



Mike Crawford, CPA, is the retired Chairman of Crawford & Associates, P.C., an Oklahoma City-based CPA firm dedicated to state and local government accounting and consulting. Crawford is a past president of the Oklahoma Society of CPAs, an inductee into the Oklahoma Accounting Hall of Fame, the 2011 recipient of the OSCPA Public Service Award and is past vice chairman of the Governmental Accounting Standards Advisory Council. Over the past 30 years, he has authored a number of professional guides, practice aids and articles on topics of governmental accounting, auditing and ethics.

# 10 Principles for a Happy Life and Career

## Principle 2: Confidence

By Michael A. Crawford, CPA

*Editor's Note: Mike Crawford has, by even his own accounts, had a successful and happy career as a CPA in Oklahoma. He says there are 10 basic principles that have guided him through a joyful life and a fulfilling career. In this and future issues of CPAFOCUS, Crawford shares that idea and those principles.*

**N**o one can make you feel inferior without your consent.” - Eleanor Roosevelt

Confidence breeds energy and enthusiasm—or is it the other way around? I’m not sure, I just know they are intertwined and essential to a successful and happy life. Confidence doesn’t remove all fear and doubt from our lives, but it does offer the chance to get comfortable with fear and to develop the courage and freedom to manage it.

Confidence comes from an internal recognition and expression of our capabilities and self-respect. However, understand there is a fine line between confidence and arrogance. While confident people and the arrogant people have similar feelings of abilities and self-regard, the confident person quietly and internally channels his or her feelings, while the arrogant person feels the need to boldly and brashly direct these feelings at others.

Common traits among the confident include:

- Listening and not doing all the speaking; the words and opinions of others matter and are sought out;
- Not being afraid to be wrong or make mistakes; and when mistakes are made, there is no attempt to blame others;

- Not constantly seeking recognition and attention, and being happy when others receive it; and
- Feeling comfortable using humor to lighten the environment when appropriate.

In the last 30 years, I’ve been blessed with opportunities to professionally speak across the U.S. and in some other countries. However, I wasn’t born with the confidence to be a good public speaker. For me, the crossover to effective public speaking came when I realized that I was well-prepared and knew as much or more about my topic than my audience. This realization gave me the freedom and confidence to deliver my message in an understandable and entertaining way. Even when my dress pants embarrassingly fell to my ankles while speaking to a crowd of 250 CPAs in Missouri one year, my confidence wasn’t shaken. I enjoyed a good laugh with my audience and continued on with determination and confidence. No public speaker can be effective without self-confidence and comfort with their topic and their audience.

Self-confidence also requires us to possess a mindset where we are able to accept what other people think and say about us, regardless of how pleasant or unpleasant it may be, with the recognition that we can only do our best and cannot control what others think.

Feel good about yourself. What other people think about you is really none of your business. ☺