

Laura Cox K.:

Claire Shipman is the co-author of the Confidence Code and, more recently, the Confidence Code for Girls. Both books look at where confidence comes from and how we can actually build it. Claire is also the co-author of Womenomics: Write Your Own Rules for Success. Womenomics and the Confidence Code have both been New York Times bestsellers, and I suspect the Confidence Code for Girls isn't far behind. Claire is a former television journalist at ABC, NBC, and CNN, she holds undergraduate and graduate degrees from Columbia University.

Laura Cox K.:

Claire, welcome to She Said/She Said.

Claire Shipman:

Thank you for having me. I'm thrilled.

Laura Cox K.:

We are so delighted to have you, and I am a big, big fan of both the Confidence Code and the Confidence Code for Girls but really the Confidence Code and have used it in leadership seminars and a course that I teach. I mean, it really is fantastic. And I sort of felt like it broke new ground.

Claire Shipman:

Well, that's so flattering. I'm learning to accept compliments. It's parts of the Confidence Code.

Laura Cox K.:

It's hard to do.

Claire Shipman:

Thank you. I know, I appreciate that. Yes.

Laura Cox K.:

You're welcome. You're very welcome. So why the focus on confidence. How did this come about?

Claire Shipman:

Katty and I had written a book a few years before the Confidence Code about women and work. And one of the things we were struck by, and really, we focused on all this great data that I'm sure you know but, you know, the more women at the top of companies, the more money they ... But we were struck by what we were finding when we would interview a lot of women who looked incredibly successful to us. And they would say things like, "I'm about to get a promotion, and I'm not sure I'm ready." "My bosses want me to do this, I don't think I'm qualified." "I'm a fraud." You're like, "What?"

Claire Shipman:

Because, of course, Katty and I thought, "Well, we have these thoughts, but we thought we were the only ones to have these thoughts." And we just-

Laura Cox K.:

And these are really successful people-

Claire Shipman:

Really successful people.

Laura Cox K.:

... that you're talking about.

Claire Shipman:

People to us who looked like, just there would be no question they were confident and then so-

Laura Cox K.:

Give me an example. Like who?

Claire Shipman:

There was a woman who was working as a senior executive at a car company in Detroit, a top manager, a woman in New York who's a fairly senior investment banker. People who'd achieved the traditional milestones, especially in the corporate world that always seemed to us hard to achieve. And we just thought, we need to do digging and find out is this anecdotal or is there something really going here? Is there actually a gap?

Claire Shipman:

And when we started digging and we found a lot of the data, that's when we knew, "Wow, this is really something worth exploring."

Laura Cox K.:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). What was the most surprising part of this? Obvious you knew you had something, but as you began to dig into the data, what surprised you most?

Claire Shipman:

A couple of things. I think one, what surprised us was the regularity with which women underestimate themselves. One, I remember one professor said to us when she wants to give her graduate students some sort of study to conduct, just for experience, and she knows what the result will be, she sends them out to give men and women a scientific reasoning test. You ask the women how they've performed. They every time underestimate how they performed. The men routinely overestimate how they've performed. And this skewing where the women underestimate and the men overestimate, and that's been studied, too, this overconfidence on the part of men, really struck us that this was so clear.

Claire Shipman:

And I think the other thing that struck us was the notion that we found with the studies of one professor at Berkeley, Cameron Anderson, that in many cases, confidence is as important as competence in terms of success in the workplace. And that kind of shocked us at first, and we thought it was sort of horrible 'cause women, we're all about being competent. But then we started to understand that it's a skill.

Confidence can be viewed as a skill, and we just thought it was important for women to understand that.

Laura Cox K.:

Another question about the differences between men and women and the way that this information's sort of interpreted, how much of it is how we process versus there really being a difference in terms of how confident we are?

Claire Shipman:

We got heavily into the science for our adult book because there is so much biology now, genetics, neuroscience in terms of the science of our personalities. So we set out saying, "Do men have a confidence gene that women don't have?" basically which we didn't think we would find. We did find that a large part of confidence is genetic, which we thought was interesting, slightly frightening, but what we found is that ... And there's not a difference in terms of the genetics with men and women, right? So that the genes they know affect confidence are evenly distributed in terms of gender, but what we did find is the way our brains function can be quite different. And I think that's, I guess ...

Claire Shipman:

The one scientist who studies confidence in rats at Cold Spring Harbor was fascinating. And we really tried to drill down into this with him. And he explained. So it's not that men look at risks and say, "That's a crazy risk. I'm gonna take it. I just feel ..." It's literally that the way they're processing that risk is different than the way we are. So what I came to understand is that very often, women view the world around us and assess the risks around us in a very different way. And that can lead to a feeling of less confidence.

Laura Cox K.:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). I loved reading about you and Katty, Katty Kay, your co-worker write in the Confidence Code about going through this process of having your own DNA tested. And to be clear, for those who don't know, you're both incredibly successful accomplished women, very accomplished in journalism. How could you not be confident? And yet, what did you find out?

Claire Shipman:

That we're basket cases in terms of genetic confidence. We of course thought, "Oh, this will be great gimmick. Let's just get our genes tested." And then we got the results back, and we thought, "Oh no, we failed the test. We're imperfect." But it helped us to realize the other part of the confidence that's so incredible which is that of course part of it may be hereditary but part of it's volitional. Part of it we do create. And we realized that we had created it over the course of our lifetime. It's like we still lack confidence, we talk about it on the book. I'm a perfectionist, I can inhibit confidence. So we both lack confidence still in a lot of ways. And we talk about it in the book. I'm a perfectionist, and that can inhibit confidence. Katty sometimes confesses to me she thinks she's successful because of her British accent. Just crazy things. But-

Laura Cox K.:

It's nice to have a British accent.

Claire Shipman:

Yes. It does help, okay. That's fair.

Laura Cox K.:

It doesn't hurt anything.

Claire Shipman:

That's fair. But what we found is when you look at the field of neuroscience and brain plasticity now, what they're realizing, we really can rewire our brains even at 30, 40, 50. And when we change our thinking habits, we are in the process of rewiring our brains. So when we're telling you you can build more confidence, you can almost literally see that happen. And I think that's what got us through that depressing news about our genetics.

Laura Cox K.:

Yeah. Well, even given those results, it doesn't seem to have held either of you back particularly, right? You're both very successful accomplished people. So how would you have been different do you think?

Claire Shipman:

That's a great question. And it gets to the heart of this issue which I talked about earlier which is that there are all these successful women out there who don't sound confident so does it matter? I think we would still argue yes because I think I can look in certain areas of my life and realize I would have done more things, I would have done different things had I not been so focused on being right all the time and being risk averse. I think I might have been a little more creative, I probably would have branched out in different ways. And I think that's one area that even when women are successful, we don't know how much more successful we might have been or happy with what we're doing. But the other part of it really is it's just hard to feel a lack of confidence. It's not fun to process things that way, so I think then it has to do with our inner lives and what we're experiencing. And it's just not obviously as fulfilling to experience success when we doubt ourselves all the time.

Laura Cox K.:

Yeah, absolutely. So let's dig into this notion of brain plasticity. I love the idea of this because it really is about you being in the driver's seat. Right? You have control to some degree-

Claire Shipman:

You do.

Laura Cox K.:

... over how this works. So talk a little bit about what that means and ways that people can sort of make themselves more confident.

Claire Shipman:

We were really focused on, "All right, what's the formula for confidence? How do we break it down?" And as best as we could discover, the formula is simple. But that doesn't mean it's easy. So it really has to do with taking risks, doing some failing, persevering, mastering something ultimately, and it's this

cycle. So it's really interesting, actually. One professor explained to us confidence actually is what turns our thoughts into action. So confidence isn't just, "I feel great about myself." That's self-esteem. "I feel I'm a valid human being, I should be here." Confidence is, "I'm thinking about doing something," and then that's the stuff that lets us actually then go do it, which involves a little bit of a risk. Right? So confidence greases the wheels, as it were. But it's a virtuous circle, so doing creates more confidence. So once you get going, you're building up a stockpile.

Claire Shipman:

So risk-taking and action, those things can be really hard for all of us. I think for a lot of women, risk-taking will look different for everybody. We talked to a lot of women for whom, of course, speaking up in meetings is a big risk. That's always an issue. Some people are more introverts than others. Some women feel rightly more intimidated when they're the only woman in a room and they have to speak up. And there's a lot of data about that.

Claire Shipman:

Some women just have trouble. We talked to successful women who are senior executives. One partner at a law firm said, "I just have trouble making decisions every day because I think every decision needs to be 100% perfect. And then I refuse to make them, and I have a hundred people waiting for me." And she said she had to create a rule for herself that 90% of her decisions would be good, 10% would be wrong. And she just would have to deal with the fallout. But that mental trick lets her just decide and move on. So sometimes it's about being less perfectionistic. And I think you have to identify where is it that you're unwilling to take risks in life? And then start small and allow yourself to start to get used to failing, essentially.

Laura Cox K.:

Do you think it changes over time? This woman who's very senior in a law firm clearly has had to make a lot of decisions over the course of her career. So did it become more difficult for her? Is it something that maybe happens at different ... Is there different peaks and valleys over the course of your lifetime? What do you think about that?

Claire Shipman:

What we found is that we did a confidence quiz when we released our adult book. We created a quiz online, and an enormous number of women took it. We created it with a couple of academics, and I don't think they've ever seen this amount of data. They thought they'd get a thousand people, and I think 50,000 people took the quiz or something.

Laura Cox K.:

Oh, fantastic.

Claire Shipman:

So it's crazy.

Laura Cox K.:

We used it the last-

Claire Shipman:

Great.

Laura Cox K.:

... [crosstalk 00:12:19] too.

Claire Shipman:

and we found that in general, women's confidence does slightly grow over time. There's this low at puberty, which is why we wrote the girl's book, but then it slightly grows over time. I think showing that women do learn a lot, right? We learn eventually to take risks, ideally, and to move through it. But there is also situational confidence, and I think for a lot of women, there are periods in their lives when they have troughs. For a lot of women, it might be taking time out of the workplace, trying to get back in where you just don't feel that you've had that practice again, and a lot of it really does come down just the experiencing over and over and the willingness to put yourself out there.

Claire Shipman:

We were talking to a woman the other day who said, "Well, we want to create all these programs, but so many women think they almost need to go back and get a master's degree before they can go back to work," because they want a credential because they're not confident enough that what they know is gonna work.

Laura Cox K.:

It's so fascinating. Okay. Let's pivot and talk about the Confidence Code for Girls. As you thought about this, how much ... So you're the mother of two children. You have a son who's older and a daughter who's younger.

Claire Shipman:

Yes.

Laura Cox K.:

How much did your experience with your daughter enter into your desire to write about confidence for younger girls?

Claire Shipman:

It's funny. It really was not the driving force. Although, I've learned so much from it. We were thinking, "What do we want to do next?" Because the book did really well, and we thought about other things for adult women, but we really got fixated on this notion that confidence drops pretty severely for girls at puberty. And why that is and ... Just for example, girls tend to drop out of competitive sports at six times the rate boys do. And competitive sports is one of the few things that's been shown to clearly give people a boost in their careers. Other things would, too, but competitive sports is just a kind of a no-brainer.

Claire Shipman:

So we were just like, "What if we could get in there at that moment and help girls understand the power of risk-taking and failure and help them avoid the trap of perfectionism?" And I was seeing some of that with my daughter, but oddly, she's a real tomboy, and so for a while, I thought, "Oh, I'm immune to this, 'cause she's a tomboy." Well, boy, was I wrong. She's a tomboy, but she has all of the perfectionism, she has hall ... And this all started pouring out as I was writing the book. It's like, "Oh, my gosh." She knows she ... "I'm not gonna do debate. I'm no good at it. I have no idea how to do it." Just this ... And I would look at my son, he'd be like, "Yeah, mom. I got it. I'm fine."

Claire Shipman:

And literally at one point he said to me, it was the third or fourth test in middle school that he'd gotten backwards, like, "I did so well." He'd get a B-, C+ or something. He's like, "I've noticed that I tend to think I'm always gonna do better than I do. And the girls in my classroom always worried, and they do really well." And I said, "Oh, interesting." You know.

Laura Cox K.:

How do you begin to socialize these or sort of at what age do you begin to socialize these topics with your kids? With your female children in particular but really with both kids?

Claire Shipman:

Well, they're a little ... For me, it's hard 'cause they're sick of hearing me. "If you say the word research one more time, stop." I feel like I'd probably turn them off of this notion just by being involved myself. But I think it's tricky with girls because Katty and I have realized, and I we've been talking to girls since the book came out.

Laura Cox K.:

And she also has a daughter?

Claire Shipman:

She has two daughters, one-

Laura Cox K.:

Two daughters.

Claire Shipman:

... who just graduated from college and one who's 12. And you don't want, we don't want girls to think, "Oh, my gosh. Some gloomy horrible thing's approaching, and we're all gonna catch the no-confidence disease," right? And so instead what we've tried to do is talk to them about the benefits of risk-taking and the exciting parts of it. And let them see there's an alternative to having to be the good girl and get everything right all of the time and understand why that quest for perfectionism I think is just not worth it. And so we try and have casual conversations about it. It's hard. Kids want to listen when they want to listen and otherwise not at all.

Laura Cox K.:

Yeah, yeah. But it's so interesting how early these thoughts seem to trickle in. Our daughter is only eight years old, and I see this tendency toward perfectionism already, and I see this tendency toward, "Well, maybe I just won't do that." She's eight.

Claire Shipman:

Right.

Laura Cox K.:

And she's not too far from puberty but far enough that I'm a little surprised that she's already beginning to think along these terms. So-

Claire Shipman:

It's actually for eight to 12-year-old girls.

Laura Cox K.:

Okay.

Claire Shipman:

So we picked that age because it's really at eight is when we start to see the drop happen. And we did a poll with this great company, Ypulse, and they're used to talking to parents and their kids and so it's done in a really sophisticated way. We found so many interesting things. One, that parents all over the place like you get shocked when they see their daughters who at age six, seven are wildly confident. And where does this hesitation come from? Also interestingly that dads are better at spotting a lack of confidence in their daughters often than moms.

Laura Cox K.:

Wow.

Claire Shipman:

And we think, and the pollster thinks it's because it's even stranger for dads to see ... They don't recognize that ... Women, we often recognize those feelings and we think, "Oh, yeah. That does seem risky." And so we're not viewing the behavior often as odd.

Laura Cox K.:

It's so normal to us.

Claire Shipman:

Yes. It's normal, and we kind of think, "Oh, that's not great," but we also understand it because we went through it. And so dad's, I think, can be a real asset in this if they can get engaged on it and kind of just challenge your daughters to do things that are outside of their comfort zone. And the failure has to be just, "Who cares?"

Laura Cox K.:

Yeah. Let's talk about how you retooled the Confidence Code, turned it into the Confidence Code for Girls because the content is there, but it's structured differently, that quiz.

Claire Shipman:

Yes.

Laura Cox K.:

So talk a little bit about how you structured the book and how difficult was that?

Claire Shipman:

It was harder than we thought. I think our publisher thought, "Oh, well, just boom, turn it around," and of course we thought, being slightly perfectionistic, said, "Well, no, we want the girls to actually like this book. We don't want to just sell it to the parents, we want girls to not be bored stiff." So we worked with some cognitive behavioral therapists, we actually worked with a writer who's written for tweens before, too, to just help us with the voice. But what we realized is what really engages kids at this age is quizzes, scenarios. Here's the scenario where so and so and the sleepover happens and which is the confident choice? So we have a lot of those sorts of things and less expository, "Let us tell you about confidence, kids. And here's what you should know." And so we tried that, it's illustrated, we have graphic novel panels because we think those are a great way to lay out scenario for girls, too.

Claire Shipman:

And then we have stories of real girls who have done confidence things but not girls like Malala, who are awesome but just out of reach for all ... You know, my 13-year-old, it's like, "You know, am I really gonna do that?" But we have girls who are trying to box in a headscarf or who campaigned to have free tampons in a girl's locker room or just things that are accessible and then help them see what they might be able to do.

Laura Cox K.:

Yeah. What are the most important takeaways for parents related to raising their daughters and to some extent maybe their sons?

Claire Shipman:

So I think it's really tricky because I think we live in a culture right now that is so pressurized. And especially, as you'll see with your kids, the whole sort of getting good grades, getting into college. And we are literally preaching anti-perfectionism and so that's at odds with everything has to be perfect, everything ... And so I think for parents to understand that it's very easy to give into this get good grades, do everything right all the time, but that for girls especially it can be just a horrible kind of disease. Because they're not figuring out who they are, they're not learning to fail and take risks. And the fact of the matter is the standards in the workplace are utterly different.

Claire Shipman:

We were just writing a piece about it for the Atlantic, and it feels to me like a big bait and switch that we have this educational system, parents, teachers who are all sort of right up through college it's just do well, do well, do well, do perfectly, please everybody, do everything just right, don't fail. Then you're in the workplace, and guess out? Oh, it's totally different. Take risks, fail, keep going. And girls have

internalized all this stuff. And it's not what they need. And boys, of course, try as they might, haven't really internalized it because they just can't do it as well. So they've naturally learned along the way to fail and mess-up and they've built confidence.

Laura Cox K.:

I often feel like the terminology should be you need sort of different words for perfection and failure. Perfection's really a bad thing. Failure's actually really a good thing.

Claire Shipman:

Right.

Laura Cox K.:

And yet, the words that you're conditioned to sort of strive for perfection and avoid failure, it's completely the reverse.

Claire Shipman:

We thought about that, too, 'cause some people said to us, "Don't use the word failure because it's so negative. It's not failure." I said, "I know, but it's just, it's a shorthand people understand." Because girls especially, at this age, are so prone to the melodrama and the, "Oh, my God. They're so awful. It's a complete fail," and they understand it and the drama of it. And the more they can see that you just recover and you move on ... I think for me as a parent what's great about it is it's liberating. If you can know as your child is striking out at bat for the 10th time or bringing home a bad grade or a fight with a friend and they move through it, your first instinct is to suffer for them and then fix it. But if you can also tell yourself, "Oh, God, they're learning such an important lesson right now," it helps you get through it, too.

Laura Cox K.:

It's so hard to be a parent. So hard to do that.

Claire Shipman:

It's the hardest thing.

Laura Cox K.:

Oh, my goodness.

Claire Shipman:

It's the hardest thing.

Laura Cox K.:

It's really hard.

Claire Shipman:

Yeah.

Laura Cox K.:

Now that you have this incredible knowledge and perspective having studied this topic, how do you think your career might have been different?

Claire Shipman:

That's so interesting. It is hard to think back on it and pick out what I might have done differently. I've always liked telling stories, so I'm happy I ended up in journalism. And I give this example a lot in speeches that when I think about how do I lack confidence? For years when I was on political talk shows, I was often the only woman on a panel, say, on the George Stephanopoulos Show. And I always had this sense that I was talking less than the male panelists. And I went back before our first book came out and I measured. I had an intern help me just measure the talk time, and I had on average talked 30% less than the men.

Laura Cox K.:

No kidding.

Claire Shipman:

Largely because I felt I had to only say exactly what was right, what I had prepared for, only answered the question. I wasn't gonna answer George's question and then say something else I might want to say, right? That would be presumptuous, right? But the men were just talking all over the place. And I realized that was a metaphor for me for what did I hold myself back from? Was it different sorts of pieces? Different sorts of reporting? I agonized for a long time for almost a year about moving on from the White House beat maybe I would have moved ... I think there are a lot of things that I might have pursued that might not have been radically different but certainly would have made me feel calmer and less anxious all the time with more confidence.

Laura Cox K.:

As you think big picture about your career, about these two, three, actually, amazing books that you've written, what impact do you hope all of this will have on others and on the world?

Claire Shipman:

I have to try not to just crumple up in a ball and say, "What? These little books?" So hard. I still find it hard when people come up to me and say, "Your book really helped me." I literally break into a sweat where I'm like, "What? Really? What? I think I'll go hide under my covers."

Laura Cox K.:

You need to just accept this. They really are great books.

Claire Shipman:

It's hard. I guess I like the idea of starting a conversation. So I'm a really not a black and white person, and I love throwing this out there but understanding there's more to learn. Did we get every single point right in the book? Probably not. Is there more to know especially about boys? Absolutely. And I just hope people will start to look at this and think about ... I guess especially in terms of confidence in the way we raise girls, what could we be doing differently on the social, emotional education front? 'Cause I really do think, to be very concrete, that the pressure on kids these days and the pressure to succeed

and do it in a way that just allows for almost no failure, for boys and girls, by the way, is really unhealthy. And I think if we could understand how to build resilience and confidence and we made that more of a focus than getting everything right on the test, we'd be raising a much stronger generation of kids.

Claire Shipman:

Other thing I hope is that we get a lot more women running things. That's my long-term goal because-

Laura Cox K.:

Amen.

Claire Shipman:

Yes. I think the more women in charge, the better world we're gonna have.

Laura Cox K.:

Let's talk about that long-term goal. What's next? Are you focused on what's next? What are you working on currently?

Claire Shipman:

We are just talking about that. The book only came out six weeks ago, so we're still thinking about this book and ... We want to get this book ideally into schools. We think it would be a useful tool. But we're thinking about is there some way we could support something like Running Start, this great organization that trains young women to run for office, and could we help with that at a even younger age and start to get girls more confident in their own voices?

Claire Shipman:

I've been thinking a lot about boys. I think boys right now need a lot of help and guidance given everything that's happening. I don't think they knew what's expected of them. They don't talk about their feelings as much, so I'd love to see a focus on that. I don't know whether that's us or not, but we'll mulling.

Laura Cox K.:

That's fantastic. In the Confidence Code for Girls, one of the great exercises, at least I thought it was one of the great exercises, is to write down your top five risks. So five risks. They're not like jumping off of a cliff necessarily but smart risk that you might take. What about for you? What are five risks for you as you think about some of these great questions?

Claire Shipman:

That's a great question in general. I am pretty cautious even though I've written these books, and I've tried to learn from it. It felt risky to me to write a book in the first place. It felt very risky to me to have the audacity to write a book for girls. We're starting to speak at schools, that feels incredibly risky to me 'cause I kept thinking, "How am I qualified to do this?" I guess thinking about whether we start some sort of organization, that would feel like a risk to me. Could I do that? I'm an introvert and so there's a lot that feels risky to me about starting something and leading it and trying to figure out how to deal with that. So I think that's something I'm trying to wrestle with a little bit.

Laura Cox K.:

How did your collaboration with Katty come about in the first place and what made you good collaborators?

Claire Shipman:

I think, one, it's fun to work with somebody. I feel so lucky we did this together. I don't know that I would have had not just the nerve but I don't know that I ever would have turned in a manuscript because of course I'm also a procrastinator. So we work well together because Katty is not a procrastinator, so I'd be the one saying, "Well, but we really need the perfect thesis." And she'd say, "Okay, I'm done with chapter one, and I'm moving onto chapter three." And I'd say, "What? Oh, my gosh!" Then I would feel I had to jump into action, and we just had a great back and forth that way that I think kept things moving forward.

Claire Shipman:

Katty and I almost immediately after we first met, we were at a cocktail party, and we both were comparing notes about how we loved our TV jobs but basically just were always hoping for days off or day when we weren't called to work and that didn't have to go to work the next day. And we realized, we were like, "God, are we the only two TV journalists who want less time on television and we want to be doing something else, too?" So I think when we had this idea about the way we worked and the way we tried to juggle things with kid, which was our first book, it just seemed very natural. And we thought, "Okay, let's try this. Who knows?" And it's been a great partnership. Really fun.

Laura Cox K.:

Yeah. You seem very similar in many respects in terms of the way that you approach the world and this notion of confidence. Your results, your DNA results were somewhat similar as well.

Claire Shipman:

Yes. That was-

Laura Cox K.:

Which is kind of interesting.

Claire Shipman:

That was interesting because I wouldn't have thought that. I assumed Katty had super confident genes. And I thought, "Oh, I'll be the anxious one." But we both had a really similar profile. And it's just ... But temperamentally, I think it helps when you have a partner because number one, it means I'm not obsessing with my husband about stuff which saves our marriage, which is really useful. And it just keeps you motivated.

Laura Cox K.:

One thing that I think is so curious is the fact that you have had a successful career. There must have been things that you inherently were doing to boost your confidence that parallels with the research that you found. Have you thought about what it was, even though you felt under confident, your DNA says you may not have been the most confident person in the room, but clearly, you were putting one foot in front of the other and you continued to move forward.

Claire Shipman:

I know, I do think about that. My sister said to me at one point when, maybe it was when our second book came out. I can't remember if it was our second or first, and we were talking about rule-breaking, something in the book, and I remember she stood up and submitted a test, and she's like, "Well, that's you. You've always broken the rules." And I thought, "I have?" I didn't realize that and so maybe ... I do think there's part of me that was driven and that I haven't been worried about convention so much. And I think that's helped. That I have had a sense I can do things. I think the reason I think I felt less than confident has to do a lot with this perfectionism and this feeling that I'm always falling short. I'm capable but I could be doing it a hundred times better. And so I think that's just limiting. I think that the experience of just getting out and doing things and trying them I have certainly learned confidence doing that.

Claire Shipman:

And I also had, you know, in a lot of ways, I think ... We didn't grow up with a lot of money, I had to work in high school if I wanted to buy a new sweater. So some of just the life stuff, when you have those experiences, that does teach you confidence, right? Because you're just being handed these opportunities.

Laura Cox K.:

Yeah, maybe a little fear of failure perhaps, too.

Claire Shipman:

Yes. Definitely.

Laura Cox K.:

Interesting. Anything I've missed? Any big-

Claire Shipman:

This has been so great.

Laura Cox K.:

... big topics?

Claire Shipman:

I think that one thing that a lot of people ask about with kids and girls, especially, is social media and what about confidence and social media? I would say that we tried to approach it in the book in a really realistic way. Social media's not gonna go away. But we tried to talk to girls about pitfalls to avoid and also how to use it in a positive way. But I think what parents should understand is that at puberty, in addition to feeling a confidence drop, this sense often of rumination and overthinking, that's when that kicks in. Right at puberty. So imagine these poor girls, they have no idea what's going on in their brains and they're overthinking everything. And what social media does on top of that is just doubles down on that.

Laura Cox K.:

Fuel, right?

Claire Shipman:

It's just fuel. And one teacher said to us at one point, "In the olden days, you'd have a fight with your friend at school, you'd come home, and there'd be a natural break." You could have eight hours without dealing with it. Not anymore. You can deal with it incessantly. And so we tried to give them some tools for knowing when to really get off of it and put it away. But also how you can find positive outlets on social media because there are great ways for kids to find people like them on social media to connect with them and say, "Look, it's a tool. Use it well." And I think if parents can support that, it's a better direction.

Laura Cox K.:

Yeah, that's great advice. We always ask everyone who comes on the podcast for a single piece of advice or a life hack. Something that's maybe your mantra or something that you share with other people. You've given us lots of advice already, but is there one single thing that's been your driving force or that's become your driving force or something that maybe [crosstalk 00:34:56]-

Claire Shipman:

You know, it's funny. We have a mantra with our book which is do more, which means risk more, think less, and be authentic. So we have a big part about being yourself is the way you're gonna be the most confidence. And I like that for shorthand, but I also like something some young girl came up to me and told me about a year ago at a conference. She said, "When I just think I'm not gonna do something, I do what my dad told me which is I do it afraid." So just-

Laura Cox K.:

Do it anyway.

Claire Shipman:

... do it afraid. In other words, don't fake it till you make it. Don't try to pretend you shouldn't be afraid. A lot of things in life are frightening but do what I think a lot men do which is just, "Ugh, it looks horrible, and I'm gonna do it anyway." So I've been using that a lot whether it comes to sending an email I find frightening where it's just like, "Oh, I don't like that, but I'm just gonna do it afraid." So I think recognize the feeling and move on.

Laura Cox K.:

Yeah. Claire, thank you.

Claire Shipman:

Oh, my pleasure.

Laura Cox K.:

This was awesome.

Claire Shipman:

This transcript was exported on Mar 07, 2021 - view latest version [here](#).

Thank you, Laura.

Laura Cox K.:

Such a pleasure to have you here today.

Claire Shipman:

Thank you, it was really fun.

Laura Cox K.:

Thank you. To learn more about Claire, go to our website at www.shesaidshesaidpodcast.com. There you'll find her bio, links to all of her terrific books, and much, much more. And if you're enjoying She Said/She Said, we want to hear from you. Please leave your feedback, please subscribe, you can find us on iTunes, Google Play, and Stitcher as well as on Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter. Thank you so much for listening.