

I BELIEVE I can DO IT.

“Break through that, all the judgement. Never let anything hold you back.”

⚡ **Jessica Cox**

In order to soar, we must believe in ourselves. Self-confidence gives students the resilience to keep learning, despite any obstacles that may appear. In this unit, students learn how self-belief can propel learning and growth.

★ Reading Passage: Jessica Cox

The first pilot without arms, Jessica Cox is an incredible inspiration whose self-confidence helped her achieve her dreams.

★ Short-Answer Activity: Learning to Fly

After reading Jessica’s story, students will reflect on her belief in herself and examine what they can take away from her example.

★ Small-Group Activity: Three Nice Things

In small groups, students will say three nice things about one another, and then themselves, building self-confidence and positive collaboration.

★ Whole-Class Activity: I Am, We Are

Students will create art that completes the statement “I am...” If possible, have magazines available from which students can cut out images to include in their art. Then, as a class, discover what qualities students have in common. Create a poster with common attributes.

★ Journal Prompt: Fearlessly Brave

To overcome fear, we must believe in ourselves. In this writing exercise, students will journal about one fear they have that they would like to overcome.

★ Growing Beyond

Ask students to interview an expert; this could be a family member, a friend, or an adult relative who the student feels is an expert at self-confidence. The student should record answers to these questions:

- ★ What does it mean to believe in yourself?
- ★ What is one thing you have achieved that you didn’t think you could do at first?
- ★ What did you say to yourself in order to achieve it?
- ★ What advice would you give me about believing in yourself?

Once interviews are complete, ask students to share their findings with the class and discuss some of the common threads in the responses.

Name: _____

Date: _____

JESSICA COX



Jessica Cox was born without arms, but she has learned how to fly. She is the first armless person to earn a pilot's license and fly solo.

How does someone without arms decide they are going to learn how to fly?

Jessica says it helps that when she was growing up, her parents encouraged her to do everything that other kids with arms could do. She learned to do every task with her feet—from drinking out of a glass and eating with a fork to coloring and playing.

For a while, she tried prosthetic arms. But they just never felt natural to her. After wearing them for 11 years, she decided to take them off. Jessica never looked back.

"I do not have arms, but that is not what determines what I can do," Jessica said.

Her belief in herself never wavered. She went to college and earned a degree in psychology and communication. She had already accomplished so much, but there was one fear left she wanted to overcome. Jessica had always had a fear of flying.

She believed she could get over this fear, and she wanted to try. For three years, she took flight lessons and learned how to fly a plane with her feet. Finally, she was a certified pilot. Jessica became the first person in aviation history to fly by using her feet.

And that is not all Jessica Cox can do. She trained in tae kwon do for many years and earned a black belt. In training, she also met her husband, Patrick. Jessica has also learned how to surf, scuba-dive, and play the piano.

For Jessica, it's not about whether she can do something—it's about how she can do it. She said, "I had to—out of necessity—develop that. Because that was how I had to approach everything. I was looking at it as: how can I do this with my feet instead?"

Today, Jessica is a motivational speaker who encourages people to overcome challenges and follow their dreams. She has unique experience that shows others that if you believe you can do it, there is really nothing to stop you from achieving the impossible.

Name: _____ Date: _____

LEARNING TO FLY

Directions: Thinking about Jessica's story, answer the questions below. Then find a partner and discuss your answers.

1. Jessica had the confidence to believe in herself, which allowed her to learn how to do everything with her feet instead of her hands. What are some adjectives you would use to describe Jessica?

2. How are you similar to or different from Jessica? Explain your answer.

3. Jessica's family was very supportive and encouraging. Who do you have in your life that helps you believe in yourself? How do they help you?

4. Sometimes, when we try to do something new, it can feel uncomfortable or scary. When you are learning a new skill, what do you say to yourself? Does that help you, or does it make it harder?

5. When Jessica earned her pilot's license, her dream came true. What is one thing you have achieved that you are proud of? How did you feel when it happened?

Name: _____ Date: _____

THREE NICE THINGS

Jessica Cox had a strong belief in herself—that she could do anything she put her mind to, despite her obstacles.

Even the most confident person sometimes doesn't see the good that others see. In this exercise, you will get a chance to hear some nice things that your classmates think about you.

Directions: Find two other students and form a group of three. Sit in a circle, facing one another. Take turns saying three nice things about one another. Each thing you say must be positive and true. Write what your partners say about you below. Then, at the bottom, say and write three nice things to yourself.

★ Three Nice Things from _____ to Me ★

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

★ Three Nice Things from _____ to Me ★

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

★ Three Nice Things from Me to Me ★

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

..... **I AM, WE ARE**

Directions: Who are you? What are the qualities that define you? Complete the sentence “I am...” with art. Draw, write, make a collage—it’s up to you. You could include skills you’ve mastered, qualities of your personality, or beliefs you have about yourself. Get creative!

When you’re done, discuss as a class and find what qualities you have in common with your classmates. Create a “We are...” poster together for your classroom that includes everything you have in common.

I am...

