



Navigating Your Way Through Self-Sabotage

Navigating Through Self-Sabotage As You Journey Towards Your Impossible Dream

Self-sabotage can be seen as a pattern of thoughts and behaviours you engage in, often without even knowing it, that creates obstacles to achieving your goals. The phrase itself is rather misleading as it does not actually mean what it appears to mean. Think of it more as an internal protective mechanism. You may not even be aware that you're engaging in self-sabotaging behaviour, as it's not something we do on purpose.

We all self-sabotage to some degree, and it's more common than most of us realise, creeping into every avenue of our lives, including the most pivotal ones. Regardless of how self-sabotage has affected each of us, there are ways to correct this and change course towards a healthier, more successful life.

THE SCENARIO AND THE QUESTION

You know that there are certain things that will heighten your stress and anxiety: coffee, lack of sleep, texting the crazy ex. We know this, but we will down that coffee, stay up and watch that movie, and we will send that text, all of which are going to make us feel just awful.

SO: Why did we not take a moment to think it through, to breathe, and wait for rational thought to kick in?

We know that to lose excess weight, all we need to do is maintain a healthy diet and exercise plan. Yet we will reach for that donut someone brought to the office, or we will miss our exercise class because we'd rather binge on Netflix all night.

SO: If we know what we need to do, why do we still do the opposite?

Your next promotion or salary increase is dependent on a crucial project deadline coming up. Despite all the reminders you have set, you still keep putting off the work, "I'll get to that later." The angel on the left shoulder that wants to succeed sets the reminders. The devil on the other shoulder is scared,



apprehensive maybe, of what moving forward in your career may mean, so has missed the deadline through procrastination.

SO: Everything you needed to succeed was right there at your fingertips, so why ensure failure when it was so easy to win?

WHY WE SELF-SABOTAGE

Self-sabotage can take many shapes and can develop for many reasons. The BIG thing you need to know: there is no one reason why it happens and it can happen to anyone. Having said that, perhaps the three biggest reasons why we may begin engaging in self-sabotaging behaviour are:

We don't believe in ourselves. If we always have that voice telling us we are not good enough, qualified enough, pretty enough, then how will we ever act in a way that is positive and that will bring success? If we don't believe in ourselves, then we will create situations, obstacles, and reasons to prevent us from succeeding.

We're afraid of what might happen if we DO succeed. Self-doubt makes us often believe that if we succeed, we will be exposed for the fraud we believe ourselves to be. Or we open ourselves up to be judged, rejected or lose people that are close to us when we begin to shine our light and be seen. This means that we will often find ways to hinder our progress and ultimately stop ourselves from achieving because we are just too afraid of the "consequences".

We are unwilling to expose our vulnerabilities. We may be aware of a skills gap or a weakness, but rather than admit this and ask someone for help or work on closing the gap, we pretend that we are okay and everything is under control. Eventually this catches up with us and we either underperform or stress ourselves out trying to keep up appearances.

SIGNS OF SELF-SABOTAGE

Self-sabotaging behaviour looks different from person to person because everyone is different and has their own unique path that brought them to this point. What we are giving you here are the more general signs that you can watch for:



Procrastination

We're afraid we might fail, so we procrastinate, we put things off, and ultimately self-fulfil our own prophecy, which then just feeds into the self-doubt we already have.

Chronic Lateness

It may seem like a silly one, but constantly showing up late to meetings or important functions is a sure fire way to damage your relationships. What this does is lead to a lack of trust and respect from friends, family, and colleagues.

Commitment Issues

When we're afraid to get hurt, of being emotionally vulnerable, it can lead to us purposefully damaging what could have otherwise been healthy relationships and friendships. Often, this, as an example, could see you cheating on a partner so that there is now a "valid" reason to walk away.

Overindulgence

Anything done in excess is often a sign of self-sabotage. Whether it's alcohol, drugs, eating everything in sight or binge watching Netflix, these are all things we do to create a momentary escape from the negative feelings we have. The thing is, though, it may be good in the moment and give you what you need for a minute, but these kinds of things set you back and derail you from achieving what you want to achieve.

If you're trying to figure out if you're self-sabotaging or not, ask yourself the following:

Is the way you are behaving in line with your goals and values?

REIGN IN YOUR SELF-SABOTAGE

If you have recognised that you are self-sabotaging, then there are various things you can do to try and overcome the behaviour. Just keep in mind: you won't change overnight, and you need to try and be patient with and kind to yourself through the process.



Understand the need and recognise the behaviour

Take some time and think.... What is it that you are afraid of? What is the real reason that you self-sabotage? Don't judge yourself, don't beat yourself up about it... Just try and understand what needs this self-sabotage is filling. How are you going to overcome it if you don't know the reason for its existence?

And no lies, this is going to be uncomfortable because it's going to open you up to feeling all kinds of emotions, but this is a necessary step if you really do want to work towards change.

Then, once you feel you understand the underlying reason behind why you sabotage yourself, take a moment again and think about what your self-sabotage behaviour actually is. What is it you do? Perhaps make a list, or ask close friends and family for their thoughts, whatever makes you most comfortable but which will still get you the answer. You can't very well change a behaviour if you don't know what you're actually doing.

Changing the narrative, action and behaviour

This is the fun part. Just kidding. This is going to require hard work, patience, and consistency. The cool thing, though, is that it really will be worth it in the end. What you now need to do is look at how you can create alternative, positive actions that will replace the self-sabotaging action. Implement changes in small, bite-sized chunks.

Let's say you need to reprogram how you speak to yourself, but you also procrastinate. Don't try and battle both of these all at once. Start by writing down what your goals are, and make sure they are meaningful goals. Then write down what the specific actions for each are. Decide on a starting point, and then take one step at a time down the list. Perhaps you decide to start with daily self-esteem building affirmations, then, when you feel ready, move on to your next action.

Bottom line:

- ▶ Recognise that you self-sabotage
- ▶ Understand why you do it
- ▶ Understand how you do it
- ▶ Identify the positive and healthy alternative actions you need to work towards instead



- ▶ Know what the goals are that you want to achieve and what the actions are for each
- ▶ Take it step by step and day by day
- ▶ Know that it's not going to be all sunshine and roses. There will be good and not so good days. And that's ok. You need to learn that it's ok and remind yourself that it's not because you are not worthy.
- ▶ Remember that you are worth it and this will help you on your journey towards achieving your impossible dreams.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

If you need help breaking free of self-sabotage then perhaps get in touch and let's chat about how I can help you reduce negative thought patterns that stand between you and your success. You are not alone, and at times, we all need help to move beyond what is holding us back so that we can be who we were meant to be and who we want to be.

