

What we desire is our greatest fear

LISA STEINGOLD

I'M AN executive coach and I work with executives from various fields and industries in unlocking potential.

I've observed that most people are as afraid of success as they are of failure. Many are stuck in situations trying to avoid failure and can't step into success because what if they are not able to sustain it?

It might sound ridiculous, but in over eight years' experience I've found what someone most wants is also what they're most afraid of, so they typically end up running away from their deepest fears and deepest desires.

What most people don't realise is that the subconscious is ruling the show. While they say they want to be successful, their behaviour is contradictory.

Carl Jung, in the 1920s, understood many of us have a subconscious or internal saboteur. That's why, the minute we might declare a diet, all we think about is beer or chocolate brownies, and by day four of a diet, 90 percent of us have sabotaged our own efforts.



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We recognise it there, but haven't begun to recognise our inner saboteur exists in our professional lives.

Often, with clients who profess to be extremely busy, on closer examination we see what they're busy with isn't necessarily in line with their vision. The saboteur is at work.

Great, you realise you've got an internal saboteur but how do you work with it? This is not (I'm thrilled to say) an

exercise in positive thinking or affirmations, because the saboteur lives in the subconscious, so these are as helpful as a Band-Aid on a cardiac arrest patient.

What's needed is a good dose of getting real. Write down a list of the daily activities you engage in. Which activities contribute towards your vision and which don't?

Look at the percentage of time you spend on each activity. Take a sheet of paper and examine why you might be afraid of success. While you're at it, write down your fears. The key is allowing a degree of discomfort.

I understand how, in our instant gratification society, this might seem preposterous, but I mean it. Write down all the things you do that make you comfortable and all the things you might need to do to take you towards your dreams, which make you uncomfortable.

Do what makes you uncomfortable, and remember that as you face your fears, you also face your deepest desires.

● Lisa Steingold is an executive coach. Contact her at coach@lisasteingold.com. Visit www.lisasteingold.com