



So, what's holding you back?

Have you ever seen those 'horizontal bungee' games at fairgrounds where someone has a strong piece of elastic tied to them, and they have to try to reach a pint of beer, or race someone else, but the elastic keeps trying to pull them back?

What is it that keeps on pulling you back whenever you try to imagine breaking out and trying something new, or living your dream? What is your mind telling you?

No time? Not enough money? Too old? Too young? Not good enough? Fear of the unknown? Fear of failure? Or maybe someone else's expectations for you are holding you back.

So what reasons do you have not to be living your dream right now? Why aren't you now, at this very moment, experiencing the things in life that you really, really want?

Write them all down.

Now, I feel sure that most of the reasons you put down are not based on fact, or have not actually happened. They have something to do with how your mind perceives the situation to be, or how capable your mind perceives you to be.

So - these reasons are probably mostly in your mind. They are negative thoughts or beliefs or may be rooted in a lack of confidence. The best thing you can do is to master your mind. You know it's possible. How easy is it to justify buying those fab shoes? Well, that's just making your mind say 'yes'. See - we can all do that!

Master your negative thoughts and beliefs

Think of a bright, cheerful fairy on your shoulder, maybe like Julia Roberts playing 'Tinkerbell' in the film of Peter Pan. She is your loyal supporter and wants more than anything for you to succeed and be happy. Feel free to

think of your own loyal supporter, but make sure they are indeed loyal, supportive and cheerful!

Now think of a miserable, bitter, negative goblin on your other shoulder. Maybe a character from Harry Potter or Lord of the Rings. He (or she!) is your saboteur – stopping you from doing anything new or exciting, holding you back from taking risks or stepping outside your comfort zone.

We all have both fairies and goblins on our shoulders, and sadly we give far too much air time to the goblins. So, whatever reasons you gave to the question of what is holding you back, this is your goblin talking.

So the first step is to recognise your negative 'self-talk' for what it is. It is not the truth, and you can replace it with more positive talk.

Spend a day or two just recognising when you 'slip' into negative talk – when your goblin's voice is louder than your fairy's. You may notice that there are patterns. Your 'fairy' voice is loud and clear when it comes to making decisions about your children, or the family's social arrangements. But the goblin may be taking over when it comes to, for example, trying something new, or tackling a tricky colleague at work ...

So try this exercise:

Old, limiting belief ('goblin talk')	New, helpful belief ('fairy talk')
e.g. I can't leave my job as we need the money	e.g. I can re-train to do something else that will make me happy and fulfilled for the rest of my life
e.g. 'x' at work is making my life a misery – I'll never move on as long as he is there	e.g. I am in control of my own career path and can deal appropriately with anyone who may stand in my way

Boost your confidence



What's your reaction when someone gives you a compliment? Do you tend to shrug it off "oh, this old thing – I've had it for ages" or "what are you after...?!" And what is your reaction when someone criticises you? If you're like me, and a lot of people, you take it very personally and remember it for weeks.

The most helpful thing to do to build your confidence is to acknowledge and *remember* complimentary things people say about you. It could be a compliment on your appearance, or the way you handled a situation, or a piece of work. You need to build a mental database of all these instances and make a point of reminding yourself of what's in it.

Another way of looking at this is by imagining building a 'table of confidence'. The table top is the positive belief that would be helpful to you achieving your goal. Now you need legs to support this belief.

Every time you receive a compliment, or some positive feedback that will support your belief, think of it as a table leg. So, the more legs, the stronger the belief and the more robust your confidence.

And as for those of you who feel that someone else is holding you back – are you in the back seat or the driving seat? Is someone else choosing your destination, or are you in control? Who's life is it anyway?

So, get the scissors out and cut that elastic that keeps pulling you back. Be confident, believe in yourself, and just do it.

The author, Susie Kendall, is the founder of 'You Blossom', helping mums through coaching to create a better balance in their lives and to realise their own possibilities.

