

# A star guide to confidence

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A new book reveals how the rich and famous deal with feelings of insecurity. **Bridget Gallon** finds out how author **Caroline Goyder** discovered their secrets

Emma Thompson and Helen Mirren used to have panic attacks over being booked at... Famous actors confronted their confidence battles in Caroline Goyder's first self-help book *The Star Qualities* (Pine Mackenzie £17.99).

The voice and speech coach... "I realised I was saying the same things to the actors as the people doing a best man speech - send your voice to the back of the room, connect emotionally, get your imagination to fill the room as you tell the story, make it clear and vivid". Projection is as much mental as physical - it's the same whether you are Jack Low playing Hamlet or a best man telling a story about the friend you've known since you were four.

All the actors in the book struggle with nerves and self-confidence. Goyder says coming over well on a first date, big pitch or job interview is a similar skill set to an actor auditioning.

"People in normal life don't know about that skill set. They think actors are so confident, but this proves they are not. They just know where to pick up tips if they feel nervous."

Goyder wrote to scores of celebrities and interviewed them either over the phone or face to face. "They really embraced the book. They understood how nervous people get and talked about their moments of horror and rejection. They were very honest about the pressures of the job and how they dealt with that, and offered useful recommendations about what they do."

Goyder's book mingles their quotes with her own thoughts and handy boxes of advice titled 'your toolkit' in chapters ranging from enjoying parties, shining in interviews, standing out from the red, bouncing back and giving a speech.

It is common to refuse to give quotations and speeches at... "People think they cannot do anything and my job is to say 'you'll be fine'. If you are quiet and speak from the heart, you will always give a good performance."



Many of the actors advise accepting vulnerability, fear, and failure; learning to live with it and deal with it.

When Minnie Driver is rejected, she allows herself half an hour's screaming rage before sitting quietly, breathing and checking off everything good in her life.

Bill Nighy sometimes thinks of first night nerves as an illness. "I can act when ill so why not with nerves. It's legitimate to be afraid. It's a healthy normal reaction, only the mad are not afraid."

Goyder believes that because theatre is about highlighting human vulnerability and frailties "actors aren't afraid to own up to their own. It's what makes us human."

"An actor who can't cope with nerves or rejection can't work. Every single actor in that book has experienced huge rejection. Kate Winslet didn't get a single

job from 12-16, if she had given up when she was 15, she wouldn't have got an Oscar in February."

Goyder advises walking into an interview with "a bright optimism, seeing yourself in the job and thinking without arrogance 'you would be lucky to have me'."

She adds that "ease" is the big word for actors, as well as working hard at making things appear effortless.

"Don't put in too much effort or you look desperate. Less is more. The good performers make it look effortless because the skills are so deeply wired they don't have to think about it any more."

"Voices like Richard Burton's are really very trained. You can train your voice to a very fine degree. The best actors keep working on their voices. You can see it in their performances, there is music in a bowed instrument."

*The Star Qualities*  
Caroline Goyder

The secret to being confident, charming and successful lies in the world's leading actors



Caroline Goyder, whose book *The Star Qualities* features advice from celebrities like Emma Thompson, Kate Winslet and Bill Nighy.

## FACTFILE

□ Winslet talks about growing up believing she was stocky and unattractive and "on days when you think 'I'm fat, I'm ugly'" having to "trick" herself out of negative thoughts to get the confidence to enter a room. "It's 50 percent skill and 50 percent courage".

□ While Helen Mirren finds being in character liberating, walking into the first day's rehearsal or

She advises a relaxed open stance and lowering the voice to get attention.

□ Sarah Jessica Parker is grateful that she didn't listen to urgings to have cosmetic surgery when younger and admits while she tries not to absorb the hurtful things said about her, she cannot help dragging it around behind her.

□ Ewan McGregor advises

beforehand helps him. "The nearer you get to the performance the more horror stories you tell each other about 'dying'. It's like facing up to it by talking about it a lot. I dried up in *Guys and Girls* during a song, at the time it was a nightmare I went on and my mind went blank."

McGregor was completely rocked by the experience until a fellow performer told him...

## CAMPSTEAD BESTSELLERS

- WOLF HALL by Hilary Mantel, Harper Collins, \$18.99
- THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO by Stieg Larsson, Doubleday, \$16.99

- 6. THE OTHER HAND by Chris Cleave, Sceptre, \$7.99
- 7. THE ELEGANCE OF THE HEDGEHOG by Muriel Nazzari, Sceptre, \$7.99

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