

## Sabotaging Voice – Friend or Foe? by Adrian Mitchell

As coaches we would use the term sabotaging voice (or another similar term) quite a bit. We all understand what our sabotaging voice is...the voice inside us that at any given moment in time can sabotage what we are trying to do or what we would like to do. This voice may be sourced from any amount of voices from our past...our parents, our siblings, our teachers, our peers, the school bully etc. But it is a voice we all recognise and to a large degree it doesn't matter where it originally came from, only how it is affecting us matters. We could of course go for therapy to seek out the source so that once and for all (hopefully!) we can finally bury one of the ghosts that has haunted us for many years (1 down, only 499,999 to go, if we're lucky!!!). However we go about trying to deal with it, what matters is that we actually manage to deal with it and it no longer has power over us.

The very fact that we use the name "sabotaging" for this voice strongly suggests that this voice is no friend of ours! Why would it be?! It basically gets in our way every time something important comes up. It creates obstacles, blocks, walls and limits for us. It tells us we're "useless", "no good" or "good for nothing". It tells us we'll "never amount to anything", we "can't do this", or we "can't do that". It tells us we are "not skilful enough", or "not as good as others". It tells us we "haven't enough confidence", we are "too short", too tall", too skinny", too fat", too ugly", too pretty" too stupid" or "too intelligent". It tells us "nobody likes us", we "can't do the job right", we "are always wrong", or "no one takes us seriously". Oh and by the way, we'll "never find the right man or woman" and even if we do "it'll never last"!

As if all of the above isn't bad enough, this voice doesn't just get in our way with the important things; it can get in our way even in the small things and it travels with us everywhere. Just when we think we can relax and chill out, there's that voice again, "shouldn't you be doing something else", "have you finished the hovering", "did you leave the iron plugged in", "what about the kids", "you're lazy", "you'll pay for this", "the garden is a mess", "you shouldn't be eating that chocolate", or "you shouldn't be drinking that beer". It just doesn't stop! Friend or Foe...why am I asking?!

Its just that if our sabotaging voice is in fact as it would appear a foe, then does this mean that we are carrying around an enemy within us for most (if not, all) of our lives? Even if we managed to get rid of the voice at some point, it still means we had to carry it around for a long time. Does this make any sense? It seems to suggest that conflict should be part of our lives as a matter of course and that we should be at odds with ourselves a lot of the time. What about harmony? What about flow? What about oneness? What about inner peace and contentedness? Are these just fantasies so that we don't have to deal with the "real" world?

Who knows? But for the moment lets assume they are not fantasies. What then can we say about the sabotaging voice? Do we need to look at it from a different perspective? Let us try! At this stage you all hopefully understand the idea that when you are at odds with

something or when there is conflict with somebody, and it needs to be addressed, you need to look to yourself to see how you have been creating the conflict you are experiencing rather than laying the blame on the door of the other person no matter how convincing the evidence appears to be. What you are experiencing is totally yours, because you can only experience from within and your response to what was happening outside of you is what created your experience, rather than the thing itself. Therefore, the other person who is in conflict with you is not responsible for what you are experiencing, and what the other person is experiencing is not your responsibility. We all create our own reality by how we respond and react to life events. This is how we have our life experiences.

So if conflict only comes from within, this indicates that a part of us is in conflict with another part of us. We know what we need to do when we are experiencing conflict with another person...we stay out of the ring (boxing). If we get into the ring with the person we are taking a backward step and the situation will become worse. So we stay outside the ring and eventually the other person will also step outside the ring, thus avoiding unnecessary conflict and finding common ground. Let us use this idea when we are experiencing conflict between two parts of ourselves.

We don't fight the part we are in conflict with...we don't get into the ring with it. Eventually it will come out and talk to us! It is not that we ignore it, because that won't work...it will just keep getting louder and louder until we can't stand it anymore and before we know it we are in the ring! We don't ignore it and we don't fight it...we allow ourselves to be present to it, or we present ourselves to it. When we activate the higher aspect of ourselves (our spirit, our cosmic connection, the creative principle, God, etc), we also activate that aspect of all parts of us. When this happens that part of us that was desperately trying to entice us into the ring, steps out and we begin to gain an understanding of what that part of us is trying to tell us for our benefit. The energy of conflict has morphed into the energy of peace (conflict is the shadow of peace).

Let's go back to the outside world again for a minute. We need external triggers such as people, places, nature, events, situations, circumstances and tasks to trigger life experiences for us. We are all here on Earth taking part in this major production of Life, all helping each other to have life experiences. Some people, places, events etc play the "bad guy" for us to have specific life experiences and others play the "good guy" for us to have different life experiences. All however are playing roles for us to have life experiences which we then set up by our responses and reactions to the external triggers. These people, events, situations, etc., do not "happen" to be in our lives at a given moment or moments by accident. Remember, our external world is a reflection of our internal world, therefore whatever we are faced with on the outside is there in order to activate, trigger or "bring to life" that which lies within us, thus creating our life experience.

Let us now go back in to our respective internal worlds and bring that understanding and learning with us and apply it within. We can look at our sabotaging voice in all its many, many guises as our internal triggers (we do have internal triggers...what are our

memories but internal triggers...we remember something and we react or respond to it thus creating another life experience!). If our sabotaging voice appears (in whatever guise) in order to play a role for us, it is not there by accident. It is there for us to create a specific life experience for ourselves. The sabotaging voice as we call it will always play the “baddie”, hence the name! But let us remember, it is simply playing a role for us. Our responses and reactions to its words and tones create our life experience.

Just like with the outside world, if we do not like our life experience, we need to change our responses and reactions to reflect the kind of life experience we do want. We are responsible for our life experiences...always! Our sabotaging voice is usually “vilified” by us. But that would be like hurling abuse at an actor because of the role he is playing in a “soap”, a series or a film. We know that this unfortunately actually happens, but we also know it doesn’t make any sense. So, let us stop seeing the sabotaging voice as the enemy. By doing this we can create far better life experiences for ourselves. If we attract conflict, it is in order to experience peace. However we do not need anywhere near the amount of conflict we are attracting just to experience peace. We can experience peace also by attracting...yes, you’ve guessed it...peace!

As has been mentioned a couple of times before in previous articles (!), being present to your life, rather than being absent from it, brings rich rewards. It allows you the opportunity to engage with life triggers at a level of unity and oneness than at a level of conflict and separateness. Creating enemies and experiencing separateness is a path open to us all at any or all times in our lives, but why would we want to consciously choose this path? That is a question for each one of us to answer (including myself!). Perhaps it is because we are not being present often enough. Let us keep in mind what type of energy we can expect to experience when we are in our presence. We experience calmness, stillness, peace, clarity, oneness (connection) and knowing (crystal clear intuition) when we move into our presence. We breathe in this energy and we breathe out this energy. Others around us then breathe in this energy and they in turn breathe it out. When we do this we inspire ourselves and those around us. We also make our lives much easier and help perhaps to create a ripple effect bringing this “light” energy (as distinct from “dark” or “heavy” energy) to others we have never even met or are possibly never likely to meet. Why would we not want to do this?

So, let us go back inside to our sabotaging voice. Why wouldn’t we do the same internally as externally? If we can spread peace, calmness, stillness and clarity to others outside of us, then let us spread the same energy throughout our world within. By choosing to be present to our sabotaging voice rather than being absent from it, we can create a ripple of this “light” energy throughout our internal world. The more often we choose to do this the more ripples are created and the further the ripples move out from the centre.

Perhaps by being present to our sabotaging voice we are doing a lot more than we might think! Because if we think about it we can link the external world to the internal world and perhaps see that what happens in the external world is merely a reflection of what happens in the internal world. So all the situations and dramas we somehow seem to find

ourselves involved in may actually be a result of the dramas created within our internal world. We know now that those internal dramas are triggered by our sabotaging voice. So, therefore if we make peace on an ongoing basis with our sabotaging voice, we are also at the same time making peace with our external world.

If we could choose between two “parallel” universes to live in, would we choose to live in the universe of “drama” or the universe of “peace”? Some would no doubt choose drama. Why? Because, maybe it brings with it a sense of excitement or a sense of aliveness? Does this mean then that by choosing peace, you are not choosing excitement or a sense of aliveness but rather some existence where peace is in effect a drug that numbs the senses and we live in “lala” land, feeling good, but not experiencing life?! Surely not! Experiencing peace in our lives, doesn’t mean experiencing boredom! It means experiencing freedom. Freedom to be and do whatever we wish because we are not tangled up in dramas of our past.

Can we have excitement and peace at the same time? Of course we can. The truest and finest form of excitement and exhilaration comes from peace, not from drama. Peace allows us to experience life in all its glory, whether we are sitting on a park bench looking in awe at the majestic trees and beautiful flowers and shrubbery or surfing the waves in the lashings of rain on the wild west coast of Ireland! Peace brings stillness within which then allows life to dance through us because we are not getting in the way of life. When we are not still, we get in life’s way, we get in our own way and drama prevails.

Drama locks us in to an emotional roller coaster ride which we can’t get off until the ride stops. Unfortunately we have very little power to stop the ride, and the more often we find ourselves on one of these rides, the harder it is to break free of them. Our habits are very hard to break particularly when we don’t recognise that we are creating these situations ourselves. When we finally realise that it is us that is the piper we can begin the process of understanding and change and release ourselves from the allurements of these emotional roller coaster rides.

If some of you out there “don’t do emotions”, don’t fool yourself! The more you “don’t do emotions”, the more others are in your face “doing emotions”. You can’t get away from them. You may not be getting up on the emotional roller coaster rides, but you are standing in the middle of a “Not Much Fun Fair” surrounded by emotional roller coasters! “Not doing emotions” simply means attracting others doing them. You need to realise that emotions are not “bad things” to be avoided at all costs. They are messengers bringing us messages about ourselves. Take the message and read it and let the messenger be on its way!

Let’s get back to the sabotaging voice before it gets into one of its tantrums! So the sabotaging voice is constantly trying to tell us something about ourselves. Each of the voices it uses is trying to tell us something specific. It is our reactions to it that create an enemy of it. However when we realise it is a friend then we can take the message it is

handing us and read it. If the voice is saying “YOU ARE NOT UP TO IT”, what is the message inside saying? Perhaps it is saying the following:

“For many years life has challenged you at your behest to stop doubting yourself and to start believing in yourself. Life is trying to teach you how fantastic you are and how you don’t have to prove anything to anybody, not even to yourself. You just need to allow yourself to experience the amazing person and spirit that you truly are. Life already knows this and so do you, deep down. Allow yourself to realise why you came to Earth. You came here to experience an unbelievable adventure, to experience your spirit through your heart, through your body, through physicality. You are not an individual on a lonely journey. You are Life expressing itself! You are the Universe expressing itself! You are God expressing itself! You are not separate from Life or God, you are it. So is everyone else. You are absolutely not alone. In fact you couldn’t be more the opposite to being alone. You are oneness, where separation doesn’t exist, where only light, peace, flow and love exist. Are you “UP TO IT”? Yes you are, because YOU ARE IT! Allow yourself to realise how wonderful you are and what your life is really about... You shining your light, the light of Life, on the world...go on, turn up the dimmer switch and start shining! You will keep hearing the voice “YOU ARE NOT UP TO IT” as long as you stay in the shadows. It will be there to prompt you to step out into the light and shine. When you no longer need that voice it will have done its work and will be gone. Remember who you really are and start believing and start truly living life.”

All the other voices have their message for you as well. All are guiding you to experience your light, the light of peace, the light of love and the light of oneness. But it is your unfolding awareness that decides the pace of your journey, the people you will meet and the places you will visit.

So, is the sabotaging voice your friend or foe? As always only you can answer that!