



# Self sabotage in the workplace: How to overcome it?

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Have you ever found yourself working toward an important goal only to spectacularly fail because you did something foolish?

Or, maybe you feel stressed and anxious when you are trying to achieve something important. This, in turn, might make you feel more and more frustrated, discouraged and angry with yourself. These feelings trap you and keep you from doing what you need to do.

These are all signs of self-sabotage.

Self-sabotage erodes your self-confidence and self-esteem, and affects your relationships with your co-workers. With every failed attempt to do the thing you want, you “prove” to yourself that you cannot or should not do it. While we may sabotage ourselves at work, conversely, we can choose to change and to manage those self-limiting behaviours. When we recognize and stop these ridiculous thoughts and focus on choosing from strength, we think and act from a place of empowerment and confidence.

## Dwelling on the Negative

Whether in a recurring internal dialogue or conversations with colleagues, the themes are the same. You focus on what is bad about your situation versus what is good, what is not possible versus what

is. You remember all the bad things that have happened to you and not your accomplishments.

People frequently get what they expect, and attract what they dwell on. Stop blaming others for your situation or feelings. While other people can influence your emotions, they cannot force you to feel or do anything. Stop wasting time complaining, which eventually gives unpleasant events power over your life. Focus on solutions, rather than dwelling on problems. Stop focusing on what is bad about your situation versus what is good; what is not possible versus what is. Stop counting the bad things that have happened to you, not your successes. Choose to live in a positive space.

## Imposter Syndrome

Imposter syndrome is an unrelenting fear that you do not belong where you are. Perhaps you think you are unqualified for your position, or that you got the job by mistake. More than just self-doubt or second-guessing, a person with imposter syndrome believes they are inadequate, and lives in constant anxiety that they are about to be exposed as a “fraud.” Imposter syndrome can have crippling emotional effects, causing you to talk negatively to yourself and fall into a pattern of behaviour that interferes with

your work.

According to Psychology Today, imposter syndrome prevents people from “internalizing their accomplishments.” While actual imposter syndrome is a psychological term, many of us struggle with the same sense of inadequacy and inability to recognize our own successes. When this happens, it is important to take a step back and focus on the value you bring to your team.

## Obsessing over Perfection

Many experts agree that perfectionism is actually a destructive mindset. We measure our success and our talents, both on the job and in our personal lives, against standards of perfection that are virtually impossible to meet. This can lead to self-doubt and lower self-esteem, among other negative consequences. It does not make you look good to try to do everything yourself or to appear to always be overworked. Nor do you want to be indispensable for the wrong reasons – like taking on all the low-level mind-numbing tasks. You are allowed to have help.

Do the best you can. Understand that mistakes are occasionally made, and embrace constructive criticism so you can learn. Don’t beat yourself up if your work isn’t perfect, because nobody else’s

is either, and try to be more mindful of your strengths and weaknesses to turn them into opportunities in your career.

## Cinderella Complex

“Cinderella Complex” finds its name from the fairy tale princess Cinderella, waiting for her prince charming to rescue her from the evil stepmother and stepsisters. Most modern adaptations of fairy tales, as well as original versions, place gender expectations on women. The Cinderella Complex leads to inappropriate or ineffectual behaviour on the job, to anxiety about success, to the fear that independence will lead to loss of femininity. These fears are not surprising, considering that only a generation ago dependency was inextricably linked with what it meant to be feminine. Caught in transition between two vastly different concepts of femininity, women are still emotionally reluctant to commit themselves to independence.

Employees suffering from this complex wait to be picked out instead of taking an active role in their success. Instead of relying on one successful or powerful person to support and recognize you, build a network of supporters and advisers. Stop thinking that someone else will “save” you; save yourself.