

# UNBOUND

## SELF-SABOTAGE

### What is self-sabotage?

Self-sabotage is the behavior we exhibit in response to our limiting beliefs, judgments and perceptions of ourselves, our circumstances or others. These behaviors undermine your success despite your own desires and goals, and hinder you from reaching your full potential. So you can't actually work towards achieving these goals when you are having these thoughts and beliefs that work against them.

It stems from negative thoughts and emotions - which manifest as negative self-talk and low self-esteem, low self-worth, and lack of confidence. The resulting outcomes of these behaviors continually reinforces the negativity by producing negative results. So whenever we believe we can't do something, that belief is going to show up in our results, and then we have the perception that we failed.

These limiting beliefs are habitual thought patterns with their own voice, beliefs and assumptions that work against your best interests. We might easily mistake them as the voice of reason, but they are actually working against us.

**These voices appear as the following characters, which we will refer to as saboteurs:** Judge, Avoider, Controller, Hyper-Achiever, Hyper-Rational, Hyper-Vigilant, Pleaser, Restless, Stickler/Perfectionist, and Victim.

### Be careful not to over-identify

We individually have any combination of them, some might be more prevalent than others depending on the environment. For example, at work your controller might be stronger, and at home your pleaser might be stronger. Be careful not to over-identify with any of these, we want to identify them separately so that we can see that we are not characters, rather they are their own entities which we can either welcome in or shut out.

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### How does self-sabotage show up in our lives?

Self-sabotage shows up as feeling stuck, indecisive, uncertain, questioning our decisions or our goals, feeling like we are taking action and not getting results, or like we have to 'figure it out' and looking externally for answers.

Any time we feel a negative emotion, our saboteurs are activated - we get hijacked. We have habitual behavioral responses to challenges (these responses are our saboteurs in action). When we can start to identify our self-sabotaging thoughts, we can begin to discern what is real and how we can problem-solve, rather than react and self-sabotage.

### Why do we sabotage?

These saboteurs live in the part of our brain that is focused on survival. This part of our brain (brain stem, limbic brain) motivates us through negative emotions (fear, stress, anger, guilt, shame and insecurity). This might generate success or achievement, but not happiness.

These beliefs were created in our early years in order to protect us and get our needs met. The judge especially is a unique perspective that we each formulated in order to be able to predict the world around us and anticipate challenges. The coping mechanisms we adopted to manage uncertainty served us in childhood, but not in adulthood. Now we have access to the fully-developed critical thinking part of our brain. When we are sabotaging, we are not using our critical thinking.

### Exercise

You can find one of your limiting beliefs right now by completing this sentence:

**"In order to survive and succeed, I should\_\_"**

Freely write anything that comes to mind.

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### Identifying the saboteurs/limiting beliefs\*

#### **THE JUDGE is the *reason* we sabotage ourselves.**

*Limiting belief: I'll be happier/more successful when \_\_\_\_\_. And this is not available to me now.*  
The other saboteurs show us how that belief shows up in our behavior.

Each saboteur is associated with a limiting belief. Examples might include:

#### ***Limiting belief of the Avoider***

By avoiding difficult situations, emotions or tasks, life will be more pleasant and enjoyable. The result is that things get more unpleasant and you have a bigger problem to deal with in the long run.

#### ***Limiting belief of the Controller***

By controlling my circumstances or others, I can ensure better outcomes. No one else can, nothing gets done if I don't do it. The result is that when we control small things, we lose influence over larger outcomes.

#### ***Limiting belief of the Hyper-Achiever***

The more I achieve, the happier I'll be. Your achievement is the condition for you to have self-worth and creates your identity. The result is that if anything goes wrong, your identity is at risk (I don't know who I am if I'm not this), and people feel like you're not invested in them, they're just there to serve your goal.

#### ***Limiting belief of the Hyper-Rational***

By rationalizing, I can make better decisions because all decisions are best made using the rational mind. The result is that we don't acknowledge emotions (our or others) and come across as cold or arrogant and end up making things worse in the relationship, or get stuck making decisions from a logical place rather than from alignment with our values and desires.

\*These definitions were adapted from the work of Shirzad Chamine, author of *Positive Intelligence*.

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### Identifying the saboteurs/limiting beliefs\*

#### ***Limiting belief of the Hyper-Vigilant***

By being vigilant, I can protect myself and others. I have to be on the lookout for dangers from anywhere. The result is that you feel anxious and protective, and you're not calm and focused enough to see real danger clearly.

#### ***Limiting belief of the Pleaser***

By pleasing others, I can have better relationships, people will like and trust me more and feel connected to me. The result is that when you only say nice things, people don't really trust you, people get used to taking from you because you don't have boundaries, you get resentful.

#### ***Limiting belief of the Restless***

When we are restless we believe life is short, so we have to get the most out of it by jumping from one thing to another. It always has you looking towards what's next or more interesting or promising. The result is that you are never present to life at all, and never dig deep enough into something to really get the most out of it.

#### ***Limiting belief of the Stickler/Perfectionist***

Through perfectionism, I can bring more peace and joy to my life by creating order and quality. The result is that you spread yourself thin, feel more anxiety when things fall out of order, life feels messier than you want it to. Others feel anxious around you and get discouraged because they're not good enough for you.

#### ***Limiting belief of the victim***

The victim saboteur offers self-pity as a replacement for the lack of self-love and love from others. It promises more positive attention and connection through acknowledgment of your struggles. The result is that people get tired and move away from you. You desperately want more love and attention but you end up getting less.

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### WORKSHEET

#### Identifying your Judge:

After watching the video, what thoughts can you identify that are the voice of your Judge?

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#### Identifying your Saboteurs:

Take a few moments to read through the saboteur descriptions.

Which ones feel most prevalent in your life? *List your top three:*

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Using the list below, reflect on which saboteurs are more activated in the following areas:

at home \_\_\_\_\_

at work \_\_\_\_\_

in your relationships \_\_\_\_\_

*Keep going for other areas of your life*

On a separate sheet of paper, list out all the thoughts you can identify as the voices of these three saboteurs.

*Extra credit:* Make a note next to each thought that you can clearly hear a voice of someone else (most likely an authority figure or role model).