"There comes a point when you either embrace who and what you are, or condemn yourself to be miserable all your days. Other people will try to make you miserable; don't help them by doing the job yourself." Laurell K. Hamilton

Is it possible for us to be our own worst enemy? Do people get in the way of their own successes and when they do meet with success, whether professional or in relationships, sabotage it in order to end it?

Given the choice between being happy and being sad, most of us will choose happiness, but not everyone. There are people who thrive on being sad. The simplest way in which this can be described is that the person wants and needs to be sad and they will devise ways of making that happen.

When a person habitually undermines himself or is drawn to situations or relationships where he will be disappointed, fail, or be mistreated psychologists sometimes refer to this as self-defeating personality disorder.
This disorder can be defined as, "a pervasive pattern of self-defeating behavior, beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts. The person may avoid or undermine pleasurable experiences, be drawn to situations or relationships in which he will suffer, and prevent others from helping him."

To qualify for this diagnosis a person has to exhibit at least five of the following eight behaviors:

1. Chooses people and situations that lead to disappointment, failure, or mistreatment even when better options are clearly available.
2. Rejects or renders ineffective the attempts of others to help him.
3. Following positive personal events, responds with depression, guilt, or a behavior that produces pain.
4. Incites angry or rejecting responses from others and then feels hurt, defeated, or humiliated.
5. Rejects opportunities for pleasure, or is reluctant to acknowledge enjoying himself.
6. Fails to accomplish tasks crucial to his personal objectives despite demonstrated ability to do so.
7. Is uninterested in or rejects people who consistently treat him well, e.g., is not attracted to caring sexual partners.
8. Engages in excessive self-sacrifice that is unsolicited by the intended recipients of the sacrifice.

People who suffer with this disorder adopt unrealistic goals and when they fail to achieve them, they react with anger, depression, rage etc. They are overly self-sacrificing, rejecting of those who treat them well, fail to finish important tasks, reject opportunities for pleasure, incite rejecting responses from others, reject help from others, and makes self-defeating choices of people and situations.

Although there is believed to be a genetic component involved, self-defeating behavior is believed to start in childhood with parents who fail to discipline a child effectively.

There is disagreement on exactly what type of parenting causes this behavior to emerge. One theory is, that if a child receives an excessive amount of praise from a parent even when it is not deserved, then the children will grow up with an inflated image of themselves that they feel they must protect against realistic tests. They protect it by taking on a handicapping excuse.

Another theory is that if a child is exposed to a strict authoritarian parent and has been repeatedly told that he does not deserve love or that he deserves pain then that is exactly what he will grow up to believe. As a result, he will avoid and reject anything that leads to pleasure. Even when there is pleasure, he can never enjoy it since he will be riddled with feelings of guilt and shame.

There is no medication to treat self-defeating personality disorder. However, long-term psychotherapy of any kind can be helpful. Regardless of the type of psychotherapy it will require long-term treatment and it will be an uphill battle, because this type of patient will always remain invested in defeat.

Source material: APA 2000 DSM-IV, psychnet.com, psychology today.com, wikipedia
Searching for **when you are your own worst enemy**?

1. **Hair Replacement Center**
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