

If you've ever grappled with self-trust, defaulting to indecision rather than committing to a choice, this show is for you.

A lack of self-trust can stem from past experiences, disappointments, or criticism that chip away at your confidence about your judgment.

Indecision, however, is a decision in itself—and one that can often lead to missed opportunities and regrets.

What's important to note here is what's at the heart of this reluctance: it's FEAR. And that fear often stems from past experiences where trust was broken, whether by others or by yourself.

The Neuroscience of Self-Trust and Fear

Research shows that fear and uncertainty activate the amygdala, the brain's alarm system.

The amygdala processes perceived threats and can initiate a “fight, flight, or freeze” response. For those who've experienced betrayal or criticism, the amygdala may become overly active, making it difficult to make clear, confident decisions.

Dr. Bessel van der Kolk, a leader in trauma research, suggests that these responses **can cause people to feel unsafe in their own minds and bodies, impacting their trust in themselves.**

Further research points to the prefrontal cortex, the area responsible for planning, rational decision-making, and moderating social behavior. When the amygdala is highly active due to past fear, the prefrontal cortex struggles to regulate emotional responses, making rational decision-making even more challenging.

How Fear Leads to Indecision

When we fear making the wrong choice, we're more likely to choose indecision, hoping circumstances will "just work out." But not making a decision is, in fact, a choice—a passive one.

Dr. Timothy Pynchyl, a researcher in the psychology of procrastination, notes that **indecision is often a way of avoiding discomfort.** Rather than face the potential fear of making a "wrong" choice, we avoid making any choice, which can lead to feelings of powerlessness.

But that is no way to live...let's take a look at how we can build self trust and start becoming the women we're called to be.

Building Self-Trust Again: Research-Based Remedies

1. Mindfulness and Awareness Training

Practicing mindfulness helps regulate the amygdala's response to fear. Studies published in *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* show that mindfulness can reduce amygdala activity, allowing the prefrontal cortex to engage more fully in decision-making.

Start with short, daily mindfulness practices—this helps you observe your emotions without judgment, fostering a sense of safety in your internal environment. Say things like, “I am noticing that I feel...or This might seem hard, but I can do hard things.”

2. Small Decisions to Build Confidence

Start with small, low-stakes decisions. Little things like choosing something more healthy off a menu, saying let me think about it instead of always saying yes and resenting it later...these small things strengthen your prefrontal cortex!

Further, the research suggests that successful, confident decision-making can become a habit. Each small decision you make reinforces your self-trust, creating a feedback loop of positive experiences that gradually rewires the brain to approach larger decisions with more confidence.

3. Self-Compassion Practices

Many people with trust issues are highly self-critical, which can undermine confidence.

Dr. Kristin Neff, a pioneer in self-compassion research, has shown that self-compassion **can alleviate fear and encourage resilience.**

Practicing self-compassion involves talking to yourself kindly, forgiving past mistakes, and encouraging yourself as you would a friend. This approach can help rebuild self-trust by creating a nurturing internal environment where risk-taking and growth are possible.

4. Visualization Techniques

Neuroscience shows that the brain doesn't distinguish much between visualization and actual experience—remember the concert pianist we've talked so much about?

Visualize yourself making confident decisions and the positive outcomes that follow. This primes the brain to associate decision-making with success rather than fear. Studies on visualization, like those by sports psychologist Dr. Jim Afremow, show that seeing oneself succeed can foster real-life confidence. Michael Phelps

spoke about this when asked about all the gold medals he won in the Olympics. He said he could see himself touching the side of the pool before anyone else. There was a number of things he did in his visualization process, but this was how he'd finish.

5. Reframing Failure as Feedback

Cognitive-behavioral research suggests that reframing experiences of failure as opportunities for learning, rather than signs of personal inadequacy, is powerful for building resilience.

By seeing each decision as a chance to grow, you remove some of the fear associated with making the “wrong” choice. And there’s chemistry involved to help as this will activate dopamine pathways that encourage repeat behaviors, creating a more positive outlook on risk-taking.

Moving Forward with Confidence

Rebuilding self-trust is a process, but one that leads to profound personal freedom.

Each time you decide, **you affirm your ability** to handle life’s outcomes, fostering inner resilience and confidence.

When you understand that fear of decision-making is simply a learned response, you can actively work to change it, opening up new pathways for growth, fulfillment, and self-empowerment.

By gradually challenging fear with positive action and nurturing your relationship with yourself, you'll find that self-trust becomes second nature, opening the door to a life shaped by your own choices and convictions, not by the lingering fears of the past, never again defaulting to fear!