

Getting Out of Your Own Way

By Lainie Neiman

I often find myself saying these words to people, "*You need to get out of your own way*" Most of us are guilty (including yours truly) of getting in our own way from time to time. So, you may well ask yourself, what does it mean to *get out of your own way*?

To get out of our own way means to be able to do the following:

- To fully *accept* responsibility for our own behavior
- To *recognize* our natural strengths and talents and *acknowledge* them as unique and useful gifts.
- To *respect* the unique aspects we all possess as individuals

Ironically, most of us have a stunning (and stunningly destructive) ability to hone in on our defects and deficits. We concentrate on these (perceived) weaknesses, while choosing to minimize, diminish or even ignore those unique talents, gifts and positive traits which we naturally possess. So often, we obsess over our imperfections and focus our energy on our deficits. *THIS* is getting in our own way.

A client came to see me recently because his anxieties were interfering with his attempts to start a new business. "Tom" was anxiety ridden and paralyzed by his inability to see past what he perceived as terrible deficits. He was so crippled by his own anxiety he found himself unable to make sales calls on his new business prospects.

Together, we worked to find a way for him to be able to acknowledge that what he truly loved in life (and what ironically came easiest to him) was helping other people solve their problems. This innate aspect of his personality clashed with the message the felt he "*heard*" from his family and friends that said "Tom, you always *give away* too much of your time helping others." He had been carrying around this negative message around with him for years without realizing how much it was causing him to "get in his own way".

As we worked together, Tom learned to focus on and champion his own innate gift to help people solve their problems. This shift in focus, from seeing this gift NOT as a *deficit* but as a *strength* has had an enormous impact on his thinking, behavior and ultimately, his business and personal success.

Tom estimated that he was spending about 75% of his "air time" focusing on his deficits (on negative and therefore unhelpful traits), and only 25% of his time focusing on positive assets. He started to imagine himself focusing 75% of his energy on his strengths and 25% of his energy on his deficits, and soon felt the weight of his anxieties and fears lifted. He was able to start erasing those negative message tapes he had been hearing in his head for so many years.

With support, Tom came to realize that by using his gifts and his desire to help others solve their problems, he was succeeding in developing new client relationships and ultimately in building his business.

Another important (and insidious) aspect of *getting in our own way* is not taking responsibility for our own behavior and instead blaming others for our shortcomings. Accepting personal responsibility requires us to look inward to NAME, CLAIM, and TAME our own self-sabotaging behaviors and to be accountable for the successes and failures of our own decisions. Once you are able to start focusing positively on your successes, you will find it easier to accept responsibility for your mistakes. Mistakes happen to be one of our most effective learning tools.

Accepting responsibility helps us to see more clearly those ways in which we sabotage ourselves. With this new awareness, we are able to make more positive choices about meeting life's challenges.

The greatest reward you will glean from these seeds of self-discovery is this: your life will be more fun. You will not only have more fun, you will be more successful in everything you attempt. Once you uncover how you are unwittingly sabotaging your own success by feeding your insecurities and negative self-esteem, you can mindfully avoid these emotional and psychological traps.

STOP wasting time and energy focusing on your flaws. STOP wasting time focusing on the flaws of others. We all have our own life path. Every day your path will become clearer as you build confidence and accept personal responsibility.

Every day you will find that you have rewarded yourself by living up to your highest potential. You will feel better; you will be more successful. You will walk taller in the world. What could possibly be a better return on your investment?