

Self-sabotaging cycle

A Workbook to Break Free from Self-Sabotage

What this is. A 45-page self-help workbook (Canva, “counsellorcronan”) rebuilt as a client workbook. Its text is kept word for word: the five steps of the cycle with their reflective questions, the L.I.F.E. self-sabotage quiz, faulty thinking and reframing, the power of yet, fear of intimacy and its quiz, procrastination, and the self-care, gratitude and self-esteem pages. Writing space is laid out in the house style; the illustrations are replaced by plain panels. Notes marked “added” are the only additions.

HOW TO USE IT · ADDED

- 1 Pages 2 to 17 are the heart of it: read one step, then answer its four questions before the next session. Two questions a sitting is plenty.
- 2 The quiz on pages 18 to 22 tells you which of four patterns is doing most of the sabotaging. Do it once, early, and again at the end.
- 3 Pages 23 to 30 are tools: reframing, “yet”, what-ifs, and a fear-of-intimacy check for anyone whose sabotage shows up in relationships.
- 4 Pages 31 onward are maintenance: procrastination, self-care, gratitude, a habit tracker and self-forgiveness. Use what fits.

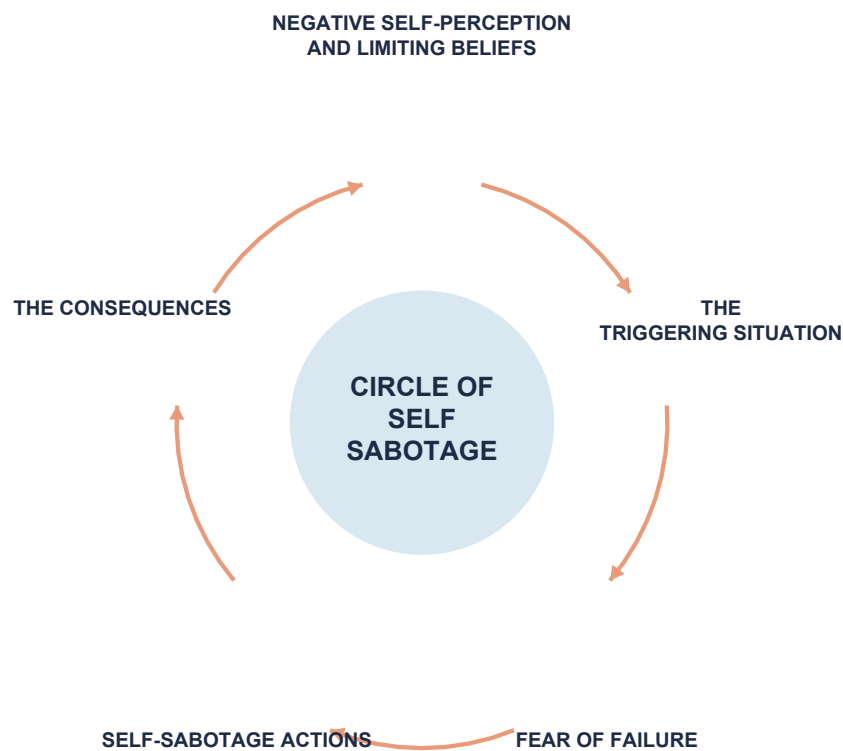
A note on the quizzes (added). The L.I.F.E. quiz and the fear-of-intimacy quiz are reflection tools from the workbook, not validated measures. Treat the scores as a conversation starter, not a result.

The self-sabotaging cycle

Five stages, each feeding the next

Self-sabotage is a dilemma that many of us face, often preventing us from reaching our full potential. It's a disruptive pattern where we undermine our own goals and happiness, almost unknowingly setting up barriers that thwart our progress. This cycle involves several interconnected stages, each influencing the next, making it feel difficult to escape.

Let's explore the self-sabotage cycle: from its roots in negative self-perception to the destructive actions it provokes and how we can break free.



Circle of Self Sabotage: diagram redrawn; the five stage names are the workbook's.

Step 1: Negative Self-Perception and Limiting Beliefs

Negative self-perception and limiting beliefs form the bedrock of the self-sabotage cycle. These ingrained ideas about who we are and what we can achieve shape our reality, influencing how we act, what opportunities we pursue, and how we react to setbacks.

■ Understanding Negative Self-Perception

Negative self-perception refers to an inherently critical view of oneself, where an individual perceives themselves as inadequate, incapable, or undeserving of success. Unlike occasional self-doubt, these perceptions are pervasive, influencing multiple aspects of an individual's life and behavior.

For example, you might shy away from applying for a promotion at work, not necessarily because you lack skills or experience, but because you believe you “aren’t worthy” or “won’t measure up” to the role. These perceptions are often cultivated from early experiences through feedback from parents, teachers, peers, or even societal messages, becoming a silent narrative we repeatedly tell ourselves.

■ Limiting Beliefs: The Hidden Barriers

Limiting beliefs are closely tied to negative self-perception. They are restrictive thoughts that confine us to a narrow view of what is possible. These beliefs might include ideas like “I’m too old to change careers,” “Creativity is not my strength,” or “I’ll always be single.” Such beliefs act as invisible barriers that prevent us from seizing opportunities or fully embracing change and growth.

These beliefs can be so ingrained that we aren’t even aware they’re driving our choices and actions—or lack thereof. Over time, they bring about a dissonance between where we are and where we aspire to be, fueling a cycle of self-sabotage.

■ Challenging the Narrative

To foster positive change, it’s essential to unearth and challenge these limiting undercurrents. Doing so allows us to replace old narratives with ones that are empowering and self-affirming, thereby rewriting the conditional boundaries we set for ourselves.

Reflective questions

Step 1: Negative Self-Perception and Limiting Beliefs

1 What are some recurring negative thoughts or beliefs I have about myself?

Identifying repetitive thoughts helps highlight patterns and perceptions that drive self-sabotage. Reflect honestly—is there a voice that insists, “You’re not good enough,” or tells you, “You’ll never be able to do that”?

2 Where did these beliefs originate, and why do they feel true to me?

Delve into the past and identify experiences or influences that may have planted these beliefs. Were they inspired by a critical teacher, comparisons with siblings, or societal standards? Understanding the origin helps democratize their perceived validity.

Reflective questions

Step 1: Negative Self-Perception and Limiting Beliefs

3 How have these beliefs impacted my decisions and actions up to this point?

Examine key decisions—career choices, relationships, missed opportunities—and assess how they were influenced by particular beliefs. Recognize that these beliefs may have closed doors to potential progress.

4 What evidence do I have that contradicts these beliefs?

Actively seek instances where you succeeded despite feelings of inadequacy. Acknowledge wins, skills, or compliments you might habitually downplay. Use this evidence to defy and dismantle limiting beliefs, reinforcing the truth of your capabilities.

Step 2: The Triggering Situation

In the complex cycle of self-sabotage, the triggering situation serves as the initiating event that activates negative patterns and behaviors. Understanding how certain circumstances can provoke these responses is crucial to interrupting the cycle and fostering healthier reactions.

■ The Anatomy of a Triggering Situation

A triggering situation is any event, interaction, or circumstance that elicits a heightened emotional response, often serving as a precursor to self-destructive behaviors. These situations are unique to each individual and are deeply tied to personal experiences, past traumas, or unresolved emotional issues.

For some, a triggering situation might be a critical meeting at work where performance is being evaluated, while for others, it could be a social gathering where social connections and communication skills are put to the test. These scenarios stir up fears or insecurities, activating a “fight, flight, or freeze” response rooted in survival instincts.

Following the occurrence of a triggering situation, individuals might resort to coping mechanisms that feel comfortable in the short term—like procrastination, avoidance, or indulgence in unhealthy habits—but detrimental over time.

■ Identifying Personal Triggers

Recognizing these situations is essential for developing a strategy to address and manage them effectively. Self-awareness can be significantly heightened through consistent practice and reflection, allowing one to anticipate and alter their responses proactively.

■ Navigating Emotional Reactions

Once a triggering situation is identified, it's vital to explore the emotions and thoughts it provokes. Understanding this connection clarifies how certain beliefs and perceptions come into play, often reinforcing the cycle of self-sabotage.

Reflective questions

Step 2: The Triggering Situation

1 What specific situations consistently provoke a strong emotional response in me?

Make a list of scenarios that typically evoke stress, anxiety, or defensiveness. Is it public speaking? Interacting with authority figures? Identifying these triggers brings awareness to the starting point of self-sabotaging behaviors.

2 What emotions do I typically experience during these triggering events, and how do they manifest in my thoughts and behaviors?

Map out the emotions—fear, anger, sadness—that arise during these situations. Do you experience a racing heart, sweaty palms, avoidance? Observe associated thoughts and how they manifest in tangible actions or inactions.

Reflective questions

Step 2: The Triggering Situation

3 What underlying fears or beliefs (possibly tied to past experiences) might be activated by these situations?

Connect the dots between current perceptions and past experiences that might have shaped them. Are these emotions fueled by a fear of judgment, failure, or inadequacy based on past criticisms or failures?

4 What healthier strategies can I employ to manage my response the next time I'm in a triggering situation?

Brainstorm solutions and coping mechanisms that can help navigate these situations calmly and constructively. Could deep breathing, cognitive reframing, or seeking grounding support from a trusted friend help to defuse your initial response?

Step 3: Fear of Failure

Fear of failure is a formidable emotional force that often underpins self-sabotaging behavior. This fear acts as a powerful deterrent, preventing individuals from taking risks, seizing opportunities, or fully engaging with life's challenges due to the perceived threat of falling short. Understanding and addressing this fear is crucial for personal and professional growth.

■ The Nature of Fear of Failure

Fear of failure manifests in various forms: self-doubt, perfectionism, procrastination, or avoidance of challenges. It is often rooted in early life experiences, cultural expectations, or distorted beliefs about success and self-worth. When left unchecked, this fear can severely limit one's potential and lead to a cycle of inaction and regret.

The thought processes driven by a fear of failure are typically irrational and catastrophic, imagining the worst possible outcomes. These patterns reinforce a defensive stance, as people equate personal worth with achievement, intertwining their identity tightly with success. This perspective hinders creativity and innovation, as it discourages experimentation and risk-taking essential for growth.

■ Recognizing the Impact

The fear of failure doesn't just impact personal goals; it can extend to relationships, career choices, and personal well-being. Decisions become colored by an overemphasis on avoiding failure rather than pursuing success, leading to opportunities being missed or undervalued.

Thus, conquering this fear is about learning to embrace failure as a part of the learning process and not as a defining endpoint. An effective approach involves reframing perspectives and altering the narrative around failure.

■ Fostering a Growth Mindset

Addressing fear of failure requires cultivating a growth mindset, where challenges are viewed as opportunities for development rather than threats to one's self-image. Celebrating small achievements and learning from mistakes is key. This recalibration shifts the focus from end results to ongoing improvement and resilience.

Reflective questions

Step 3: Fear of Failure

1 How does the fear of failure generally influence my decision-making process?

Reflect on recent decisions in both professional and personal settings. How significantly does the avoidance of failure shape the choices you make? Recognizing patterns helps in understanding the depth of its impact.

2 What specific past experiences might have reinforced my fear of failure?

Identify key moments in your history that might have contributed to this fear. Were there instances of harsh criticism, excessive praise contingent on perfection, or comparisons with others? Recognizing these influences can offer insights for healing and progress.

Reflective questions

Step 3: Fear of Failure

3 How do I typically react when faced with the possibility of failure, and what are the costs or consequences of this reaction?

Analyze your default response—is it avoidance, over-preparation, or giving up at the first hurdle? Consider the long-term consequences of these strategies, such as missed opportunities or heightened anxiety.

4 What steps can I take to reframe my perception of failure and build resilience when faced with setbacks?

Generate practical steps for reframing failure as feedback for growth. Could you view a failure as a learning curve and imagine its potential positive outcomes? Incorporate resilience-building practices like self-compassion and persistent goal-setting.

Step 4: Understanding Self-Sabotage

A Path to Personal Growth

Self-sabotage is a behavioral pattern where individuals disrupt their own development, success, or well-being through negative actions or attitudes. These actions can be conscious or unconscious, leading to obstacles that prevent us from achieving our goals. Recognizing and understanding self-sabotaging behaviors is crucial for personal growth and fulfillment. Here, we delve into common self-sabotage actions and provide reflective questions to aid in overcoming these patterns.

■ Common Self-Sabotage Actions

- 1. Procrastination:** Putting off important tasks or decisions can stall progress and create unnecessary stress. This delay might stem from fear of failure or success, perfectionism, or lack of confidence.
- 2. Negative Self-Talk:** Persistent criticism or pessimistic thoughts can erode self-esteem and foster a defeatist attitude. Phrases like “I’m not good enough” or “I always fail” can hinder motivation and resilience.
- 3. Setting Unrealistic Goals:** Setting the bar too high or low can lead to discouragement and burnout. Unrealistic expectations can make failure seem inevitable, derailing efforts and motivation.
- 4. Avoiding Responsibility:** Dodging accountability for actions can lead to blaming others and a lack of personal growth. This can create a cycle where learning from mistakes is hampered, impeding improvement and adaptation.

Reflective questions

Step 4: Understanding Self-Sabotage: A Path to Personal Growth

- 1

What fears are holding me back from pursuing my goals or making positive changes?

Understanding the root cause of your fears, such as fear of failure or rejection, can provide insight into why you might unconsciously hold yourself back.
- 2

How does my self-talk impact my actions and decisions?

Reflect on the tone and content of your inner dialogues. Identifying negative patterns allows you to consciously replace them with positive affirmations and constructive feedback.

Reflective questions

Step 4: Understanding Self-Sabotage: A Path to Personal Growth

3 Are my goals aligned with my values and capabilities?

Evaluate whether your targets are realistic and meaningful. Ensuring your goals resonate with your core values can boost motivation and commitment.

4 In what ways can I take more responsibility for my actions and their outcomes?

Consider how taking ownership can empower and liberate you from cycles of blame. Acknowledge past mistakes as learning opportunities that steer you towards better decision-making and growth.

Step 5: Consequences of Self-Sabotage

The Hidden Costs

Self-sabotage manifests in actions that, often unconsciously, prevent individuals from achieving their goals and realizing their potential. Its insidious nature can have profound and lasting consequences on various aspects of life, including personal growth, professional success, relationships, and overall well-being. Understanding the consequences of self-sabotage is essential for redirecting one's path towards a more fulfilling life.

■ Consequences of Self-Sabotage

- 1. Stalled Personal and Professional Growth:** By undermining their own efforts, individuals hinder progress in both personal and professional spheres. Self-sabotaging behaviors such as procrastination or fear-based decision-making can prevent people from seizing opportunities for advancement or learning new skills, leading to stagnation.
- 2. Strained Relationships:** Self-sabotage can manifest as self-isolation, conflict avoidance, or lack of communication, which can strain relationships with family, friends, and colleagues. The resulting conflicts and misunderstandings often create a cycle of mistrust and alienation.
- 3. Diminished Self-Esteem:** Engaging in self-sabotaging behaviors reinforces negative self-perceptions and feeds into a cycle of self-doubt and low confidence. This erosion of self-esteem can perpetuate a belief that failure is inevitable, making it difficult to alter destructive patterns.
- 4. Increased Stress and Anxiety:** By constantly working against one's own interests, individuals may experience heightened stress and anxiety. This emotional strain can lead to a decreased ability to cope with challenges and an increased susceptibility to burnout or mental health issues.

Reflective questions

Step 5: Consequences of Self-Sabotage: The Hidden Costs

1 What is the long-term impact of my actions on my personal and professional development?

Reflect on how habitual behaviors could be limiting your growth and opportunities. Visualize the potential trajectory of your life if these patterns persist, and consider the benefits of change.

2 How are my actions affecting my relationships with others?

Assess how self-sabotage might be creating barriers or tensions in your interactions. Explore ways to cultivate honest communication and address unresolved conflicts that hinder meaningful connections.

Reflective questions

Step 5: Consequences of Self-Sabotage: The Hidden Costs

3 What beliefs about myself might be feeding into these patterns of self-sabotage?

Delve into underlying beliefs and narratives that sustain negative behaviors. Replace them with healthier, encouraging thoughts to foster a positive self-image.

4 How can I manage stress and anxiety without resorting to self-sabotaging behaviors?

Identify healthier coping mechanisms for stress and anxiety, such as mindfulness, exercise, or creative hobbies. Developing a toolkit of positive strategies can help diminish the reliance on self-destructive actions.

Self-sabotage quiz

Why do we self sabotage?

Take the quiz and find out which L.I.F.E element has contributed to your self sabotaging.

L Low
self-concept

I Internalized
traditions

F Fear
of the unknown and change

E Excessive
need for control

STATEMENT		TRUE?
A	Your feelings about yourself depend on situational factors, such as what people say to you, how you look, or how you are treated.	☐
A	You measure your self worth based on your accomplishments in life.	☐
A	You have trouble identifying the things that you like about yourself (Tip, try and list five things that you like about yourself. If you have trouble with this task, then answer YES)	☐
A	You need help knowing who you are and understanding your identity, such as your morals, values, and beliefs.	☐
A	You often compare yourself to others and their achievements and wonder if you can achieve similar things.	☐
B	You have always been told that risk taking is dangerous and that the world is a scary place.	☐
B	You have grown up around an anxious person, such as a parent or sibling who always seemed nervous and worried about things.	☐
B	When you were young a significant adult could never accomplish their goals, which used to discourage them with their future efforts.	☐
B	You grew up with high expectations and standards, and if you did not meet others expectations you were put down and criticised.	☐
B	You grew up without having any real good role models in your life. All your accomplishments have been done on your own.	☐

STATEMENT	TRUE?
C You don't like surprises or unplanned things. You prefer routine and if your usual schedule or structure doesn't happen then you get angry.	☐
C You don't deal well with change in your life. For example, if you started a new job, instead of feeling excited you felt anxious and worried.	☐
C When you don't know what to do in a situation you feel nervous and panicky.	☐
C You are constantly putting yourself down with negative self talk, such as "I can't do this" or "I'm a failure."	☐
C When you have gone out of your comfort zone and tried something new, it was a disaster and then it discouraged you from trying new things.	☐
D You get called a control freak often.	☐
D You always have to be right and win every argument.	☐
D You are a harsh critic on others, but also on yourself.	☐
D You like to correct others when they make a mistake or when they are wrong, (no matter how big or small it may be.)	☐
D You don't admit your faults and you have a very hard time admitting that you are wrong.	☐

Count up all the true marks that are linked to each letter. Then, check to see which L.I.F.E element you have the most true marks. If you have a tie, this would mean that you have a mixture of the two elements.

If you have very few true marks, that is great; you can rest assured that you are not self-sabotaging your life. You have many strengths that you can rely on that can help you with other obstacles in your life.

Added. Write your totals here: A ____ B ____ C ____ D ____ Then read the page for your highest letter.

Quiz results: **A and B**

Low self-concept · Internalized beliefs

MOSTLY A'S = LOW SELF-CONCEPT

When people meet someone new for the first time, we usually introduce ourselves by providing information about who we are. We typically say things such as “I’m a nurse,” or “I’m studying at college,” or “I’m a swimmer” to describe who we are. How we view ourselves and our statements about ourselves are all part of our self-concept.

Self-concept is how we perceive ourselves; it involves everything about ourselves, such as our thoughts and feelings about ourselves physically, personally, and socially.

There are three main concepts of self-concept:

- Self-image. How we view ourselves, including our physical and cognitive evaluations
- Ideal self. The person we wish to become.
- Self-worth. This is also known as self-esteem, formed by social interactions and feedback from others.

When you have a low self-concept, it usually goes hand in hand with low self-esteem and confidence, and you tend to believe that you can don’t have the ability to become your ideal self. The low self-concept can even go as far as having self-sabotaging thoughts such as, “I don’t deserve good things in life” or “I’ll never be good enough.” The more you self-sabotage, the more you reinforce your low self-concept; the cycle goes on.

To break this cycle, first, you must increase your self-concept, develop a strong sense of self and identity, and secondly, identify the self-sabotaging comments and put-downs to try and break that cycle.

MOSTLY B'S = INTERNALIZED BELIEFS

Your experiences, attitude, and beliefs are part of what makes you who you are. They affect how you think, what you do, and how you do it. An internalized belief is something we unconsciously believe about ourselves. Outside influences have all formed and internalized these internal messages and beliefs. Your background, upbringing, experiences, and relationships will all have played a part in how you see things.

Beliefs are developed and inherited. As we grow up, we unconsciously watch, learn and take on the views of those around us, especially those we admire. Parents, siblings, coaches, teachers, mentors, and workmates pass their opinions and beliefs on to us, and we can accept them. We might turn them into our thoughts or reject them in time.

Unfortunately, we learn to take on both the good and bad beliefs of others; for example, we might be repeatedly told what to worry about and fear in life, which could end up holding us back or even self-sabotage.

For example, if you had an overly critical parent that was judgemental and questioned everything that you did, your inner critic would self-sabotage all your decisions in life, possibly leaving you to procrastinate and never entirely buy into anything with complete confidence because your inner voice would contribute to a lack of motivation, reluctant to try and do new things, fear of being criticized, as well as craving acceptance and approval from others.

Quiz results: C

Fear of the unknown and change

MOSTLY C'S = FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN AND CHANGE

Humans are creatures of habit and routine. Fear of change is one of the most common fears that people face. Although stress from change is a natural part of life, it is difficult for everyone and will always cause feelings of overwhelm to some extent. Throughout your life, you will deal with change in many ways. Some changes are very minor and easy to get past. Other changes may be more significant, leading to elevated stress levels.

Our brains are lazy by nature, and they love it when everything stays exactly as it's always been so they can run on autopilot, knowing that we're safe in the life we've always known. Our brains are constantly looking for the easiest and most energy-efficient way to operate, so around 95% of our lives are run without even thinking about it.

When was the last time you had to think about how to wash your hair or get dressed? We do these things subconsciously, without any effort of thinking, because it is physically wired into our brains. No wonder, when faced with change, most of us find it kind of scary.

Our brains love familiarity and don't like the unknown and, most of all, change.

Any particular change can cause fear because it is the unknown, and our brains are very good at perceiving change as fearful and dangerous. Animals might fear an immediate danger that is happening right now, but can we fear something that might happen that isn't happening now, that isn't even showing its ugly face at the moment? Excessive fear of change is an unhealthy coping mechanism attempting to protect you; your mind is holding you back from dangerous situations you have already played out in your head. So instead of making an uncomfortable change, your mind and body would stick with the same old thing because it's what you already know, and you have learned how to handle it, even if the situation is terrible for you.

For example, if you are in a toxic relationship and know you need to leave, you can self-sabotage yourself by listing all the possible bad things that 'could' happen if you make the change and justify your reasons to stay.

Quiz results: **D**, and quick tips

Excessive need for control · Quick tips for ending self-sabotage

MOSTLY D'S = EXCESSIVE NEED FOR CONTROL

Control can be defined as exerting influence over one's environment or the actions or behaviors of another person—it is sometimes used excessively by those who fear the unpredictable and ambiguous, feel they need to prove themselves or fear losing control.

From an evolutionary point of view, if we control our environment, we have a far better chance of staying alive. Our deep subconscious mind thus gives us strong biochemical prods when facing danger (such as the fight-or-flight reaction).

Look around and watch what we as humans do. So much of our everyday activity is related to achieving our much-needed sense of control.

Rituals, for example, are everywhere. So why do we have them? They reassure people that everything is as it was and provide a familiar framework for our daily lives.

Social norms and values tell us what to do, what is right and wrong, what is good and bad. When everyone in the group follows the rules, we feel a sense of control.

Being in control of your life sounds positive, and in most cases, it can be. But, the desire for control may be rooted in a fear of uncertainty, and for some people, the need to control everything can become all-consuming.

Like most aspects of mental health, controlling behaviors exist on a spectrum — most people experience them to some degree. However, if you feel the need to control everything and events around you, you may consider yourself a perfectionist, holding yourself (and others) to high standards.

A persistent desire or need for control may be linked to difficulty accepting uncertainty. You may create a sense of security and predictability by exerting control over every aspect of a situation. On the other hand, if you constantly need to control your life, you may be holding yourself back by not letting go and trying new things or accepting things that are out of your control.

Another way people like to feel in control is with your feelings; this can be especially detrimental in relationships, as it can stop you from being vulnerable and opening up to your partner, ultimately providing a deeper trust and connection. You may sabotage your relationship by staying in control but never feeling vulnerable.

QUICK TIPS FOR ENDING SELF-SABOTAGE

- Work on your self-concept. Understand and identify your core values, beliefs, and morals. Then, try and stick to them and behave in ways that align with your self-concept.
- Challenge your internalized beliefs, challenge your negative self-talk, and stand up to your inner critic.
- Challenge your fear of change and the unknown, accept that it is a part of life, and instead of focusing on all the negative things that could happen, embrace the new path you are on and look at the positives.
- Please just give up your need for control. You can't control everything in your life and shouldn't have to. Instead, have confidence that no matter what life throws at you, you have the skills to overcome it.

Faulty thinking and reframing thoughts

Catch the thought, then try another

Faulty thinking are thinking styles that our mind uses to convince us of one thing when in reality it's completely untrue. The inaccurate thoughts are used to reinforce negative thinking patterns.

They are biased perspectives we take on unknowingly and reinforce over time. These patterns of thoughts are often subtle and difficult to recognize when they become a regular feature of your everyday thinking. That is why they can be so damaging because it's hard to change something when you don't realize it needs to be changed.

REFRAMING THOUGHTS

Our thoughts determine our behaviour, therefore it is important to have positive thoughts. Try and change the negative thinking into more positive productive thinking.

Instead of..		Try..
Everyone is going to stare at me	→	<i>People might look at me because they like my outfit</i>
What if I make a mistake	→	
I wont know anyone at the party	→	
I don't want to do this	→	
No body at school likes me	→	
I am a failure	→	
I am going to come last	→	

The power of yet

A growth mindset in one word

Imagine believing that you are capable of achieving anything.

When you develop a growth mindset, you understand that your abilities are not fixed and that learning new skills and intelligence is developed over time with persistence and determination.

A growth mindset opens the door to new possibilities, even those you once might have thought were unattainable.

I can't do it

YET

I don't get it

YET

I don't understand this

YET

Believe in the power of

YET

This doesn't make sense

YET

It doesn't work

YET

I'm not good at this

YET

Often when self-sabotage, we attach our thoughts with “what if?”. For example, “What if I fail my test,” “what if the doctor has bad news,” ‘what if I’m late.’ When we do this, we are already predicting a bad situation and failing to see any other possible outcomes. If you find yourself saying “What if,” catch your thought and think of a positive “What if” situation instead.

NEGATIVE WHAT IF?.....

POSITIVE WHAT IF?.....

Fear of intimacy

Red flags, then a 30-item check

To be intimate with someone is to share close emotional or physical ties. If you fear intimacy, you often have a subconscious fear of closeness or fear of becoming too close to others. As a result, you may unknowingly avoid intimacy and make excuses to avoid getting too close to anyone romantically. Though you may long for intimacy, it is also possible that you never seem to allow yourself to get vulnerable.

FEAR OF INTIMACY RED FLAGS

»» You have trust issues or have been hurt in your past relationships.

»» You suffer from low self-esteem.

»» You feel uncomfortable with physical contact.

»» You have difficulty expressing your needs.

»» You are a perfectionist.

FEAR OF INTIMACY QUIZ

Read each statement carefully and rate it as either 3 (very true), 2 (somewhat true) or 1 (not true at all).

#	STATEMENT	3	2	1
1	I feel uncomfortable telling my partner about things in the past that I am ashamed of.	☐	☐	☐
2	I feel uncomfortable talking with my partner about a past situation that really hurt me.	☐	☐	☐
3	I find it hard expressing myself and my feelings to my partner.	☐	☐	☐
4	There has been times when my partner was upset and I found it difficult to show them that I care about them.	☐	☐	☐
5	I am afraid to confide my true feelings to my partner.	☐	☐	☐
6	I get anxious just thinking about telling my partner that I love them.	☐	☐	☐
7	At times I feel uncomfortable with my partner for no reason at all.	☐	☐	☐
8	I feel discomfort when I express my feelings to my partner.	☐	☐	☐
9	I feel afraid to make any long term commitments with my partner.	☐	☐	☐
10	I feel very uncomfortable sharing my past experiences to my partner, even the happy ones.	☐	☐	☐
11	I get nervous when I show physical affection to my partner.	☐	☐	☐
12	I find it difficult to be truly open to my partner.	☐	☐	☐

#	STATEMENT	3	2	1
13	I don't like it when my partner emotionally depends on me.	☐	☐	☐
14	I am afraid to share with my partner what I dislike about myself.	☐	☐	☐
15	I am afraid to get closer with my partner as there is a risk that I could get hurt.	☐	☐	☐
16	I feel more comfortable keeping private information to myself.	☐	☐	☐
17	I feel don't comfortable being spontaneous with my partner.	☐	☐	☐
18	I am a closed book, I am a very private person.	☐	☐	☐
19	I often have moments of unexplainable frustration, coldness, or indifference towards your partner?	☐	☐	☐
20	I feel uncomfortable when my partner shares their personal feelings and experiences with me.	☐	☐	☐
21	I am afraid of sharing my person thoughts and feelings with my partner.	☐	☐	☐
22	I find it difficult to trust my partner.	☐	☐	☐
23	I feel comfortable telling my partner what my needs are.	☐	☐	☐
24	Sometimes I just shut down when I am around my partner, for no reason at all.	☐	☐	☐
25	I feel stuck at a certain point in my relationships and find it hard to move to the next stage in my relationships.	☐	☐	☐
26	I feel uncomfortable showing physical affection, even though I want to receive it.	☐	☐	☐
27	In my past I have had too many or too few unstable relationships.	☐	☐	☐
28	I fear being rejected or hurt by your partner.	☐	☐	☐
29	I have low self esteem and often devalue myself.	☐	☐	☐
30	I have been told in the past by my ex partners that I always keep them at arms length.	☐	☐	☐

Fear of intimacy: results

Add up your results. You should have a score between 30 - 90.

SCORE BETWEEN 70 - 90

You have a high score on the 'Fear of Intimacy' quiz, which means you are most likely struggling to get emotional and physical with your partner. You may or may not be doing this deliberately.

Having a fear of intimacy in your relationship can cause stress, which could lead to a breakdown in your relationship, even before any real intimacy begins.

In the future, you may need to understand why you have developed such a fear of intimacy and try and work on opening up to your next partner to maintain any future relationships.

SCORE BETWEEN 50 - 70

You have a middle score on the 'Fear of Intimacy' quiz, which means that although you are not entirely closed off to your partner, you still have many areas in your relationship that you need to work on within yourself.

Try to understand what area of Intimacy you struggle with the most, whether it is emotionally, physically, spiritually, or intellectually.

To be truly intimate with someone means you can honestly reveal your true self to your partner and connect on a deep level.

In the future, try to grow from your past relationships, learn from where you held yourself back, and move forward.

SCORE BETWEEN 30 - 50

You have a low score on the 'Fear of Intimacy' quiz, meaning you do not fear intimacy in your relationships. This is great as you feel very secure and confident within yourself. As a result, you can express yourself clearly and comfortably with your partner.

In your future relationships, remember that there is constantly growing and learning to be done; keep being honest with yourself, and don't let anyone take advantage of you; don't be fearful in your relationships.

Even if your heart is broken, "Better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all."

Procrastination and avoidance

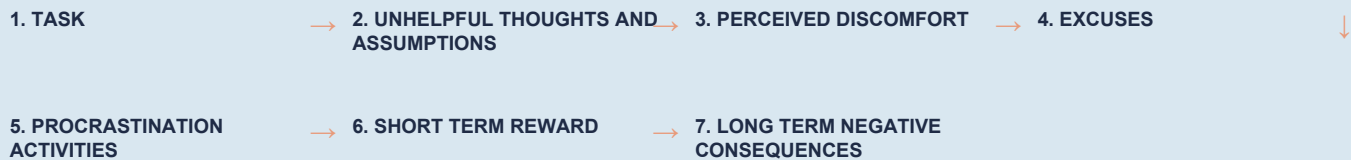
The circle, and ways to overcome it

What type of person are you? Are you the type of person who tackles things head-on and gets tasks done right away, or do you have a bad habit of avoiding, procrastinating, and putting things off?

Procrastination is delaying or postponing a task or set of functions and can be self-sabotage in disguise. It derails us from completing missions and prevents us from achieving our bigger goals.

Avoidance and procrastination bring many negative consequences that can affect many aspects of your life, such as feeling overwhelmed, increased stress, anxiety, guilt, fear, worry, depression, burnout, and low self-esteem.

CIRCLE OF AVOIDANCE AND PROCRASTINATION



WAYS TO OVERCOME PROCRASTINATION

- 1 Set specific and realistic goals.
- 2 Assess your procrastination. Identify the things that you delay unnecessarily. For example, you may browse your social media accounts instead of studying.
- 3 Create an action plan. That involves using relevant anti-procrastination techniques.
- 4 Break tasks into manageable steps, such as into sub-tasks that you can easily complete.
- 5 Make it harder to procrastinate by removing potential distractions.
- 6 Set yourself some deadlines, such as deciding that you'll complete a specific task by noon tomorrow.
- 7 Identify and address your fears by considering what advice you'd give to a friend.
- 8 Increase your motivation by marking streaks of days on which you achieve your goals.
- 9 Use time-management techniques by alternating consistently between work and rest.
- 10 Develop self-efficacy by reflecting on your successes.

All about me

NAME _____

NICKNAME _____

STAR SIGN _____

D.O.B _____

FAVORITE FOODS

FAVORITE SONGS

IF I WON A MILLION DOLLARS, WHAT WOULD I DO WITH IT?

WORDS THAT DESCRIBE ME

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO

A QUOTE THAT INSPIRES ME IS

All about self-sabotaging

How would you define self-sabotaging?

What are some of your self-sabotaging behaviors?

How do your self-sabotaging behaviors impacts your well-being and life?

All about self-sabotaging

Why do you think you self-sabotage?

Are there any particular self-sabotaging patterns that you can recognize?

What can you do differently?

All about self-sabotaging

How can you reward yourself?

What coping skills can you put in place so that you have a back up plan when things get tough?

Reflection

Gratitude.

When you show gratitude, you express your thanks for something, letting us appreciate the memories and things we still have. So, for example, while you will be feeling incredibly sad that you have lost someone, you might still be grateful for the time you had with them or for the things you still have.

A memory with my loved one that I am grateful for is...

Things about me that I am grateful for...

Things that I have learnt this year and grateful for are...

My loved one would be most grateful for...

I am grateful for my life because?

Self-care

Self-care is an essential survival skill. Self-care refers to things we practice or engage in regularly to reduce stress and maintain or enhance our physical and mental well-being. Self-care is really anything you do for yourself that makes yourself feel better or cared for can be considered self-care.

1	PHYSICAL	Sleep, stretching, physical activity, healthy eating and rest.
2	EMOTIONAL	Stress management, gratitude, acts of kindness, forgiveness and compassion.
3	SOCIAL	Personal boundaries, support systems, positive social media and spending time with loved ones.
4	SPIRITUAL	Time alone, space, yoga, meditation, mindfulness, connection and nature.
5	PERSONAL	Hobbies, self identity, doing the things that bring you enjoyment.
6	SPACE	Safety, organization, clean and tidy, security and stability.
7	WORK	Time management, work boundaries, break time and knowledge.

Added: tick the two you neglect most, and write one action for each on the reflection page.

Habit tracker

Month: _____ · the workbook’s circular tracker, as a grid

HABIT	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Example (from the workbook). April: Exercise, Meditate, Cook a healthy meal, Make my bed, with the days each was done shaded in.

NOTES

Create an “I am great” folder

Could you down all the things that you are great at or have accomplished so far? These could be screenshots of kind messages you've received from others, coworkers, friends, or family members. You could also include media clippings, data metrics, or other figures that show your accomplishments.

Self-esteem bucket

What fills it, what makes holes, what mends them

WHAT FILLS YOUR BUCKET AND MAKES YOU FEEL GOOD ABOUT YOURSELF?

What do you do well? For example, exercise, helping someone, mastering a new skill, spending time with friends.

WHAT CAUSES HOLES IN YOUR BUCKET AND MAKES YOU FEEL BAD ABOUT YOURSELF?

For example, negative thinking, worrying, getting in trouble and stress.

HEALTHY COPING SKILLS EXAMPLES:

Gratitude, mindfulness, self-care, socializing, sleep, exercise.

The bucket and stress-bucket illustrations are replaced by these three panels; the questions are the workbook's.

Self-forgiveness

Nobody is perfect, and we all make mistakes. However, making mistakes is what helps us learn and grow as individuals. Your self-esteem needs to let go of any negativity you are holding onto and forgive yourself to move forward in your life.

Could you list some things you must forgive yourself for and let go of?

Reflection.

Note on the text. Source slips corrected and listed: “develop a strong self of self” → “sense of self”; “To be truly intimate with someone means Intimacy means you can...” → one “means”; the asterisks around reflective question 3 in Step 5; the Ways to Overcome Procrastination list, numbered 1–7 then 5, 6, 7 in the source, is numbered 1–10. Kept as written: “democratize their perceived validity”, “you can don’t have the ability”, “others expectations”, “I feel don’t comfortable”, “towards your partner?”, “my person thoughts”, “how do your self-sabotaging behaviors impacts”, “Could you down all the things”. The circular habit tracker is given as a grid; the illustrations (buckets, balloons, hexagons) are replaced by plain panels.