

# **STOP THE SELF-SABOTAGE**

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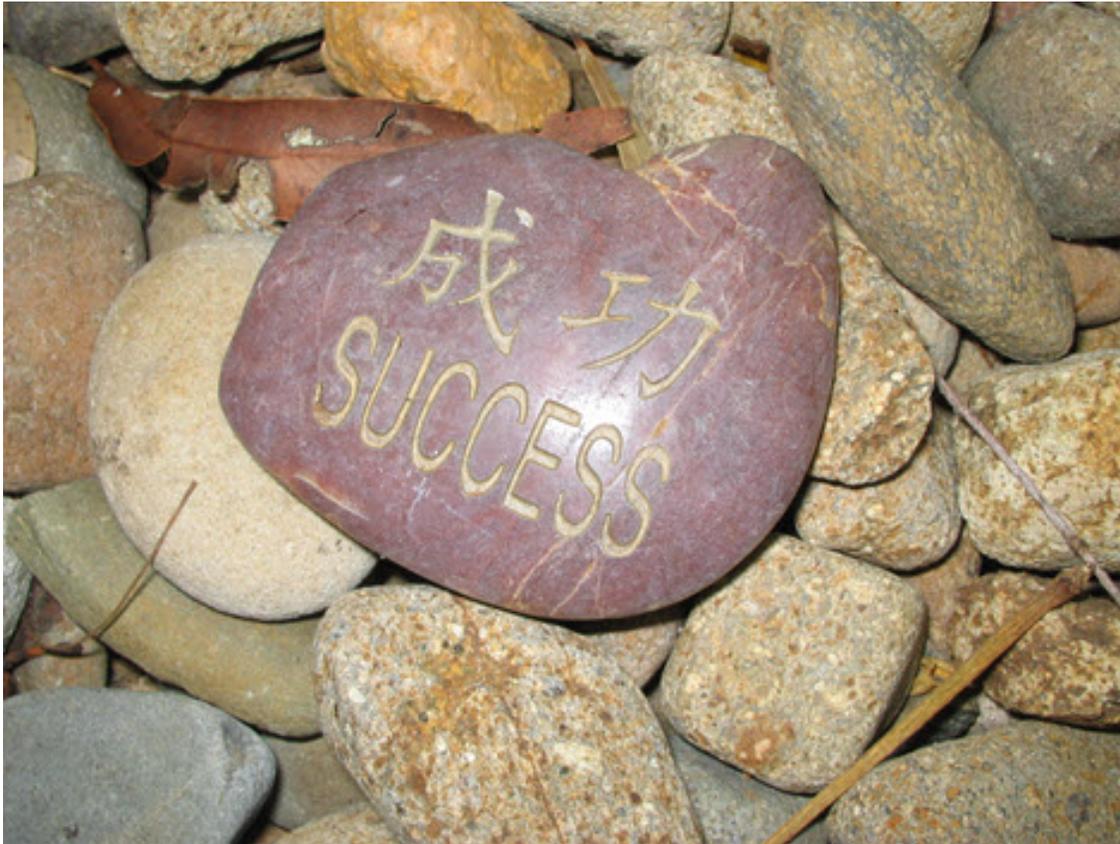
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## Stop The Self-Sabotage And Be the Success You Want to Be



"You can't do that!" "That's way too difficult!" "If you try, you'll probably just fail anyway." Have you ever said these things to yourself?

Do any of these scenarios sound familiar?

It's the night before a big deadline which is looming in your business---but instead of doing the work needed, you're scrolling through your social media feed.

Or maybe you set a goal to start eating more healthy foods, but can't seem to resist stopping for fast food every day for lunch or reaching for that bag of chips.

Or how about you've put yourself out there and gotten the clients you thought you wanted only when it comes time to start working with them you make excuses.

Or maybe you've had a fight with a family member. Instead of staying home and working it out you find yourself shopping. You mindlessly fill your cart with items you don't need but can't stop yourself from buying them anyway.

If you've found yourself having these negative thoughts or in any situation like these repeatedly, you may be struggling with self-sabotage.

Self-sabotage often comes from having low self-esteem. It can be a result of the way you were raised or circumstances that have happened to you.

No doubt it's something many people have struggled with at some time or another. The good news is that you can beat it. In this guide, we'll look at what's causing you to have self-sabotaging behavior and ways you can counteract it.

### What is Self-Sabotage?

Before we get into how to stop your self-sabotaging behaviors, we need to know what self-sabotage is.

“Behavior is said to be self-sabotaging when it creates problems and interferes with long-standing goals. The most common self-sabotaging behaviors are procrastination, self-medication with drugs or alcohol, comfort eating, and forms of self-injury such as cutting.”

Source: Self-Sabotage | Psychology Today <https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/self-sabotage>

Self-sabotage is often an unconscious thought or behavior that is in direct conflict with our desire to succeed. Self-sabotage is the act of doing a particular behavior that goes directly against what we need or want to do. It can be what stops us from achieving our goals and dreams. It can often come in the form of that inner critical voice, telling us we can't do something.

That critical inner voice refers to a pattern of damaging thoughts toward ourselves and others. The “voices” that make up this internalized dialogue enemy foster distrust, self-criticism, self-denial, addictions and a withdrawal from goal achieving activities. The critical inner voice affects every part of our lives including our self-esteem and confidence, our relationships, and our performance and accomplishments at school and work.

Now that you know what self-sabotage is, you need to understand why you do it and how it can affect everything you do. We'll dig deeper in how to recognize when you are doing it and how to make gradual changes.

### Why Do You Have Self-Sabotaging Behavior?



## STOP THE SELF SABOTAGE

If you want to succeed, why do you sabotage it with your behavior? Bad habits, negative self-talk and other ways we mess things up for ourselves can come from many different sources. Self-sabotage is when part of your personality acts in conflict with another part of your personality.

Self-sabotage is used as a way to coping in difficult situations or when we feel like we are not capable enough.

Here are six reasons for self-sabotaging behavior:

1. Being familiar with failure. It could be you are used to situations that always fail or don't work out. You are around dysfunctional or negative people that pull you down. You are afraid to try something different because you might fail or others will tell you it won't work. In other words, your comfort zone. This is where you are comfortable, so why change it?
2. Any bad habits like excessive drinking, smoking, uncontrolled anger or overeating can cause you to stick with what is familiar. You tell yourself you can't change these habits so why try.
3. Listening to your critical inner voice. This voice is formed from experiences early in our lives. We internalize the attitudes of others directed toward us by our parents or others of influence in our lives. They may have seen you as lazy so you grow up feeling useless. Your self-sabotaging dialogue might tell you not to try. For example, "Why bother? You'll never succeed anyway."
4. Internalized negative thoughts from our parents or others toward you. For example, you grew up with a parent who always saw the negative side of everything and worried about what could go wrong or how they looked to others. You could take on a similar attitude without even knowing it.
5. Unconsciously needing to be in control. If you feel something is bound to fail or too good to last, you might find a way to make it fail, thus we are in control because we caused it to fail.
6. A feeling of being unworthy. This can come from low self-esteem, causing you to feel like you don't deserve success or happiness.

As you can see, self-sabotage is often due to a poor self-esteem, low self-worth, no self-confidence, and lack of self-belief. We can suffer from this type of behavior pattern because we can't effectively control our emotions. We react to circumstances or people in ways that prevent us from reaching our goals.

### The Most Common Signs of Self-Sabotage

Did you know that you can unconsciously be self-sabotaging? If you aren't aware of it there are several ways you might be doing it. How do you know what the signs and symptoms that you are sabotaging yourself with are?

So here is a list of some symptoms and signs. Do you recognize any in yourself?

- Often using words like “should” or “I can't.”
- Conflict between your hopes and desires against your failure to change anything.
- Low self-esteem.
- Feeling that no matter what you try you just can't succeed.
- Frustration.
- Depression.
- Putting yourself down and telling yourself “I'm not good enough.”
- Doing things that are dangerous, such as drinking or drugs.
- Procrastination.
  - Putting off things all the time and then justifying it to yourself.
  - Starting projects but never finishing them.
  - Feeling unmotivated even when you have lots of exciting opportunities.
  - Dreaming of doing something but never acting on it.
- Worrying.
  - Worrying over things that don't really matter.
  - Believing others will think less of you if you fail.
  - Fretting that if you succeed your friends or family won't like you anymore.
  - Doubting yourself and your abilities when you know you're capable.



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- Having feelings of stress and anxiousness, unexplained depression and panic attacks.
- Being angry with yourself, others and your situation.
  - Using aggressive rather than assertive communication.
  - Using anger, resentment or jealousy to destroy relationships with others (family, friends, co-workers).
- Feelings of worthlessness.
  - Embellishing other people's achievements while lessening your own.
  - Taking unfair or misguided criticism to heart.
  - Letting others put you down.
- Perfectionism. Wanting everything to be perfect.

This is just a sampling of the ways people sabotage themselves. Oftentimes we don't even recognize we're doing it until it's too late.

### **Recognizing Your Own Self-sabotage**

We have all had those times when we were our own worst enemy. We experience thoughts and behavior that prevent us from moving forward or improving at something we desire. The trick is to recognize when we are doing this and put a stop to it.

But how do you recognize your own signs of sabotage?

There are several tell-tale signs to look for.

#### **Grinding to a halt**

One way to recognize self-sabotaging behavior is when you grind to a halt for no rational reason when you are trying to achieve a goal. You have the desire, skills and ability but something just seems to stop you.

#### **Not being able to do something**

Another sign is when you feel you can't do something you should be able to do even though you instructively know that you want or need to do it.

#### **Ask yourself these questions:**

What goals have you had for a long time and never been able to reach?

What do you consistently fail at with no obvious reason why?

What areas do you find yourself procrastinating doing or putting off making a decision about?

Are you suffering from lack of motivation to do something that you should want to do?

Do other people become frustrated with you consistently?

What in your life causes you dissatisfaction because you know you can do it or do it better?

Do often find yourself angry or frustrated with yourself?

### **Fearing success**

Do you find yourself always fearing the responsibility that comes with accomplishing your goals? Do you fear that getting out of your comfort zone will make you stand out? After all, staying in your comfort zone is safe.

### **Contradicting yourself**

Those thoughts we have that tell us we can't do something or that we're not good enough are signs you are sabotaging yourself. Pay attention to your thoughts and address the negative thoughts right away with positive ones.

### **Perfectionism**

Waiting until everything is perfect is a sign of self-sabotage. If you find yourself waiting until your project is perfect or it's the perfect time, you are doomed to never move forward. It's common to be afraid of putting yourself or something out there that isn't perfect. Remember, though, that most success comes from missteps and failures.

Self-sabotage can be tough to overcome. Recognizing the behavior is the first step. It may be difficult but with commitment and determination you can overcome self-sabotage and attain success in whatever you want.

### **Tips for Beating Self-sabotage**

As I've already mentioned, the first step to beating self-sabotage is to recognize when you are doing it. What else can you do to start helping yourself?

Take a look at these 5 tips to help you start becoming a friend to yourself instead of beating yourself up.

1. Understand your problem. This is basically just recognizing your behavior when you are doing it. When you catch yourself saying "I can't" or "I'm not worthy enough to.." change that into a positive. Instead say "I can do whatever my mind allows" or "I deserve to ..."  
Repeat these positive affirmations often. Work on improving your self-esteem by realizing you don't need to please others to be happy, successful or whatever your goal is.
2. If you are having trouble pinpointing when you are self-sabotaging yourself, write about it. Keep a journal to bring out any experiences or to find patterns of your behavior that are working against you.



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3. Face your fear or self-doubt by taking positive action. It doesn't have to be an all or nothing action, either. Take a small step toward what you are afraid of. It will be scary. But facing that fear, a small step at a time, lets you grow your confidence. And you'll be able to build on that confidence for the next step.
4. Do something just for you every day that will make you feel good. Take a yoga class, attend a cooking class, get a manicure, or take a stroll in nature. Doing one little thing that makes you happy builds your self-esteem.
5. Challenge your self-sabotaging thinking - ask yourself what deeper thoughts are behind the self-sabotaging talk. Is it rational and based on clear facts? Or is it irrational? Are past unsuccessful encounters keeping you afraid and doubting yourself?

Once you've recognized the signs of your self-sabotaging behavior, you can begin taking action to avoid repeating it. By taking small steps even when you're afraid you begin to build your self-confidence. That in itself is a big step in removing the self-sabotaging thoughts and behaviors.

### **Move Forward by Getting Out of Your Comfort Zone**



Wouldn't life be much easier and less scary to simply do what you've always done? After all, our comfort zone is where we are comfortable even if there is stress.

Should you stay in your comfort zone? Is it the right thing to do to be a success and to be happy?

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The comfort zone is defined as the space where your activities and behavior fit a routine or pattern that minimizes any risks or stress. In your comfort zone, things are familiar, secure and a certainty. There is no risk, and if there is stress, it's stress we're familiar with already.

Stepping out of your comfort zone means you are opening yourself up to unknown stress and anxiety because you aren't sure what'll happen or how you'll react.

"In an increasingly competitive, cautious and accelerated world, those who are willing to take risks, step out of their comfort zone and into the discomfort of uncertainty will be those who will reap the biggest rewards," [Margie Warrell writes in Forbes](http://www.forbes.com/sites/margiewarrell/2013/04/22/is-comfort-holding-you-back/). (source: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/margiewarrell/2013/04/22/is-comfort-holding-you-back/>)

To get out of your comfort zone:

- Be aware of when you are resisting moving out of your comfort zone.
- Change how you feel when moving out of your comfort zone scares you. Embrace the challenge and set goals that force you out of your comfort zone.
- Don't try to sprint out of your comfort zone. Take small but steady steps away from where you feel comfortable. Identify your fears and then face them step-by-step.
- Revisit your progress to make sure you're moving away from your comfort zone.
- Do something differently every day. Take a different route to work. Go to a new restaurant on the spur of the moment. Eat a new food or ethnic dish once a week. Make a change in the way you do things on a day-to-day basis.
- Trust yourself to make quick decisions if you're more comfortable weighing all the possibilities first. If you often make snap decisions, take your time making a choice.

There are lots of other ways to stretch yourself out of your comfort zone. Learn a new language or new skill. Connect with people who you admire and inspire you or simply volunteer for an organization you admire if you're socially shy. Travel to somewhere you've never been. Visiting new places can broaden your perspectives, whether it's a worthwhile experience or a regrettable one.

Getting out of your own set boundaries and getting uncomfortable helps build your confidence and self-esteem. By gaining more confidence, you're more likely to be less fearful of taking the next small step. It helps you keep your self-sabotaging behaviors to a minimum, as well.

### What to Do Next

As you've seen, self-sabotaging behavior is a self-defeating way of thinking. It can knock you down and keep you stuck in place, unable to move out of your comfort zone or to try something new. It involves negative self-talk and behavior that's an easy habit to fall into and a difficult one to break out of. By becoming aware of when you are doing it, you can beat it.

You need to also realize where the self-sabotage is coming from.

- Is it from having a low self-esteem or some type of anxiety?

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- Does it come from hypersensitivity or depression?
- Does your self-sabotaging behavior come from lack of self-confidence or assertiveness?
- Are you a workaholic? Under- or overachiever?
- Does it come from poor relationships or social skills? Are you needy or have unreasonable expectations?

Your next step begins with tackling your sabotaging talk and behavior. When you catch yourself saying or doing something negative, turn it around. Keep repeating the positive talk.

Address your fears. Turn your fears around and put them in the correct perspective. Are they based on facts or previous outcomes? If so, address the facts as to how they might affect you in a positive way.

Use your fears to come up with a message that inspires you to face them. Take a small step toward that fear. For example, say something like, "Even though I don't have the skills to complete the project on time, I know I can learn or find the resources I need to finish it. When I start working on the project, all the doubts and anxiety I have been stressing over while procrastinating will begin to disappear."

Look at whatever behavior it is you want to change first. Maybe you want to change your exercise pattern. Or maybe it's a financial behavior you want to change. Write it down. "I want to have a better budget" or "I want to exercise consistently every day."

Look at that behavior and notice what the story is that generates that behavior. Is the story really true? If so, how can you let it go or change the behavior?

Self-sabotaging behavior often pops up from something we've previously experienced or been told. Learning to recognize when you are doing it and what is causing you to do is the first step to changing it.

Here are some Key Points to ponder:

- Don't wait until things are perfect. We often want to be 100% certain of an answer before we speak or put an idea into practice. This overanalyzing behavior is a classic form of self-sabotage. Instead, strive for excellence but put it out there anyway.
- Watch your words. Your inflections as well as your words influence how confident you are or appear to be. Saying "I can't" or "I don't deserve" are two very common sabotaging phrases. Avoid them at all costs.
- Get out of your comfort zone. Take a few steps every day away from what feels comfortable.
- Learn a new skill. Build your confidence by learning a new skill. Just the act of trying to achieve the new skill will boost your confidence and get you out of your comfort zone.
- Shift your belief by visualizing a positive outcome.

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- Start slowly and make small changes. Don't try to sprint ahead and make drastic changes. If you are a chronic negative nelly, you need to work on changing your thoughts slowly.

Changing your self-sabotaging behavior will take time, work and consistent effort. But the end results can be amazing. You'll be able to go for your dream and express yourself in a positive way.



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