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My Self-Sabotage Worksheet

Seven short steps to understand one way you get in your own way, and to try something different next time.

01 Signs of self-sabotage: which sound like me?

Tick any that you recognise, even if only sometimes. Recognising a few is normal. Add your own if yours isn't here.

- [ ] Putting things off until it's too late to do them well
- [ ] Starting arguments or pulling away just as I get close to someone
- [ ] Perfectionism that stops me finishing or handing things in
- [ ] Quitting just before the finish line
- [ ] Talking myself down before I've even tried
- [ ] Numbing out (scrolling, drinking, eating, bingeing shows) instead of doing the thing
- [ ] Not preparing properly, so I have an excuse if it goes badly
- [ ] Saying yes to so much that my own goals never get a turn

Any others I notice in myself:

02 Pick one pattern

Choose the one that costs you most right now, or the one you're most ready to look at. Name it plainly.

The pattern I'm going to look at:

A recent time it happened. What was going on, and what did I want?

How much is this pattern getting in my way at the moment?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

A little A lot

03 What it protects me from, and what it costs

Take two or three times this happened. For each, note what you did, what it saved you from feeling or facing in the moment, and what it cost you afterwards. Both columns are real.

The situation Where, when, who	What I did The sabotaging move	What it protected me from The feeling or risk I avoided	What it cost me Later, or over time

04 The belief underneath

Patterns like this often rest on an old belief about yourself, other people or what happens if you really try. Tick any that ring true, then put yours in your own words.

- [ ] If I try my hardest and fail, it proves I'm not good enough.
- [ ] If I succeed, more will be expected and I won't keep it up.
- [ ] People leave once they really get to know me.
- [ ] It has to be perfect or it isn't worth doing.
- [ ] Good things don't last for people like me.
- [ ] Wanting things openly is risky or selfish.

In my own words, the belief this pattern protects:

Where might I have learned it? And is it as true now as it felt then?

05 My if-then plan for next time

Pick the moment the pattern usually starts, and decide now what you'll do instead. Keep the 'then' small enough to do on a bad day.

If...
The moment or feeling that sets it off

Then I will...
One small, specific action

What I'll say to myself in that moment (kind, not harsh):

06 A small experiment

Choose one low-stakes chance this week to do the opposite of the pattern, then see what actually happens. Treat it as a test, not a pass or fail.

My experiment (what, when, where):

What I predict will happen if I don't protect myself this time:

How strongly do I believe that prediction right now?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all — Completely

07 Review: what happened?

Come back after your experiment. Whatever happened, you've learned something about the pattern.

What actually happened? Was it what I predicted?

How strongly do I believe the prediction now?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all — Completely

One thing I'll keep doing, or change, next time:

When you're done, a moment to reflect

- When did this pattern first show up in my life, and what was it helping me cope with then?
- What would I have to feel or face if I stopped doing it?
- If a friend did exactly this, what would I understand about them that I'm not giving myself?
- What's one goal I've quietly stopped going for, and what made me stop?
- What would it look like to be on my own side next time, rather than in my own way?

Free worksheet from selfgrowth.org. Free self-growth worksheets for real life. Fill it in online and it saves as you go: selfgrowth.org/worksheets/self-sabotage-worksheet

If things feel heavier than a worksheet can hold

These are self-reflection tools, not therapy. If you're struggling, especially if you have any thoughts of harming yourself, please reach out to someone now. In the US, call or text **988**. In the UK & Ireland, call **116 123** (Samaritans). Elsewhere, find a free helpline at **findahelpline.com**. If you're in immediate danger, call your local emergency number.