

“Are you your own WORST ENEMY?”

You could be brilliant at motivating your friends or helping your family look on the bright side, but what about dealing with your own issues? The chances are you're not so good at being kind to yourself. So, how can we choose a different approach? Claire Munnings dives in and asks the experts...

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Do you often find that you over-react to negative events and hang on to the stress, shame and resentment caused by them? You're not alone. This sort of self-sabotaging behaviour is common, and can take root after all sorts of upsetting situations, big and small. But, whether it's someone pulling out on you at a roundabout, your manager criticising your work performance or a partner cheating on you, the way you react can dramatically impact your physical and emotional wellbeing and limit your potential for happiness.

“Many people feel a need to have a sense of control over events in their life and find it difficult when things don't work out how they expect them to. We have a preconceived idea of how we think things should be and when it doesn't happen like that we tend to get angry, annoyed, defensive or upset,” explains Carlyne Bennett, a life coach, NLP practitioner and mindfulness instructor (carolynebennett.com). “This way of responding to situations doesn't feel good and doesn't make things better. In fact, it tends to create more stress.”

As a proponent of the law of attraction, Carlyne believes that the damaging energy



caused by such reactions only serves to create more negativity. "From a law of attraction perspective, what we focus on, we see more of. Where attention goes, energy flows," she explains. "The feeling that the stress response creates tends to feel uncomfortable, therefore making us react even more."

Cosmic order

Even if you don't necessarily believe in the law of attraction, you can see how this may arise in different situations. If you didn't get a promotion you were hoping for, for example, you might react by chastising yourself and choosing to believe that you'll never be able to progress with your career. But, by creating more anxiety and lowering your self-worth, you're actually reducing your chances of future success – creating even more strain and self-esteem issues.

Holding onto the emotions caused by this pattern of behaviour is not good for us. We all know that stress can have a significant effect on our bodies and if we cling to feelings like anger, shame, guilt, sadness or resentment over prolonged periods of time, we will begin to notice the impact on our health.

Psychotherapist and leadership coach Deborah Maloney-Marsden (deborahmaloney.com) says it's often the fact we don't properly process or recognise our emotions in these situations which causes a deep-rooted problem.

Let it out

"Crying and talking to others are two ways of releasing and healing, but many of us are told not to cry and prefer not to share our emotions," she says. "The more we hold on to our feelings, the stronger our other, often destructive coping mechanisms need to become and this is where we start to see self-sabotage in the form of addictive behaviours, anger issues, depression or anxiety. Physical symptoms are also noticeable and can show themselves in all sorts of ways – through headaches, back pain, panic attacks and other symptoms."

So, how can we change the way we

"When we self-sabotage we are taking away the opportunity for growth and we are stopping ourselves from moving forward"

react to difficult situations and stop self-sabotaging our lives? Both Deborah and Carolyne believe self-awareness is key.

Changing the pattern

Creating new, more positive patterns is the best way to move forward and pull yourself out of a self-sabotaging-shaped hole. "Exploring how you would prefer to respond in future events starts a positive foundation to support change" Carolyne says. "Recognise you have a choice and look at how you would prefer to respond going forward, then mentally start rehearsing that preferred outcome."

STRAIGHT AFTER THE EVENT – TRY EFT

EFT (which stands for Emotional Freedom Technique and is also called tapping) is a powerful technique proven to reduce cortisol levels and is a fast-evolving technique in the field of energy psychology. It can shift limiting beliefs and stress within minutes and works by releasing energy blockages in our energy system. Working with a qualified practitioner is advised to start with, however EFT is also an effective self-help technique. Try the below exercise...

- 1 Sit back and relax. Think of the scenario and score it from 0-10 (10 relating to the worst feeling you can imagine).
- 2 Tap lightly on certain acupressure points (more details of which can be found online), while talking through the specific issue.
- 3 Now do this for a second time, but incorporate more positive language about what's happened.
- 4 Score the scenario and how you feel again. Often two to three rounds of 'tapping' can relieve energetic blocks instantly and help emotions flow freely leaving a person lighter and more positive.

NH Circle



EFT IS PROVEN TO REDUCE CORTISOL LEVELS AND CAN ELIMINATE STRESS WITHIN MINUTES

Turn to page 104 to read our feature on EFT