

Perfectionism in an Imperfect World Tipsheet

Perfectionism is not just about striving for excellence; it's about setting impossibly high standards and being overly critical of yourself and others when those standards aren't met. Perfectionism usually comes from a belief that you or your work is not good enough.

When perfectionism is driving us, shame is riding shotgun and fear is that annoying backseat driver!

– Brené Brown

To avoid feeling overwhelmed it's recommended that you only challenge one perfectionist behaviour at a time. Trying to change multiple behaviours simultaneously is hard work and most likely will not be effective!

So, the first step is to identify a perfectionist behaviour that you would like to change and put an action plan together. The following tips are designed to help you get started!

6 Tips to Break Perfectionist Behaviours

1. Brain Dump

- What are all the areas you need to be 'perfect' at? Prioritise the important ones that MUST change and deprioritise the ones that are less important.
- Externalising thoughts slows them down. Try discussing with others to gain fresh perspectives.

2. Identify Your Triggers

- Take notice of the times when you're trying to be perfect. When this happens, STOP and ask yourself:
 - Whose standards are you living up to and why are you assuming that they are correct?
 - Who really cares about this being perfect? Probably only you!
- Reflect on past successes to gain perspective.
- Don't rush into action. Pause and assess the importance of this behaviour.

3. Set Clear Rules

- Give yourself time limits to complete tasks and stick to completion deadlines, even if you're only 90% done or happy with the work.
- Would spending an extra four hours lead to added commercial value? If not, then why do it?
- Have non-negotiable targets to prevent yourself from overworking.

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Nobody's perfect.

4. Ask for Feedback

- Share your first draft with someone and allow a different perspective to provide you with fresh insight.
- Be open to the feedback – it will give you the opportunity to not be perfect.
- Embrace imperfection by being receptive to constructive criticism.
- Remember that collaboration leads to better outcomes than rigid perfectionism.

5. Take Imperfect Action

- What is the cost and benefit to you, your team, others and the business if you take extra time to get something 'perfect'?
- Focus on progress over perfection. It is better to deliver something than nothing.
- Remember, waiting for perfection stalls progress.

6. Be Present

- Overthinking is simply creating problems where none exist.
- Ask yourself:
 - What is the evidence derived from your past performance?
 - Who says you are not good enough?
- Fear often stems from false evidence, so practise gratitude and concentrate on making progress in each moment.
- The best way to overcome your overthinking is to focus on the present.

The BONUS NEXT STEP!

Take Action: Embrace imperfection and prioritise progress over unrealistic standards. Commit to specific changes and deadlines.

Remember Nobody's Perfect!

Progress is more important than perfection.
– Simon Sinek