to be. All of those negative thoughts really add up!

#### **Why are we doing this to ourselves? We sound like our own worst enemies!**

Sometimes the ways that we try to become MORE confident actually keep us at our current levels. In order to have that next level success, you know you need to be more confident – you need to act from that place. Yet, if you criticize yourself, you don't have that rock-solid feeling inside. So, what will you do to get that confident feeling? You put your time and energy into managing other people's perceptions of you so you can feel better. You reach out, rather than within.

There are three basic patterns:

The first pattern is where you seek the approval of others. You put your attention into getting other people to think well of you so that they will validate and reassure you. Behaviors include doing lots of favors for people and asking people for their opinion rather than trusting yourself. The key is that you do these things in order to get that external validation and, in the end, this takes a lot of time and energy! The problem is that you *might* get the validation, but that feeling wears off quickly, and then you'll need to go back out and find other people to validate you. It's a vicious cycle.

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The second pattern is the opposite of that: Rather than seeking approval, you're actively seeking to avoid disapproval from those around you. Behaviors include staying quiet in meetings, not speaking up about your needs, and not asking for support.

The third pattern involves a repetitive loop of criticizing yourself and other people. For example, lots of women, after they finish a presentation, they focus on their flaws.

**I do this! I'll give a talk and then walk off stage and think about all of the things I didn't like. Then, even when I get back a pile of positive comment cards, I fixate on the *one* comment that wasn't positive.**

Of course! Here's the ironic part: Do you even trust this stranger's opinion? No! But that's what we do to ourselves. We focus on our flaws, and then we'll tell ourselves that we're just trying to improve ourselves. In the end, we're tearing down ourselves and the people around us.

#### **Why are we doing this to ourselves?**

As we grow up, we learn to see ourselves through the eyes of others. So it becomes important for us to "act perfect" so we can get that "emotional oxygen" – get the attention and praise that we love. Similarly, we work very hard to minimize any feelings of abandonment. This is hardwired within us. The problem is that this might be the only way that we might come to know ourselves. Later in life, we *know* in our minds that we're really good; people have praised us for our work! But it's confusing because all of that praise is external, and we don't feel it in our bones. We have an opportunity to turn our attention within ourselves and learn how to praise ourselves autonomously.

#### **This sounds like an area of your life that you always have to be working on...**

Hopefully, you can get to a point where you can just sort of stop yourself from going there in the first place. It's actually fairly easy to get started!

Let's start by addressing some incorrect advice that people often hear:

If you break up with your partner, what's the first thing you're going to do? You'll probably go out with your friends and talk about how great you are. The problem is that this is just external affirmation, and it's an endless cycle. So you need to figure out a way to find that "emotional oxygen" from within.

You've got to think "small game" versus "big game." The small game focuses on what you want and need right now. The big game is about doing the things that will bring you closer to the person you want to be! While going out might make you feel good in the moment, that's not going to actually bring you closer to the confident person you want to be in the end.

#### **I love it! You're amazing! What can we do today to shift our mindset? What's next?**

Remember that you have 60,000 thoughts a day to change your mindset. Decide who you want to be, and then work towards making every one of those thoughts serve the positive, confident image of yourself that you want.

**Of course, you can visit [www.sharonmelnick.com/dj](http://www.sharonmelnick.com/dj). Dr. Melnick has an audio training that will teach you how to be a better DJ of your own "Mental iPod".**

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#### Listener Question:

*JJ, Help! I've started and stopped your Virgin Diet over and over again. I just can't seem to get through it. What do I do?*

I'm going to take you back a couple of steps. Regardless of the diet, you have to determine the reason *why* you decided to start. If you don't think you're worthy, then you're going to sabotage yourself. And if you're having a hard time doing this for yourself, focus on your family. How will this decision to change your lifestyle impact them? You'll have more energy, better focus, and be more present.

The key ingredient is understanding why you're doing this in the first place. Focus on making the **WHY** big enough first, and then you'll be able to focus on the **HOW**.

Please review us on [Stitcher](#) and [iTunes](#). And, if you haven't already, SUBSCRIBE!

As always, remember:

**You are worthy. Dare to live a life that matters.**

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