

## **The Saboteur's cunning behaviour in romantic relationships**

The Saboteur shows up in many relationships in the following ways:

**i) Discussions involving opinions or past events.**

Here the Saboteur will soon turn the conversation into a competition of who is right and who is wrong. It will also judge the other person according to perfectionistic ideals.

As a result, one or both people then feel unheard because the communication is only taking place at surface level.

With regards to discussing a past event, the specifics of the event start to be dissected. It becomes a 'it happened this way' versus 'no it happened this way'. This is a very slippery slope, and tends to lead to further arguments, avoidance and shut down.

Whilst these types of discussions can be useful and even interesting because we can get to know more about our partner and have stimulating conversations. However, when shadow is running the show, they often just make things worse.

In effect this is all smoke and mirrors. The Saboteur is very good at this. It does not like discomfort or to feel 'weak' and so it hides behind opinions. Essentially it is avoidant of being truly transparent and vulnerable. It is scared of having the deeper conversations. As a result, it is unable to create true intimacy with self. It is not surprising then that many people find it so difficult to create true intimacy (on all levels) with their partner.

At the end of the day, YOU have the power to change the dynamic in your relationship. It is never all on your partner. If you are waiting for your partner to change, then you are avoiding claiming your own innate power to create transformation.

**ii) Trying to fix and solve.**

This is not always a bad thing because sometimes we have what might be very useful advice our partner would benefit from. The trouble is the Saboteur's timing is out. It comes in too early because it doesn't like feeling its own discomfort or the fact that his/her partner seems to be experiencing discomfort.



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**iii) Playing devil's advocate.**

Here one person might be expressing how they feel or see a particular topic/area of their life. The Saboteur can often respond to this by playing devil's advocate. It will come back with an alternate opinion that goes against the person who is expressing themselves. It likes to 'rain on their parade' and has the effect of making the other person feel like they are being shut down or that they are not heard.

One thing to bear in mind here is that the person speaking might be speaking with some shadow and the Saboteur can detect this. Maybe the person is not really saying how they feel and so their words are coming across with distorted energy. The Saboteur will experience this as 'weakness' and try to fix it rather than get curious and ask a question or offer some empathy e.g. 'it sounds like you have some sadness here around this topic, is that how you are feeling?'

**iv) Being overly 'rational' and responsible.**

The Saboteur is obsessed with doing everything according to society's ideals about what is seen as the 'right' thing to do. It gets caught up in all the should do's and shouldn't do's and doesn't stop to question whether a particular action is right/good (or the opposite) for the person.

The impact of the Saboteur's voice on our partner is often an energetic 'NO'...don't be who you are; don't have a dream; fall into line.' 'No don't do that/be that'; 'that's a silly idea'; 'that won't work' and so on.

**What is needed to try and halt the saboteur in its tracks.**

- i) Firstly, try to familiarise yourself with the kinds of things the Saboteur says so that you can spot it when it is present. Here is a reminder:
- I am an all or nothing person.  
If I could just work it out and find the answer, then it would be okay.  
If only she/he could see this / understand me then everything would be different.  
I don't have time.  
I've already tried that and said that and he/she still didn't respond/change.  
It happened before so it will happen again.  
It's not a big deal.  
I/he/she should be grateful.  
He/she should get over it.



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You can't do that. That makes no sense. You're being irresponsible.

This is what we are doing, that is final.

I cannot see the way forward.

I cannot imagine xyz.

- ii) When both partners have been triggered it is a little too late in many ways. When shadow is present and in full flow it often just has to play itself out. However, when only one person is triggered then a couple of things come to mind: a) The person who is not triggered would hold themselves in the face of their partner's reactivity and get curious. Was there something specific they said that didn't help? Ask your partner. b) This one is a bit more tricky and in many ways you need to be well versed with this work to be able to do it in such a way that doesn't come across as coaching or training the other person. You might call the saboteur out: not in a pointy finger type of way, but perhaps by saying 'I think that the Saboteur maybe speaking here right now. It tends to see things in this glass half empty way. I'm wondering if there is another perspective?'
- iii) Have a repair conversation (see repair conversation framework). If both parties are triggered is essential that a couple are prepared to have a more in-depth, transparent conversation once things have calmed down (taking a time out is fine). A repair involves both parties taking full responsibility for where they can see they were not helping the dynamic i.e. were they being defensive or critical; or did they shut the conversation down?  
It is not enough to respond with comments such as 'you are not hearing me', or 'I am not responsible for your feelings'; these don't go deep enough. Holding your hand up and being prepared to acknowledge that you played a part somewhere along the line is the way forward.

The type of conversations I am talking about lead to both parties learning something about themselves. From the conversation it could become clear as to what action we need to take or how we will attempt to show up differently next time.

### **Who is responsible for what?**

We are all responsible for what we do with our feelings, thoughts and therefore our triggers. Unfortunately, too many people hold their partner responsible for their feelings



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because they don't know what to do with them. They do not realise that their feelings are an opportunity to move from shadow to Power.

It can work the other way round too. Some people take too much responsibility and apologise too much or blame themselves over and over.

Essentially these are all forms of avoidance.

Another form of avoidance is hiding behind the message 'you are responsible for your feelings' (and therefore this has nothing to do with me) to the point that someone is not taking responsibility for the part they are playing in the dynamic.

If there is conflict or tension between a couple, both parties are playing a role. **Each person is doing something to in keeping the dysfunctional dynamic alive or on repeat.** It might only be something small like some of our words are limited and missing information. So, **we must get curious and ask ourselves 'what am I doing that is keeping this cycle repeating itself?'** If we can't hold our hand up we run the risk of missing an opportunity to clarify what we meant or what our true intentions were. The ability to acknowledge our shortcomings can be a very connecting quality in a relationship.

The truth is most people are only touching the surface of what is possible because they ultimately fear being rejected for showing up as their true self. This is why too many people jump ship from relationships that could have been turned around. The grass of course is never greener, and baggage will always follow us.

If any of the above is going on in your relationship there is deeper and more nuanced work to be done.

### **The difference between the Saboteur and the Magician Power Archetype**

The Saboteur only sees things through a tunnel vision, black and white lens. It is extremely limited in it's thinking and is always comparing everything according to societal ideals. The trouble is the Saboteur sees and speaks an element of truth and this is what hooks and triggers people. When our own Saboteur speaks, we tend to hook our partner. This is for them to look more closely at and us to take responsibility for the limitation in our language (even if we had a point).

What the Saboteur is not seeing is that there is ALWAYS another perspective and because there is another perspective there are infinite possibilities to create transformation between ourselves and our partner.

The Magician on the other hand inherently KNOWS his/her power. He is always willing to go beyond the limited mind of the Saboteur and trust his body to navigate the way



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forward. He will act on an inner 'yes' or an urge to speak up. He also knows his inner 'no' when something doesn't feel right. He is willing to show up fully and get messy. He knows that 'mistakes' are crucial in order to master his energy and his relationship. He takes full responsibility for his power to create connection and intimacy. He understands that transparency and being vulnerable can lead to intimate and even erotic moments.

In order to activate the Power of the Magician within you, it is important to understand the difference between the energy of the Child Shadow and the Sovereign Power Archetype.

### **The difference between the Child Shadow and the Sovereign Power Archetype**

The Sovereign commits to his/her own standards for him/herself. He endeavours to lead himself and be a person of integrity. He doesn't wait for his partner to go first.

The Sovereign ask himself the question 'who do I want to be here?' Someone who shows up fully and is willing to have an open, honest conversation that might get a bit messy or someone who keeps blaming our partner or only having half a conversation.

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