



SELF-SABOTAGE ASSESSMENT

(from *Stop Self-Sabotage*)

By Dr. Judy Ho

Why do we sometimes get in our own way despite our best intentions?

In my research and work, I've found that four elements can lead you to hold yourself back from living your best life. Want to find out which L.I.F.E. factors are getting in your way?

Which of the following are sometimes or mostly true for you? Be honest—no one else has to read your answers! Put a check mark in the True column for all those statements that apply to you.

	Statement	True?
A	The way you feel about yourself on a given day depends largely on situational factors (e.g., what others say to you, how others respond to you, or what your weight is on the scale).	
A	Your self-worth is primarily dictated by your accomplishments or the services that you are providing to others.	
A	Quick! List 5 things you love about yourself. Mark yes if this a tough exercise for you, and/or if you have trouble doing this in less than 30 seconds.	
A	There are times in your adult life when you questioned your identity, who you are, or what you stand for.	

A	When you hear the awesome things that other people achieve, you secretly wonder if you have what it takes to do the same.	
B	When you were a child, you were told or shown that the world is a scary place and that it is dangerous to take risks.	
B	When you were a child, an important adult in your life (parents, teachers) seemed to be overly nervous or anxious about different things (e.g., job, home life, natural disasters).	
B	When you were a child, more often than not an important adult in your life seemed to have struggles meeting their own goals and/or appeared discouraged about their own progress.	
B	When you were a child, an important adult in your life was over-critical of you and/or held you to extremely high standards.	
B	Looking back on your life, you can honestly say that you did not have at least one role model for the major accomplishments of your life. You had to find your own way.	
C	You highly prefer structure and familiarity, and become irate at people or situations that throw you off your usual routine.	
C	When recounting periods of significant change in your life (e.g., moving, getting married, starting a new job, attending a new school), you remember more of the nervousness and discomfort rather than the excitement.	
C	You feel very nervous when you don't know what to expect in a situation.	
C	Once you decide on an important goal for yourself, one of the primary concerns you have is, "What if I fail?"	
C	You have had at least one experience in taking a chance on something new that blew up in your face and led you to feel much more nervous about trying new things later.	
D	Someone in your life has called you a "control freak" at some point.	

D	You often try to have the last word or to win an argument.	
D	You find that you are often a harsh critic of not only yourself, but also others.	
D	You have a tendency to correct others when they are wrong even if it is about somewhat inconsequential things).	
D	Be honest! You have a very tough time admitting you were wrong.	

Count up the number of checkmarks that are associated with each letter (A, B, C, D). The one for which you have the most checkmarks is your primary L.I.F.E. obstacle. If you have a tie, this would suggest that you have more than one dominant L.I.F.E. obstacle and each one might be contributing somewhat equally to self-sabotage. If you have one letter that has the least checkmarks, that's great! This shows a strength in your L.I.F.E. profile—one you can lean on as you work on skills to overcome the other obstacles. If you have an area of identified strength, you can rest easy knowing that this element isn't causing self-sabotage— it is a factor which does not cause you to overestimate threat.

After tallying up your results, check out the descriptions below to learn why you self-sabotage.

For more, check out the [full book](#) or send me your questions at www.drjudyho.com!

Mostly A's = Low/Shaky Self-Concept _____

Mostly B's = Internalized Traditions _____

Mostly C's = Fear of Change/Unknown _____

Mostly D's = Excessive Need for Control _____

Mostly A's = Low or Shaky Self-Concept

Self-concept is your image of who you are and how you define yourself. Some of these characteristics relate to how much value you place on yourself (i.e. your self-esteem or self-worth), the view you have of yourself (self-image), and what you wish you were like (ideal self). When we have low or shaky self-concept, we tend to believe that our ideal self is nothing more than a pipe dream. We lack confidence in our own ability to achieve goals, doubt that good things will ever happen to us, and look to external circumstances and events (like whether our boss immediately compliments us on our work) for how we should feel about ourselves on any given day. We may even believe that we aren't deserving of good things. Self-sabotage can rear its ugly head when we have low self-

concept overall or specifically in a particular role that is aligned with your goal. The more you self-sabotage, the more you reinforce a lower or shaky self-concept.

Mostly B's = Internalized Beliefs

When we are young, the adults who take care of us make especially powerful impressions on us. We tend to adopt their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. There are all sorts of beliefs we might internalize, not only through vicarious learning but also by being told by others what to fear. Sometimes we call this learning through negative verbal information. For example, a belief that you might not have what it takes to accomplish a goal might develop if you had a very judgmental parent, teacher, or other influential adult during your childhood. This negative internal voice contributes to self-sabotage, because when you doubt what you are capable of, you are likely to either never start pursuing your goal or quit halfway. Negative self-talk that arises from internalized beliefs is a major driver of self-sabotage. If you don't believe you will be rewarded for your efforts, you may never make an effort at all.

Mostly C's = Fear of Change of the Unknown

Humans are creatures of habit. Routines and familiarity comfort our minds, which love repetition as a way to instill calm and manage stress. When something new is introduced, the mind can interpret it as a type of stressor. Big, sudden changes or too many changes all at once are especially confusing to our brains, and when feeling pushed beyond the comfort of usual levels of familiarity, you may respond to a new challenge by choosing to remain in the same place and continuing to do the thing you always did, even if the familiar option is clearly undesirable when compared to the unfamiliar challenge. In a mistaken attempt to protect you, your mind holds you back from a potentially positive change, rationalizing that that at least you've learned over time how to deal with the current problems. It takes some effort to realize this might be the culprit, because it usually involves doing nothing different, rather than something active to mess up your progress.

Mostly D's = Excessive Need for Control

Belief in your ability to exert control over your environment and to produce desired results is essential to your well-being. From an evolutionary standpoint, if we are in control of our environment, then we have a much better chance of survival. It is human nature to want to *feel* in control of what is going on around us. Like many things in life, moderation is great, but when taken overboard, a good thing gets turned on its head. If you let it get the best of you, this adaptive mechanism of wanting control can get in the way of reaching your goals. If you feel that you must always be able to see the finish line and every single step along the way before you even take your first step, that need will likely stop you from ever starting. It may also lead you to quit in the middle of the journey because any unknowns along the way are simply too much for your conscious mind to deal with.