

Write from the Deep
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Going Deeper Workshop: Overcoming Damaging Self-Talk
Segment 11: When Ego Protection Sabotages You

Damaging self-talk can be a form of ego protection, which is another type of self-sabotage.

When you say I stink at this you're protecting your self-esteem...By invoking an inherent lack of ability, you reduce your personal responsibility in the negative outcome, since you couldn't have done anything about it anyway...If outcomes are up to you, and you still do badly, it's not going to feel good. (Rodolfo Mendoza-Denton, "[Why We Sabotage Our Success](#)," *Psychology Today*)

- The language "I stink at this" sounds like a fixed mindset. It "absolves" you.
- When you fail, you're not disappointed. Instead, you consider yourself smart because you knew you couldn't do it all along.
- Even those with a growth mindset can self-sabotage to protect self-esteem. They worry about what will happen if their efforts aren't good enough to succeed.
 - Experiments showed they would do things like deliberately skip practice questions for a test, so they'd have an excuse for why they did poorly.

Trying to protect your ego, your self-esteem, by saying you stink at something, or by giving yourself excuses undermines you.

- It keeps you from fully investing. It keeps you from going all out...and possibly failing.
- But then we DO fail because we're not fully invested. This is a self-fulfilling prophecy and self-sabotage.
- We try to protect ourselves from having to find out whether we truly have what it takes to be a writer.

Whether you have what it takes isn't the issue! What matters is if you have what it takes to say yes to God.

- If He's asked you to write, are you going to be obedient?
- He's asking if you'll submit yourself to Him and fully invest.

You're not alone if you struggle with saying yes, with fully investing.

- In Exodus 3-4, when God calls Moses from a burning bush and tells him, “So now, go. I’m sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt,” Moses has numerous objections and ultimately says, “O Lord, please send someone else to do it.”
- Over and over God answers Moses’s objections and gives him signs.
 - God isn’t interested in Moses’s abilities.
 - All God wants from Moses is a *fully invested heart*.
- God demonstrates His power and authority to Moses to reassure him.
 - God will equip Moses.
 - God will do the work to strike the Egyptians and compel Pharaoh to let the people go.
- Likewise, God is the one who reaches into readers’ hearts and changes them. That’s God’s work.
 - Your job is to trust that God will equip you.
 - Obediently offer your best effort.

God often gives people difficult tasks.

- Moses knew going to Pharaoh would be a hard road. There would be great resistance.
 - But that didn’t mean he heard God wrong.
- As a writer, you’re going to have a hard road ahead as well!
 - That doesn’t mean you heard God wrong.
 - It’s vital that you don’t sabotage yourself by not being fully invested.