

Overcoming Perfection - Looking Within

Use the questions below to help you explore your current relationship with perfectionism:

Who in your life holds themselves to a bar of perfection? How do you know? How has this affected you?

With whom do you feel the greatest pressure to be perfect (or not mess up) around? Why?

Which are the most common situations, in which you feel pressure to be perfect (or not mess up)?

What does perfectionism look like for you (over focusing, practicing, thinking, procrastinating, worrying, etc.)? Note - it's important to know your signs so you can catch yourself in the act.

What has perfectionism gotten you? What are you afraid to lose if you stop being a perfectionist? What has it cost you?

What is your relationship with vulnerability? How does that play into your desire to perfect things?

What will change for you if you're able to better manage your perfectionism?

WHY is it important for you to overcome your habit of perfectionism? Note - remember this, it can be your fuel and motivation in challenging situations.

Overcoming Perfection - The Steps

STEP 1: Gain Awareness. After catching yourself in an act of perfectionism, gain clarity around the situation. Learn where your bar sits and what you believe will happen if you don't reach it. Complete the following:

I will be judged on _____ and
if I'm (or it's) not perfect, perfect meaning (your bar), _____
_____ then
_____ will happen.

STEP 2: Admit & Commit. Read over your statement above and admit to your perfectionist habits and commit to making a change in your behavior. Reread your WHY on page 1 to help motivate further forward action.

STEP 3: Show Compassion. When we come to a situation with a sense of perfectionism, our self confidence can feel low. Have compassion for yourself. Validate how hard it must be to feel you're being held to such a high bar and that your worst-case scenario is pretty scary (or whatever it feels like to you).

STEP 4: Challenge Your Thoughts. When answering the following questions, reference the statement drafted in STEP 1.

Where has this bar come from (myself, someone else, or society)? Who set it?

Are the following based on reality or made up? If in reality, on a scale from 1-10, how realistic are they (tip if you get stuck as a trusted friend):

What you believe you're being judged on - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

The height of your bar (see "what perfect means") - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What "will happen" if you don't succeed - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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STEP 4: Challenge Your Thoughts continued. Rework your initial statement in STEP 1 to make it more realistic and supportive by completing the questions below.

I will be judged on _____

My new bar now requires me to achieve _____

If I don't fall short, it's okay because (insert a supportive why statement)

STEP 5: Reset The Bar & Take Action. Ask a trusted friend or colleague questions, do research, take a 3rd party POV, and reset your bar to a healthier level.

What do normal expectations look like in this situation?

What do I need to change to stay within those normal expectations?

How can I hold myself accountable to stay within those limits?

Use the space below to rewrite your bar:

Perfectionist expectations (what do you believe you have to achieve):

Semi-perfectionist expectations (what is a little closer to normal standards):

Realistic expectations (what are more normal standards - these are what you'll try):



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STEP 6: Assess the Height. Explore how the adjusted bar works for you.

Was the outcome of your situation desirable? If so, how can you use your lessons from this situation and apply them to similar ones in the future?

If undesirable, was the outcome as bad as your worst-case situation or was it more manageable? What important information did you gain?

Is there anyone or anything you have to (A) cut ties with (B) establish stronger boundaries with?

Even if the outcome was undesirable - what worked?

CAPTURE THE WINS! Most likely you have volumes of situations in which perfectionism worked for you but you don't have a page of times when not being perfect worked for you. Start writing those books! It will make separating from perfectionist habits easier.

Start a journal or use a scrap of paper to capture all the times you lowered your bar and it led to acceptable and/or positive outcomes. Also include the top 3-5 benefits of lowering the bar (e.g. saved you time, allowed you to connect deeper, etc.)