

How to Recognize and Defuse Self-Sabotage

All of us want to succeed, right? Here is how to not self-sabotage.

How to Recognize and Defuse the Self-Sabotage Bomb

All of us want to succeed, right? Yeah, of course, we do. Success is part of our survival as individuals and as a species. But is there a small part of us that emerges from time to time that undermines our efforts and sets us up for failure? You bet.

Self-sabotage is part of the human condition, just as the urge to succeed. They are competing forces vying for dominance.

Clever Disguises for Self-Sabotage

Self-sabotage rarely shows up wearing its birthday suit. Generally, it disguises itself as something far less nefarious. Here are some common costumes of self-sabotage:

Too many other commitments:

When we set aside our needs and aspirations because we have “other commitments” this is often a sign of self-sabotage.

That’s not to say that your other responsibilities aren’t important, but if they are preventing you from engaging in your personal [goals](#), it may mean that this is self-sabotage wearing a fake mustache.

I don’t have time:

The funny thing about time is that there is never enough of it, ever.

And there never will be. If you find yourself waiting for the day when you’ll have plenty of time to attend to your goals and interests that may well be your epitaph.

I don’t know how to get started:

Getting started toward an important goal is sometimes tricky. Self-sabotage can jump in and use this opportunity to stall out your progress.

It’s OK if you don’t know how to get started with a particular goal, the important thing is momentum. Staying stuck in the idea that you don’t know how to begin is a self-perpetuating thought, and it’s a favorite disguise of self-sabotage.

What if I fail?

Self-sabotage *loves* this head game. The [fear](#) of failure and desire for success are close cognitive companions that can wreak havoc on emotional wellness.

Fear of failure doesn't have to keep you stuck. You can have that fear and continue to slay your goals.

Strategies for Defusing the Self-Sabotage Bomb

As you deactivate your self-sabotage, you need to carefully inspect that bomb (just like they do in those action movies). You're the main character and to succeed, you need to act quickly and defuse this thing before it wrecks you.

Get clear with yourself on what you want and why:

Name your goal as specifically as you can. When we narrow our intentions to a specific outcome, it is far easier to figure out action steps toward that direction.

Try completing the following sentence: I intend to _____ because _____.

Devote time, attention, and energy:

Remove the barriers that keep you tethered to this idea that you can't or shouldn't devote time to what's important to you.

The idea that your interests and needs aren't enough or that they are less of a priority is a false construct that is robbing you of your passion.

Set aside certain days and times each week to actively work on fulfilling your intention.

Consider it as important to honor those time slots as any other responsibility you tend to. Get out your calendar; enter a day and time each week, and set a reminder. It is that important.

Feel the feels and do it anyway:

You've had times when you were apprehensive about something (perhaps a job interview, a doctor's appointment) and you did it anyway, right?

You know you have the ability to proceed with important tasks in the face of distress and fear. Consider this one of those times where you need to sit with the feelings while pushing through and doing the task at hand.

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Get specific, break down your task:

As you push through the feelings and get into go-mode, set up an outline for yourself. What comes first and what steps do you need to accomplish to get to that larger goal? Write down each step of your plan with exactly what you will need to do.

Stay aware of negative thoughts:

Self-sabotage will creep back from time to time and cause you to wonder if you're doing the right thing or if you really have the ability to accomplish what you want.

Make it a point to check these thoughts routinely and sniff around for self-sabotage.

If you notice yourself lapsing back into old thought patterns, observe those feelings and use them as valuable information about what you may need to do next. Negative thoughts can be useful tools in helping us understand our emotional needs.

Self-sabotage happens to all of us from time to time, but we don't need to get stuck there. Recognizing it and creating a plan to work around it can put us back on track and in control of our destiny.