

# Stopping self-sabotage

Are you your own worst enemy? **Gillian Nalletamby** shows you to how to turn self-sabotage into self-empowerment

**A**re you perpetually single and finding a fault with every man you meet? Do you find yourself almost at the finish line of your goals and then run into a hurdle or obstacle that gets back to square one? Are you happily plodding along while your less capable colleagues are moving up the career ladder? Do you avoid taking risks and never challenging yourself to reach the next level? Are you always too busy to go to the gym, finish your home renovation or fulfil your dreams? If you have answered yes to two or more of these questions, you may be indulging in self-sabotage and undermining your own happiness and success. So how do you stop yourself from sabotaging your goals and choking at the eleventh hour?

## Know your emotional trigger points

Take time to reflect on what triggers you to sabotage your

goals. Keep a diary and write down patterns of behaviour over a period of a few months – this will help you identify when you are most likely to falter. It could be due to depression, premenstrual tension, a toxic workplace or friends. Recognise these trigger points and instead of indulging in emotional eating or sabotaging your goals; call a friend or your mentor who will talk you out of a bad decision or look elsewhere for comfort. Avoid resigning, cutting your hair or making huge decisions until that moment has passed. Delay instant gratification and try and focus on your long-term goals and the bigger picture. The less you do things on impulse, the better your decisions will be. Learn to think with your head and less with your heart and make decisions based more on logic and reason.

## The two-week rule

When you're aiming towards a long-term goal such as saving

for a house, the goal can seem very hard to reach. There are often mental blocks that stop us from achieving our goals where we reach a certain point and then sabotage our goal. They say saving the first \$10k for a home mortgage is the hardest, but once you have surpassed that milestone, it seems easy to save the next 10k. If you have the urge to splurge your house deposit on a long holiday, enact the two-week rule. If you feel the same way after two weeks and have weighed up the pros and cons, then go ahead and be my guest, but don't make impulse decisions on a gut reaction that you may regret later.

## Fire your harshest critic

Banish negative thoughts and your inner voice trying to tell you that you don't deserve love or happiness, a promotion and you will never be successful. Women may sabotage relationships by pushing men away and not giving them a chance, stop themselves from applying for promotions because they are afraid they are not good enough or never step out of their comfort zone. The definition of failure is not succeeding at your task; it's not trying at all. If you're not making mistakes, then you're simply not trying hard enough. More likely than not, it is fear that keeps you in this paralysed sabotaged state. Recognising why you feel this way will help stave off the saboteur within.

## Surround yourself with positive people

It is easier to achieve your goals when you surround yourself with people who have the same or similar goals as you. This may be people that you may know from an association or club or people you met online. Find a mentor in your company or industry, who will help you reach your goals and act as a sounding board for advice or a supportive lecturer who will guide you in you're writing. Someone who has gone through the same process and achieved their goals will give you better advice and support when you need a pick me up. When your inner voice is telling you that you can't do it, it's important to have an external voice telling you that you can.

## Stop indulging in self-destructive behaviour

Avoid temptation, resist acting on impulse and stop indulging in self-destructive behaviour. If you receive a text message that makes you angry, don't instantly fire off a reply back in haste. Sit on it for a few minutes or hours and you will start to see things more clearly and rationally. If you have an exam coming up or an important interview the next day, make sure you are prepared mentally and physically. Turn off your mobile phone, switch off the PDA and make sure you are free from all distractions and try and get a good night's sleep. If you're trying to lose weight and working long hours, make sure you bring healthy snacks and avoid having money for the vending machines.



Don't set yourself up for failure, stop making excuses and take responsibility for your actions.

## Don't let your past dictate your future

There are a lot of people in life who came from insurmountable odds to be successful. Donald Trump made one of the fastest financial comebacks in history and Chris Gardner, who inspired the movie, *The Pursuit of Happiness* went from being homeless to a multi-millionaire. The only difference between them and people who cannot move on from their past, is their outlook on life. You cannot change things which are in the past, but you can change the part they play in your future. Stop comparing yourself to others, set your own individual benchmarks and be your own barometer of your success.

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## All or nothing thinking

Change your perspective from all or nothing thinking and condition yourself to do things in moderation – allow yourself the flexibility to make a mistake now and again. Using words like 'never' or 'always' is setting yourself up for failure. If you

are on a diet, don't let one biscuit become a whole packet or if you are on a budget, don't let one dress become a \$2000 splurge. People who are all or nothing thinkers let one single setback upset all their hard earned work, see themselves as total failures if their performance falls short of perfect or have mental filters which only allow them to see things in either a negative or positive light with no room for a middle ground. Everyone falls off the wagon now and again; the most important thing is that you jump right back on it. Don't let little setbacks become bigger setbacks and sabotage your hard work.

## Don't fall back into bad habits

Some people would be surprised to hear that the hardest part of reaching a goal like weight loss is maintaining your goal weight. It takes constant discipline and dedication to not only reach but to maintain your goals. Taking short cuts, engaging in extreme diets or failing to put a firm foundation in place will lead to failure later on. Learn to be flexible and adaptable, adjust to a changing environment or different working hours – constantly challenge yourself. It's important to not to become complacent and allow temptation and bad habits to creep in. Stop making excuses and start making plans for your future. \*

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