

# **Client Handout: Understanding Self-Sabotage**

## **What Is Self-Sabotage?**

Self-sabotage is when we act in ways that block our own progress, often without realizing it. It's a pattern of behavior where we undermine our own goals, values, or well-being.

Examples:

- Procrastinating even when something matters to us
- Ending healthy relationships out of fear or mistrust
- Talking ourselves out of opportunities
- Being overly self-critical or perfectionistic

## **Why It Happens:**

Self-sabotage is often rooted in:

- Fear of failure or success
- Low self-worth
- Internalized negative beliefs from past experiences
- Desire to feel in control, even if it means staying stuck

## **Important Truth:**

You're not lazy, broken, or unmotivated. Self-sabotage is a protection strategy that may have once helped you cope. The good news is—it can be unlearned.



## How to Heal Self-Sabotage:

### 1. Notice Your Patterns

Track your triggers. When do you tend to sabotage?

### 2. Get Curious, Not Critical

Ask yourself: “What am I afraid will happen if I succeed?”

### 3. Talk to the Part of You That’s Afraid

Instead of fighting it, try compassion:

“I see you’re scared. You’re trying to protect me. Thank you, but I’m safe now.”

### 4. Take Small, Brave Steps

Don’t wait to feel “ready.” Take one small action anyway.

### 5. Celebrate Progress, Not Perfection

Every moment you choose growth over fear is a win.

You deserve to thrive. You deserve to show up fully.

***Healing self-sabotage is not about being perfect, it’s about building trust with yourself, one kind decision at a time.***



## Self-Sabotage Awareness Worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. Identify a Recent Example

Think of a time you may have self-sabotaged:

What happened?

What goal or opportunity was involved?

### 2. What Were You Feeling?

- Fear
- Guilt
- Anxiety
- Shame
- Overwhelm
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the emotions and any physical sensations:

### **3. What Thoughts Came Up?**

Write down any inner dialogue you noticed, below are some common thoughts for those that self-sabotage:

“I’ll probably fail anyway.”

“I don’t deserve this.”

“If I try and mess up, I’ll be humiliated.”

The first step to change is awareness. Asking yourself these questions and being honest about your thoughts and feelings is a great first step. Going to counseling is a good way to begin processing these emotions and getting to the root of the issue of self-sabotaging. You can then break-free from these negative thought patterns that often lead to dysfunction behavior and undesirable results.