

Saboteur (Inner Critic)

Saboteurs are thought processes and feelings that help us maintain the status quo in our lives. Saboteurs appear to protect us, but actually prevent us from moving forward or getting what we want out of life. Saboteurs will always be with us; they are neither good nor bad. We have to be aware of our Saboteur, and the power it has over us, in order to consciously choose an action that will move us towards our goals.

Language that the Saboteur uses:

- “You aren’t good enough (smart enough, pretty enough, etc.)”
- “You are too old (too annoying, too bossy, etc.)
- “should”, “must”, “ought to”
- “you can’t”, “you shouldn’t”
- “you need to”
- “you don’t deserve”

Steps to conquer your Saboteur:

1. Be in awareness when you start hearing negative language around your self-worth or capabilities.
2. Observe your surroundings when you are hearing negative language. What triggered it? Where are you? What are you seeing? What are you doing? Identify if there are specific situations that trigger your critic.
3. Determine whether your beliefs are real for you today. Are they coming from you or did you learn them? If they are yours, assess whether they are serving you today or holding you back. If they are learned and come from somewhere else, know that you don’t have to keep them. In either case, consciously let them go. State what you truly feel and keep those new positive thoughts in mind.
4. This a process is recycled time and again as you start to form new beliefs to quiet the saboteur.

There are several exercises in the book from Rick Carson called “Taming your Gremlin” that can help you or your clients work through negative comments or feelings of guilt.

Be aware that whenever people take the initiative to change their lives an alarm sounds and awakens the Saboteur. Expect it. You can even forewarn your clients.

Getting to know your Saboteur

This exercise will allow you to get to know your Saboteur (Inner Critic) a little bit better. Imagine the voice that you are hearing is on top of your shoulder, not inside your head. Look over at it and describe what he/she looks like. Now choose a finger puppet that best fits your vision of your critic. After choosing your puppet, put him/her on your finger and spend some time getting to know your Saboteur, what motivates her/him, and how he/she operates. Answer the following questions as it pertains to the Saboteur:

- What is your Saboteur's name?
- What does your Saboteur look like?
- What are some of the favorite things your Saboteur likes to say to you?
- What does your Saboteur value?
- What does your Saboteur want from you?
- What is your Saboteur's secret fear?
- What do you do that gets your Saboteur nervous, worked up, or on the alert?
- How does your Saboteur hijack your values?
- Is your Saboteur a crucial part of your life? If so, when can it serve you? When do you need to shut it up?