

Nine Ways to Work with the Client and NOT the Saboteur

1. Simply acknowledge or name the Saboteur.

"I am hearing a Saboteur that says you can't ask for what you want because you will jeopardize your job. Is that Fred speaking?"

...and be sure to have clients separate themselves from their Saboteur.

"Now that we have heard from your Saboteur, what do you think?"

2. Ignore the Saboteur. Do not interact with it.

For example, you request that your client exercise five times this week. The client responds with excuses. You say "I hear you, and I also know you want to feel energetic and to lose 10 pounds, so will you exercise five times this week?"

3. Give the Saboteur a job to do or a place to go.

"I hear your Saboteur has you right now. How about if you ask the Saboteur to take a trip? Where would you like to send him/her?"

"I have an idea, how about we give the Saboteur a job — what would you like him to do?"

...and direct the Saboteur:

"How about sending your Saboteur to Hawaii for the rest of this session. He sounds like he has been working hard all week and could use a vacation."

"I have a job for your Saboteur... send her shopping for books to help you with this situation while we talk."

4. You, the coach, talk to the Saboteur and manage it for the client.

"Mary, I am going to talk to your Saboteur here for a moment. Josephine, I gotta tell you, Mary is acting in her best interest. She's headed towards her dream here. Spending two hours a week writing is not going to cost her relationship with her daughter or her husband. We will look at how she can spend time with them and I'm asking you to BACK OFF."

5. Ask the client to talk to the Saboteur and move it out of the way.

“Joe, we have heard quite a bit from your Saboteur on this subject today. What do you want to say to the Saboteur that will have him step back and let us talk?”

6. Have your client personify the Saboteur. Give the Saboteur a name and a life of its own.

“Diane, who is this Saboteur speaking today who says you will mess up if you try a new way? Let’s give it a name. Now tell me about Frieda. What is she like? How is she different from your Captain?”

7. Talk to the client about his/her values. Ask what values are being honored or dishonored. This often has the Saboteur disappear.
8. When you are hearing complaints or concerns from the Saboteur, ask the client about his/her vision.

“What do you want?” or “Imagine this situation one year from now; how do you want it to be?”

9. Bring in the client’s Captain.