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# Hey Diddle, Diddle, I'm Caught in the middle

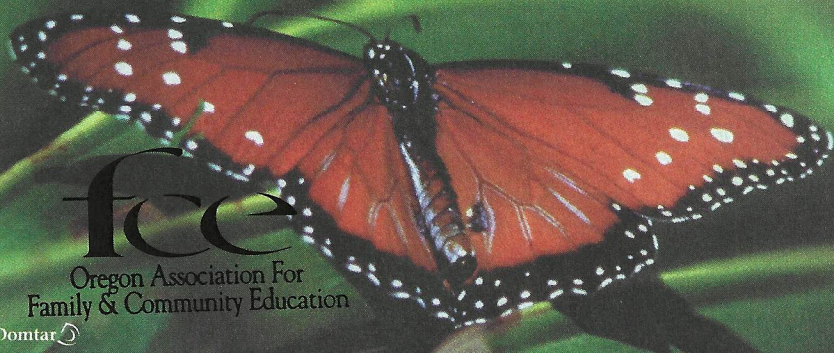
1999

( Becoming Sabotage Savvy  
in the  
New Millennium)

By  
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# Becoming Sabotage Savvy in the New Millennium

## Key Concept

Contrary to the “ideal” belief of many, especially among women, not everyone supports one another. Being undermined by a colleague, co-worker, friend or family member can create life long scarring, erode self-confidence, taint one’s reputation and credibility. Sabotaging behavior can be overt or covert and can be intentional or unintentional.

## Trainer Background

Unless sabotaging behavior is acknowledged and confronted, it will continue to grow. The cost to today’s workplace exceeds \$38 billion in lost productivity.

Stylisms differ among women and men. Men are more inclined to be overt and direct in their action. They are also non-discriminatory showing no gender preference as their target. Women have consistently reported that when sabotaged, the perpetrator is more likely to be another woman and that the method of delivery is indirect or overt.

*Sabotage is defined as: The act of undermining or destroying personal or professional integrity; creating mayhem in personal or professional lives and damaging credibility. Any act can lead to the destruction of self-esteem and confidence.*

Since the initial nationwide study conducted in 1987, women report a 45% increase of sabotaging activity from other women in 1999. From a nationwide study of 5000 women and men, 75% of working women stated that they had been undermined in the past year. Men showed no significant increase from 1987 - a total of 58% of the men reported undermining activity.

Because change is progressively speeding up, both men and women report higher levels of fear and anxiety - “Will I have the needed skills and positive attitude to grow with it?” “Will my job still be *my job*?” Whenever there is fear and anxiety, reports of sabotage increase.

The end result is that sabotage will decrease productivity - yours and co-workers - and will erode your self-esteem and confidence. In reality, most individuals have been undermined. And, a great majority have themselves been perpetrators.

It is strongly recommended that participants and the leader use **Woman to Woman 2000 - Becoming Sabotage Savvy in the New Millennium**, Judith Briles (1999, New Horizon Press). Copies can be obtained through the author’s website [www.briles.com](http://www.briles.com), [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) or your favorite bookstore.

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## Lesson Road Map (Approximately 95 minutes)

### Activity, Time, and Materials

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#### Activity 1 Creating Sabotage Awareness (20 minutes)

- Define Sabotage (transparency)
- Take *Are You Sabotage Savvy* Quiz (activity sheet)
- Costs of Sabotage (transparency)

#### Activity 2 Identify Examples of Sabotaging Behavior (20 minutes)

- Ask participants to create groups of 3 to 5 and identify occasions when sabotage has occurred - either to them or someone they know. Examples include gossip, withholding information, not giving credit or back-stabbing.

#### Activity 3 Identify Possible Saboteurs (10 minutes)

- Take *Is There A Saboteur in Your Midst* Quiz (transparency)

#### Activity 4 Creating Effective Communication (10 minutes)

- 4 Steps to Effective Communication (transparency)

#### Activity 5 Confront Confrontophobia (20 minutes)

- Steps to "Care"fronting (transparency)
- Dialogue for "Care"fronting (transparency)

#### Activity 6 Strategies to Reduce Sabotage (15 minutes)

- 10 Steps to Reduce Sabotage in the New Millennium (transparency)

It is recommended that the leader facilitate each activity with transparencies and quizzes when noted.

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## Before You Begin

All lessons are interactive and are designed to create dialogue with both the leader and other participants.

- Review the entire lesson
- Obtain a copy of **Woman to Woman 2000-Becoming Sabotage Savvy in the New Millennium**, Judith Briles (1999, New Horizon Press)
- Prepare the transparencies
- Copy *Are You Sabotage Savvy* Quiz (2 double-sided pages for each participant suggested)
- You will need overhead, screen and flip chart

### Activity 1: Creating Sabotage Awareness (20 minutes)

**Objective** To think about what sabotage is and what impact it has.

#### Activity Steps

1. Write the word "SABOTAGE" on overhead and flip chart. Ask participants to create a definition of sabotage. Record the responses. (5 minutes)
2. Reveal the "SABOTAGE" definition. Transparency #1. (1 minute)
3. Ask participants to take the *Are You Sabotage Savvy* Quiz. After completion, ask if anyone was surprised in their responses. Activity sheets 1-4. (9 minutes)
4. Ask participants to identify how sabotaging behavior could impact their workplaces. Record their responses. Use Costs of Sabotage Transparency #3. (5 minutes)

### Activity 2: Identify Examples of Sabotaging Behavior (20 minutes)

**Objective** To identify various methods of sabotaging behavior.

#### Activity Steps

1. Create groups numbering from 3 to 5. Ask them to identify within the group different sabotaging experiences. (8 minutes)
2. Ask a member from each group to summarize incidents. Record each. Discuss similarities and differences. (8 minutes)
3. Ask participants to orally tell you what impact the sabotaging behavior had on them - How did they feel? (4 minutes)

*Note: Participants find that they have commonly encountered sabotaging behavior.*

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### Activity 3: Identify Possible Saboteurs (10 minutes)

**Objective** To identify potential saboteurs in their recurring activities.

#### Activity Steps

1. Present "Is there A Saboteur in Your Midst" transparency #4. Discuss the 12 ways a saboteur may undermine another. (10 minutes)
  1. Does anyone encourage gossip? Most saboteurs are messengers-they can hardly wait to pass along damaging information about anyone or anything.
  2. Does anyone keep a tally sheet? Everyone makes mistakes-saboteurs usually keep count and can make a big brouhaha out of a molehill.
  3. Does information ever pass you by? A typical strategy of a saboteur is to isolate others. The most common practice is to withhold information or interrupt an information pipeline that is relevant to your work.
  4. Does anyone feel that her, or his, job is in jeopardy? Whenever there is fear and anxiety, such as in a reorganization, many people overreact. For some, paranoia sets in.
  5. Does anyone stand to profit by another's mistake? Any time someone makes a mistake, saboteurs relish the opportunity. They will be players in passing along the "error" and may eventually benefit by a promotion or bonus, or at very least, by an enhanced reputation because of the mistake.
  6. Have new coalitions formed on your team? It is commonplace for saboteurs to continually realign their "friendships." With each new realignment, they are often in the center, similar to the "movers" in a high school clique.
  7. Is anyone on your team sometimes too helpful? Until you really know how a group or team operates, an overly helpful or zealous player may not be what you think she is.
  8. Does anyone routinely deny involvement in activities, yet know all the details? Saboteurs are masters at working the grapevine; they are also chameleons. They initially claim no knowledge of any specific incident, yet somehow they are able to pass along the details and information to anyone who asks and, in some cases, doesn't ask.
  9. Does anyone encourage others to take on tasks that appear impossible? When you or another fail at a task, saboteurs derive great pleasure from it. Your failure makes them look good, and even more savvy, for not taking on the impossible.
  10. Does anyone bypass your authority or go over your head? Saboteurs will do almost anything to look good, including sidestepping a leader's authority or ignoring other team members' contributions.
  11. Does anyone routinely take credit for or discount yours or other coworkers' contributions to the workplace? Saboteurs rarely compliment or give credit openly for another's work. Their style is more likely to discount participation by other team members or take credit for themselves. Women are more inclined not to speak up or out when someone hogs the limelight and/or takes credit for another's work.
2. If participants identify 3 or more *yes* answers, the leader should encourage caution in dealing with the individual who displays Saboteur in the Midst behaviors.

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## Activity 4: Creating Effective Communication (10 minutes)

**Objective** To communicate more effectively with others.

### Activity Step

1. Tell your audience: Those who lack communication skills are often labeled less confident, less qualified to do a job, even less attractive. The definition of communication is: "The translation of your message into a clear, concise statement that your receiver understands." There are four key steps for both the listener and speaker. Transparency #5

*Note: Ask your participants to share examples of when they thought that they had communicated . . . and discovered that it was only on their part - The receiver was totally in the dark?!*

## Activity 5: Confront Confrontophobia (20 minutes)

**Objective** To learn the importance of confronting a situation and the steps to "care-fronting".

### Activity Steps

1. Say to your audience: "Few people start their day with the attitude 'Who can I confront today!' Most feel confronting is an unpleasant experience and would prefer to avoid it. If a situation arises that warrants confronting, and isn't, non-action states that the offending behavior or action is actually OK. Silence condones anything that may be inappropriate.

When most people are confronted, they become defensive. One of the best counters to that reaction is to have all your facts together (preferably in writing) so that you can remain focused. Otherwise, you will become distracted and unable to reach any agreement or solution."

2. Discuss the steps to "Care-fronting". Transparency #6. Best time means for the two of you; neutral means to avoid either's "turf zones"; make a list of what happened, using the Dialogue for Care-fronting. Transparency #7.
3. Know how you personally manage conflict; always remember that staying on target and listening are keys to successful care-frontation. It is normal to have to repeat your issue several times. And finally sometimes the only option is to leave. There are other positions and jobs. Do not create a terminal illness when minimal surgery would resolve the issue.

## Activity 6: Strategies to Reduce Sabotage in the New Millennium (15 minutes)

**Objective** To provide a blueprint for success in a sabotage situation.

### Activity Step

1. Sabotage within and outside of any workplace can be demoralizing, even making you ill. By using Transparency #8 - 10 Steps to Reduce Sabotage in the New Millennium, participants will have a blueprint for success.

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# Transparencies and Activity Sheets in the order they are used



# ***SABOTAGE***

## **IS . . .**

**“The act of undermining or destroying personal or professional integrity; creating mayhem in personal or professional lives and damaging credibility. Any act can lead to the destruction of self-esteem and confidence.”**

Transparency #1

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# ARE YOU SABOTAGE SAVVY? ©

## Part I

**Sabotage:** Undermining or destruction of personal or professional integrity; creating mayhem in personal or professional life; damage to personal or professional credibility; can lead to destruction or dismissal of self worth.

To check whether you are *Sabotage Savvy*, answer YES, NO or NOT SURE to the following:

	Yes	No	Not Sure
1. Have you ever given a name as a reference, later to find out that the reference gave you a neutral to negative referral?	_____	_____	_____
2. Have you ever felt that information that would make your job easier or clarified has bypassed you or been withheld?	_____	_____	_____
3. Have you ever felt that files or personal items in your office or workspace have been opened or used without your prior knowledge or consent?	_____	_____	_____
4. Has a group of co-workers or friends ever ceased talking or changed a subject when you approached them (assuming that a surprise event in your honor was not being discussed)?	_____	_____	_____
5. Has anyone ever passed on or exchanged information about you that was untrue?	_____	_____	_____
6. Has anyone ever taken credit for work you have completed?	_____	_____	_____
7. Has anyone ever NOT acknowledged or given you credit for work you have participated in or completed?	_____	_____	_____
8. Have you ever been reprimanded or confronted by someone in front of others?	_____	_____	_____
9. Has someone ever threatened you with a "consequence" if you did not meet and/or support their demands that you felt was contrary to your values?	_____	_____	_____

- |  | Yes   | No    | Not<br>Sure |
|--|-------|-------|-------------|
| 10. Has anyone ever forgotten to give you important messages or phone calls?   | _____ | _____ | _____       |
| 11. Has anyone ever committed to do something to or with you, then reneged on her commitment?  | _____ | _____ | _____       |
| 12. Has anyone ever expected you to behave, react or work in a specific "way" or "method" without telling you what the "way" or "method" was?  | _____ | _____ | _____       |
| 13. Have you ever been with an individual or group that has identified a problem, committed to seeking a solution, and then discovered that there is no one to support "your" problem when you discuss it with the boss? | _____ | _____ | _____       |
| 14. Have you ever been stuck with doing a co-worker's work because she is often late or she spends work time doing personal things?  | _____ | _____ | _____       |
| 15. Has anyone consistently criticized areas or items in your work without acknowledging or applauding the positive areas you complete?  | _____ | _____ | _____       |
| 16. Has anyone ever tried to reduce or destroy your credibility?   | _____ | _____ | _____       |
| 17. Have you ever been terminated without cause?   | _____ | _____ | _____       |
| 18. Has anyone ever told another personal information that you had shared confidentially?  | _____ | _____ | _____       |
| 19. Has anyone ever called or planned a meeting that involved you, your ideas or plans, and did not include you?   | _____ | _____ | _____       |
| 20. Has anyone ever lodged a complaint against you to your supervisor or others that you work with, without first discussing it with you?  | _____ | _____ | _____       |

If you answered YES to any of the above, you have been sabotaged by another. If you answered NOT SURE, the odds are that you have been undermined by another. If you answered NO to all of the above, you work in an ideal environment. . .congratulations!

# ARE YOU SABOTAGE SAVVY? ©

## Part II

**Saboteur:** Someone who consciously or unconsciously undermines or destroys another's personal or professional integrity; creates mayhem in another's personal or professional life; damages another's personal or professional credibility; causes another's reduction or destruction of self-worth.

To determine if *you* have ever sabotaged another, answer **Yes**, **No** or **Not Sure** to the following:

	Yes	No	Not Sure
1. Have you ever offered to be a reference for someone, and not given a positive referral when asked?	_____	_____	_____
2. Have you ever withheld information, intentionally or unintentionally, that would have clarified someone else's job or task?	_____	_____	_____
3. Have you ever used someone's files or personal items without her prior permission?	_____	_____	_____
4. Have you ever participated, or led, a discussion about someone else and quit listening or talking when that someone or someone's friend/colleague entered the room where you were?	_____	_____	_____
5. Have you ever shared or told personal information about someone that you did not verify as accurate?	_____	_____	_____
6. Have you ever taken credit for work that someone else completed?	_____	_____	_____
7. Have you ever NOT acknowledged or spoken up when someone else has taken credit for work that you know he or she did not do?	_____	_____	_____
8. Have you ever confronted or reprimanded someone when others can observe and/or hear your actions?	_____	_____	_____
9. Have you ever intimidated someone with a demand or perceived threat if she didn't do or support you when your request/demand was contrary to her values?	_____	_____	_____

	Yes	No	Not Sure
10. Have you delayed passing on important messages or phone calls?	_____	_____	_____
11. Have you ever reneged on a commitment?	_____	_____	_____
12. Have you ever expected someone to behave or react in a specific way to a situation or problem without telling her beforehand what your expectations were?	_____	_____	_____
13. Have you ever told someone that you supported her, her idea, or desire to solve a problem, then not support or speak up when someone in authority was willing or ready to listen?	_____	_____	_____
14. Have your co-workers ever had to do your share of the work because you have spent work time on personal matters, such as phone calls, making appointments or just being away from your desk?	_____	_____	_____
15. Have you ever directed negative criticism at a co-worker or employee without acknowledging some of the positive things that she does?	_____	_____	_____
16. Have you ever put someone down or belittled her authority or presence?	_____	_____	_____
17. Have you ever fired someone without cause?	_____	_____	_____
18. Have you ever passed on confidential information about someone without her permission?	_____	_____	_____
19. Have you ever planned or called a meeting that involved someone else's ideas or plans, and not included her?	_____	_____	_____
20. Have you ever made a complaint about someone to another without first approaching her with your concerns?	_____	_____	_____

If you answered YES to any of the above, you have sabotaged someone.  
 If you answered NOT SURE, the odds are that you have undermined someone. If you answered NO to all of the above, you are a Saint.

# ***Costs of Sabotage***

- **Less Productivity**
- **Reduced Morale**
- **Decline in Common Goals**
- **Elimination of Loyalty**
- **Diminished Motivation to Excel**
- **Increased Stress**
- **Increased Turnover**
- **Profitability Declines**

## ***Is There A Saboteur in Your Midst?***

- 1. Does anyone encourage gossip?**
- 2. Does anyone keep a tally sheet?**
- 3. Does information pass you by?**
- 4. Does anyone feel that her job is in jeopardy?**
- 5. Does anyone stand to profit by another's mistake?**
- 6. Have new coalitions formed in your department?**
- 7. Is anyone on your team too helpful?**
- 8. Does anyone deny involvement, yet knows all?**
- 9. Does anyone encourage others to do the impossible?**
- 10. Does anyone bypass your authority?**
- 11. Does anyone take another's credit for work done?**
- 12. Does anyone discount another's contributions?**

**3 or more yes's: Use extreme caution when dealing with this person!**

Transparency #4

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# ***4 Steps to Effective Communicating***

- 1. Speaker - Speak Loudly**  
**Receiver - Be able to Hear** (non-distracted)
- 2. Speaker - Speak Clearly**  
**Receiver - Understand What is Being Said**
- 3. Speaker - Use phrases, jargon & examples that the Receiver can relate to & understand**  
**Receiver - Appreciate that the Speaker is trying to connect - does not mean that you agree**
- 4. Speaker - Be Specific - Call for Action**  
**Receiver - Act and Respond to Speaker**



# ***Steps to “Care” fronting***

- **Determine the “best” time**
- **Create a “neutral” zone**
- **Identify (and list) your issues**
- **Understand your conflict management style (competitive, compromising, collaborative, accommodative or avoiding)**
- **Stay focused and listen**
- **Repeat 3 times - the “broken record”**
- **Know when to exit**

# ***Dialogue for “Care”fronting***

**When you . . . (what was the action?)**

**I felt . . . (your reaction - hurt, confused,  
betrayed, angry, etc...)**

**Because . . . (what does it sound, feel,  
look like?)**

**Was it your intent to . . . (repeat action)**

**In the future . . . (how do you want her to  
behave?)**

## ***10 Steps to Reduce Sabotage in the New Millennium\****

- 1. Acquire and Grow Confidence**
- 2. Be Discerning with Who You Trust**
- 3. Know that There Is a Difference Between Friendship and Friendliness**
- 4. Speak Up and Out**
- 5. Be Willing and Able to Confront**
- 6. Get a Mentor . . . Be a Mentor**
- 7. Communicate the “Unwritten” Rules of Your Workplace**
- 8. Acknowledge and Give Credit to Other’s Work and Participation**
- 9. Learn to Be More Overt and Assertive**
- 10. Don’t Be a Shrinking Violet - Maintain Visibility**

**\*Woman to Woman 2000 - Becoming Sabotage Savvy in the New Millennium, Judith Briles, (New Horizon Press, 1999)**

***“No one can make you feel inferior without your permission.”  
- Eleanor Roosevelt***