

# I MAY BE A PERFECTIONIST

## perfectionism

\per-fek-shuh-niz-uhm\ n.

a set of beliefs, feelings, and behaviors aimed at excessively high and unattainable goals



## Sound Familiar?

None of my accomplishments ever meet my standards.

I avoid answering questions or even giving opinions because I may say something dumb.

If I don't give 100%, the outcome will be mediocre.

I delay completion of projects because I cannot get them just right

## Underlying Beliefs



Mistakes must not be made. |

The highest standards must always be met. |

Failure to reach my goals equals a shortcoming in me as a person. |

If others see my flaws, they will judge me negatively. |

Wants and desires are secondary to goal achievement. |

The world is black and white, good and bad, right and wrong, with no gray areas. |



## Healthy vs. Perfectionistic GOAL SETTING

Healthy goal setting is based on wants and desires

Healthy goals are one step beyond present or previous accomplishments

Pleasure can be derived from the process of working toward the goal

Disapproval or failure can be seen as specific to the situation

Goals are often based on the expectations of others

Your goal is perfection or the best at all times

The focus is on the end result; not the process of working towards the goal

Disapproval or failure is generalized to self-worth



Yep.



Nope.



Nope.

# PERFECTIONISM

# OVERCOMING PERFECTIONISM

Here are some steps to help you let go of the perfectionistic habit:

- Make a list of the advantages and disadvantages of trying to be perfect.
- Note any self-criticism when you do not reach your goal. Is the criticism realistic? Is it helpful?
- Try changing your standards to 90% of your original for a few projects.
- Set strict time limits on tasks. When that time limit is up, move on to something else.
- Recognize that an activity involves more than the end result. What was the process or journey like? What did you learn?
- Ask yourself: What is the worst thing that could happen if I don't do this task perfectly?
- When you make a mistake ask yourself what you can learn from the mistake.
- Recognize that most criticism is specific to an action. It is rarely a rejection of the individual.

**REMEMBER:** A healthy goal-setting has drive. A perfectionist is driven.

Adapted from *Perfectionism*. John Stallworth, J.D., Ph.D.; David S. Litton, Ph.D.; Carol Pierce-Davis, Ph.D.