

# Fear of Success

**Signs of Self-Sabotaging Your Relationships & Goals, & Why You Do It** Self-sabotage may occur when you're subconsciously afraid of succeeding. Here's how fear of success, perfectionism, and self-sabotage combine to hold you back. Fear of success can be just as paralyzing as fear of failure. Many people fear success because it tests their limits and makes them vulnerable to new situations. Even worse, success can expose weaknesses and force people to deal with their flaws.

Success is scary because it involves change. Success can be intimidating and hard to handle. With success comes more challenges and responsibilities – and that can be threatening. Sometimes people fear success because they don't know if they can live up to their achievements. They don't think they're good enough or smart enough. They're afraid they don't have what it takes to rise to the challenge, and they don't know if they can sustain their success. And that's where self-sabotaging behavior comes in.

**Signs of Fear of Success and Self-Sabotage** How do you know if you're afraid of success? Some possible signs of self-sabotage are:

- 1. “Partying” the night before the big presentation.** This can be literal partying (drinking too much, experimenting with drugs, staying out until the wee hours) or metaphorical partying (cleaning your house until 3 a.m., drinking too much coffee or soda pop so you can't sleep). You may be flirting with self-sabotage if you somehow always ruin a good night's rest before a big presentation, exam, or job interview.
- 2. Procrastination.** Putting projects, assignments, or duties off while you take care of non-essential fluff or "make-work" chores can be a sign of fear of success. If you putter around instead of taking care of business, you may be subconsciously sabotaging yourself.
- 3. All talk, no action.** Sometimes certain behaviors look like laziness, but they reveal a fear of success. For instance, you may talk about your life dreams and goals all the time, but you watch TV every night and surf the Internet for hours every day. You never actually take practical steps or exert self-discipline to move in the direction of your goals.
- 4. Negative, pessimistic thoughts and behaviors.** Fear of success can involve an extremely negative perspective of life. “What's the point of dressing up for the job interview? I probably won't get it anyway.” Not trying – and focusing on all the things that can go wrong – is self-sabotaging behavior.

What's the benefit of these self-sabotaging behaviors? They provide an escape hatch. That is, if you party the night before or put your project off to the last minute, you can then shrug off your performance. You have an excuse for not doing well. Instead of facing the fear that you're not good or smart enough, you chalk it up to too many beers.