



By Denise King Gillingham, MSW

Let Me Introduce Myself: I Am Your Saboteur!

Learn to manage that second-guessing voice in your head.



We all have them. They take many different forms and have various identities. They are the little voices that play repeatedly in our heads. Perhaps you have made a decision to try something new and you hear that little voice saying, “You can’t do that” or “You’re not smart enough.” Or maybe the voice is saying, “You haven’t worked hard enough for that” or “You don’t deserve this success.” Whatever the words, the message is the same: judgment and negativity.

This little voice can play a big role: it is your saboteur. Its purpose is to keep you safe by preventing you from taking excessive risks. But safety’s good, right? Not always. There are times in your life when taking a risk and initiating change are necessary. When the saboteur appears at these times, you avoid moving forward in important ways.

Below are some suggestions for saboteur management. Remember, you are in charge of your life, and being aware of

your saboteur and its patterns is important for steering your life in the direction you choose.

- **Increase awareness of your saboteur.** An easy way to remain aware of your saboteur is to keep track of the times a negative message plays its tape in your head. Keep a record of how many times the tape repeats. It is amazing how frequently we receive negative messages. Listen to the message and then replace it with a positive, self-affirming statement. For example, replace “You do not deserve your success” with “I deserve my success.”
- **Look for patterns.** When does your saboteur appear? Often they have patterns. Some appear at the beginning of a project, whereas others appear just before you have achieved your goals. Learn when your saboteur likes to show up so that you can turn it away at the door.

Just as the saboteur can take many different forms, there are many different methods for managing it.

- **Create an identity for your saboteur.** What does it look like? Does it have a name? How does it dress? It can be helpful to draw a picture of your saboteur. The more you know about it, the easier it is to recognize and manage it.
- **Use humor.** It is very difficult to be afraid of or influenced by something that you are laughing at. Acting playful when dealing with the saboteur removes some

It is very difficult to be afraid of or influenced by something that you are laughing at. Acting playful when dealing with the saboteur removes some of the seriousness and lessens the power of its negative messages.

of the seriousness and lessens the power of its negative messages.

- **Focus on your goal from a values perspective.** Let's say you are thinking of buying a new house and your saboteur is on the scene, saying you do not deserve it. If you focus on the values involved in buying the house—like family, stability, comfort, and security—the focus shifts from the saboteur to the values that are most important to you. This is yet another way of managing your saboteur.

Just as the saboteur can take many different forms, there are many different methods for managing it. Whichever management method you choose, two things are widely applicable: a saboteur's power is lessened by awareness, so learn as much as possible about your saboteur and its patterns and identity; and focusing on a goal that embodies your values and taking steps toward achieving it are more powerful than fear or negative messages. Although somewhat paradoxical, it can be "safer" to make a well-planned life change than to stay in a seemingly comfortable situation. Achieving the life you want will require a degree of shifting and discomfort. Remain positive and enjoy the journey in the direction of the life you choose! ❀

Denise King Gillingham, MSW, CPCC, is a certified co-active coach who specializes in helping people achieve enduring life change through accessing their inner wisdom. Her international practice includes clients from all walks of life. Denise received her master's degree in social work from Columbia University and has been a mental health professional for more than 15 years. She shifted her focus from therapy to coaching in 2006. Her professional

experience includes private therapy practice in Prague, Czech Republic; crisis intervention with New York University; in-patient therapy at Payne Whitney Clinic in New York City; and substance abuse counseling at Bronx VA Medical Center in New York City. She develops and conducts workshops on emotional intelligence for organizations in the United States and Europe. Contact Denise at dkgcoach@gmail.com.



Support and Inspire the Women You Love...

Confidence Beads™ each carry a special message, designed to inspire and support the women you care about.



Whether she's working toward a gutsy goal, facing a life challenge, or just in need of a smile, Confidence Beads make the perfect gift. And for each bead purchased, we make donations to stamp out domestic violence and to Ovarians for the Cure of ovarian cancer! 🌸



Confidence
beads™



Order Today!
www.confidencebeads.com