

How to Stop Self Sabotage

Self sabotage is a sneaky little thing. It's hard for us to know we're doing it because we do it almost on a purely unconscious level. We have that uneasy feeling about moving toward our goals and our actions manifest to conform to those feelings.

We might make some headway toward our goal, but something is holding us back.

Exactly what, we don't know.

We say want something, then go about it making sure it doesn't happen.

For example, let's say you're 200 pounds and want to be 150. You lose 10 pounds but now all of a sudden, you feel uneasy about losing more. You sense your friends begin to get jealous of you and some don't even talk to you anymore and that fear of not being liked begins to sabotage your behavior so here come the Twinkies and the weight gets put back on.

Fear is ONE of the main culprits of self sabotage.

But pleasure is too.

Let's say you get hurt and you want to recover quick but for some reason, you don't. You self sabotage your recovery. Why? Because you're getting all this attention you never got before. People sympathize with you and wait on you hand and foot to help you get better so somewhere in your mind, you want to keep this pleasure going so you delay your recovery as much as possible to milk as much of this as you can.

And if you really want those kinds of benefits, guess what?

You find yourself getting hurt a lot more often.

When you put it all out like this, you begin to see self sabotage as clear as day, but when you're in the midst of it, you don't. You have a vague feeling something's there holding you back, but you don't want to look so the behavior keeps on continuing.

So what's the cause of all this self sabotage?

It's pretty simple.

You have more COMPELLING EMOTIONAL reasons NOT to move forward.

You have more COMPELLING EMOTIONAL reasons to stay where you are.

Compelling and emotional are the key words there.

You can have all the right "logical" reasons in the world to do something but stick just ONE compelling emotional reason on the other side of NOT to do it and you wont.

Self sabotage will ensue.

Go back to that weight loss example.

How many logical reasons can we come up with to lose weight?

There's a ton health wise right?

But the compelling emotional reason to avoid being abandoned, of losing the love of one's friends is enough to put a stop to the whole thing.

That's how powerful our emotions can be.

So knowing this, what do we need to do?

We need to neutralize the compelling emotional reasons holding us back and we need to overload the reasons for going toward our goal with compelling emotional reasons.

But first, we need to flush out those compelling emotional reasons that are holding us back.

We do that by completing these two simple statements that are set up to elicit those reasons.

1. My greatest fears and worries about going through the process of achieving my goal and actually achieving my goal are....

2. The hidden pleasures I am currently experiencing from not going through the process of achieving my goal are...

Now in order for this to work, you have to be COMPLETELY honest with yourself.

I mean you have to put down the thing that you DARE not put down on paper, that you DARE not tell anybody else in real life.

And this is OK because nobody is going to see this except you. Your eyes only.

A good analogy here is that you're stumbling in the dark. You need to shine some light around to see what the obstacles are. If you don't, you'll always stumble in the dark.

Until you're willing to shed light on all these obstacles, you will continue this self sabotage behavior because actions always conform to your beliefs, visible AND invisible.

So let's take an example of a businessman who's earning about 50k/year, but can't seem to make more. He wants to earn 100k/year, but something is holding him back. He procrastinates, doesn't take much action, does just enough to maintain that 50k of profit a year.

Something is amiss so he develops the courage to shine the light.

He takes out a blank piece of paper and writes down:

My greatest fears and worries about going through the process of achieving my goal and actually achieving my goal of 100k/year are:

1. Nothing good ever lasts. Something will go wrong. Why bother putting in all that effort and have it all go away?
2. What if I lose all that? That's a lot to lose.
3. What will people think of me? They'll think I'm greedy and spread rumors about me.
4. Everybody will keep on asking me for money and if I refuse, they'll call me cheap.
5. Me earning more money means I'm taking away from other people.
6. How do I manage all that money? What about taxes? It's too much paperwork and taxes will take a lot out of it anyway so there's no point.
7. Now that I make a lot more money, I have less excuses for not doing the things I want to do. I can't hide behind the no money excuse anymore.
8. What if I try and fail? (this is a biggie)
9. What if I spend too much time trying to do it and lose balance in other areas of my life?
10. What if I'm not as spiritual anymore?

The hidden pleasures I am currently experiencing from not going through the process of achieving my goal are...

1. I don't have to work hard.
2. I can complain to other people about my financial problems.
3. I can hide behind an excuse for not doing things that require money.
4. I don't have to face the disappointments of trying to achieve my goal.
5. I won't rock the boat with my friends.

Now go through and poke holes through each reasons one by one and watch them crumble.

Pretend your friend is having all these reasons and he/she wants you, as an objective third party, to refute them.

What would you say?

Challenge those beliefs.

Who says nothing good will last? What if it lasts a long time? And if tough times comes, that's OK because you're better able to weather the storms because of your initiative and financial reserves.

What if you were to keep your standard of living and invest and save the difference of the increase you get so you start to get investment returns that match your initial 50k/year over time?

What people think of you has nothing to do with you but for them. But if you're paranoid, you can choose not to tell them of your increase in finances. And if they don't know you make a lot, they can't ask for money either.

What if you making more money means people make more money because of the products/services you provide? And even if it's not directly related to helping them make more money, what if it helps them feel better about themselves so that they feel more confident in taking actions to make more money?

What if you can pay even LESS tax if you make more money? If you can find a good tax consultant, they can show you how to legally keep more of your money through retirement accounts and do all the paperwork for you.

What if you can finally do the things you've been putting off because of no money?
What if you become a brand new person as a result of those things?

What if you try and succeed? And what is failure except finding one way that doesn't work? Just try another.

What if you figure out a way to do less work by hiring other people and outsourcing other work so that you have EVEN MORE time for other areas of your life AND you make more money?

What if you became EVEN MORE spiritual now that you have more time and energy to focus on spiritual pursuits?

Do the same things with the hidden pleasures.

You can always find counters to all these reasons to poke holes in them.

Now think about this.

Those compelling emotional reasons were strong enough to influence your actions into NOT doing anything to move forward.

What if we created compelling emotional reasons that were strong enough to get you to move forward toward your goals?

So use the same mechanism but flip it toward your favor.

Complete the following sentences.

My greatest fears and worries about NOT going through the process of achieving my goal and NOT actually achieving my goal are....

The greatest pleasures I can experience from going through the process of achieving my goal and actually achieving it are...

So let's go back to the businessman example of earning 100k/year. Here's what he might write

My greatest fears and worries about NOT going through the process of achieving my goal and NOT actually achieving my goal are....

1. I'll actually earn less because I'm not growing.
2. My business will stagnate and I'll lose everything.
3. My competition will catch up and put me out of business.
4. I won't be able to weather the hard times because I didn't grow my business.
5. I'll have to go back to getting a job to survive.
6. I'll become lazy and complacent in other areas of my life.
7. I'll make the same mistakes again if I choose to start another business.
8. I'll feel powerless when things start going the other way.
9. I'll feel depressed knowing I could have done something to prevent this slide.
10. I'll lose everything and have to start again from scratch.

The greatest pleasures I can experience from going through the process of achieving my goal and actually achieving it are...

1. I'll be able to provide more for my family.
2. I'll be able to learn how to grow my business without me being there so I can have more time off to do the things I want to do.
3. I'll learn to be more disciplined and have better time management.
4. I'll be able to take retire early so I'll truly be free as I can live off the interest of my investments.
5. I can give to people who have really helped me.
6. I can give to organizations that have truly helped me.
7. I can travel the world while still young and learn from different cultures.
8. I can fix all my physical insecurities that have prevented me from fully being me.
9. I can take care of my parents in their elderly age.
10. I can devote my time to researching the things that interest me.

Remember, these have to be compelling emotional reasons FOR YOU. They have to stir that fire within you.

And note that all this is to get you going in the first place. When you begin to experience all sorts of benefits, the fear of losing those benefits will keep you from slacking.

Now with regard to pleasure we experience when achieving our goals, if you can see how it will not only serve you, but OTHERS, that's a big whammy to stop self sabotage because look at that word - SELF sabotage.

We're thinking about ourselves too much and that's a BIG part of what's stopping us from moving forward.

When we bring others into the mix, suddenly it's more important to move forward rather than to be lazy and do nothing. You actually see how your self sabotage is hurting others and how stopping that can help them.

It brings more "weight" to the side of actually doing something rather than to just float around.

Once you do all this, how do you know you've stopped self sabotage?

There's a simple test you can use initially (the true test will be whether you start taking action toward achieving your goals or not).

Ask yourself how you feel about achieving your goal.

If you feel tightness in your body like around your chest, or if your shoulders are tense or your body is on edge, you still got some work to do with regard to flushing out your compelling emotional reasons for not advancing and you need to poke more holes in them.

But if you ask yourself that question and you're relaxed, open, excited, eager to move forward, then obviously you'll know you're on the right track.