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## **SELF-SABOTAGE: Are You Doing This?**

**By Dr. Larry W. Waterman, Registered Psychologist**

When was the last time that you set a goal for yourself that you knew you would like to achieve but was outside your comfort zone? Perhaps your goal was to lose that forty pounds that you have had for the last eight years, go back to school and complete your degree, develop a plan to expand your business, or some other equally important goal. For the vast majority of people, they start out with great energy and determination but as soon as they get close to success, something happens that stops them. It's hard to identify exactly what happens but the end result is the same – the goal never gets achieved!

What is particularly strange is that the “road block” seems to occur just as you can begin to realize that you can be successful. You would think that anyone at that point would be even more motivated to complete all the steps to achieve their goal. However, we human beings are very complex and very little that we do, either positively or negatively, is as simple as it seems. Self-sabotage refers to how we stop ourselves from achieving a worthy goal either consciously or subconsciously. It can be something as simple as getting distracted which takes away our focus and stops our momentum. Sometimes we try to be sure that what we are doing is absolutely perfect and there is no downside to achieving our goal. Of course, the more we analyze the situation, the more “stuck” we become. You're probably familiar with “paralysis by analysis” which is what happens in such a situation.

Sometimes, we give up because of the doubts of our family and close friends. Take a close look at those people around you. How many of them are extremely successful at achieving the goals they set for themselves? You only have to look at the high level of obesity and the number of people who retire with minimal financial support to realize that there are very few highly successful goal achievers in our society.

What can you do to achieve a goal that makes you uncomfortable when you think about it? First, develop a very clear idea of what you want. The more specific you can be, the greater the chance you will be successful. Second, write down your goal as clearly and specifically as possible. This is a crucial step. Research shows that if you don't write down your plan, your chances of success drop dramatically. Third, write down the steps necessary to achieve your goal. Don't make each step too big. Rather, make each step attainable and specific to reaching your goal. Fourth, write down each date when you will evaluate how well you are doing. Remember, you may have to revise various steps along the way. If you do, establish new target dates when you will evaluate your progress. When you do evaluate your progress, be extremely honest and blunt. If you haven't fully achieved a step, identify what else needs to be done and do it. By following these steps, you can achieve your goal.

While it seems to be a simple process, many people find it almost impossible to follow through and achieve their goals. If you are one of these people, you may want to get some professional help to keep you on course and hold you accountable. This is the basis for the “personal coach” movement that is sweeping North America. For many people, a personal coach compared to a psychotherapist is more acceptable.

Over the years, I’ve had numerous people ask for coaching to improve their health, obtain a better job, achieve greater financial success, and other such worthwhile goals. As anybody who has achieved remarkable success in any area will tell you, your chances of success increase dramatically when you include people on your team who can contribute and support you in achieving your goal. As I often point out, you may be able to do it on your own but it’s a lot easier when you have the support and expertise of others to achieve your goal.

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