



Strive for progress not perfection

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Abstract

It is healthy to strive for success. It can be problematic to strive for perfection in an irrational way. Perfectionism is not a healthy pursuit of excellence. Characterized by inflexible expectations, high standards, and firm beliefs about how to be successful is Perfectionism. Perfectionism being a personality trait that appears at a young age, is multidimensional in nature (due to its impact on both personal and interpersonal relationships), and is related to various maladjustments that result in negative outcomes and maladaptive behavioural manifestations. Perfectionists are driven, organised, and dependable, but when their standards aren't reached, they can become worried and critical. Perfectionists can employ this feature in beneficial and constructive ways by becoming more flexible, adaptive, and tolerant of mistakes.

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INTRODUCTION

A comparison between expectations and reality is sometimes conceived of as perfectionism. In particular, perfectionists often compare themselves with a version of themselves they perceive to be "perfect". A person who is more attached to his or her expectations will have a harder time accepting reality, especially when mistakes are made or when things do not go

smoothly. As a result, insecurity, anxiety, and self-criticism can feed into unhealthy forms of perfectionism.

Perfectionists are expected to meet high standards, but they also rely on consistent methods and routines for achieving these standards. Despite their achievements, perfectionists in our society are criticized for being overly rigid and controlling, despite being admired for their achievements. The double standard illustrates that perfectionism can either be helpful or harmful, depending on the situation and how it is expressed. [1]

In perfectionism, the goal is to achieve perfection or to appear to achieve perfection. The perfectionist strives for perfection in everything he or she does in order to gain the acceptance of others. In order to achieve exceptional results, they usually have unrealistic expectations. [1, 5]

A person who is perfect is generally described as striving for perfection, or even believing that it is possible. A positive trait rather than a flaw, it is typically seen as a strength. [1, 6]

TYPES OF PERFECTIONISM

Various factors can contribute to perfectionism. It is normal for people to exhibit perfectionist tendencies in almost all aspects of their lives, while others may only exhibit perfection in their schoolwork or at work for another organization.

[4, 7]

The following types of perfectionism have been identified by some research:

1. Self-Oriented Perfectionism

Self-centered perfectionism is characterized by high standards for oneself. High-achieving and self-motivated individuals are more likely to express this type of perfectionism in healthy ways. [4]

2. Socially Prescribed Perfectionism

Perfection prescribed by society is a result of internalizing expectations from others or society as a whole. People expect certain things from their parents, friends, significant others, work, or society at large, and these expectations often lead to a lack of self-confidence, low self-esteem, and social anxiety. Perfectionism derived from social pressure has a greater risk of being maladaptive because it is motivated by a fear of rejection and criticism. [4]

3. Other-Oriented Perfectionism

People who are oriented towards others should hold them to high standards and expectations. Perfectionists who are oriented towards others may be overly harsh, critical, and demanding. The situation can lead to anger and hostility, and it may also interfere with the ability to build relationships of trust with others. [4, 8]

STRIVING FOR PERFECTIONISM

Society has become accustomed to unattainable expectations. It is constantly conditioned into us to believe we do not measure up to unrealistic bodies in magazines and picture-perfect families on social media. [2]

In uncertain situations, perfectionism helps us feel in control by helping us feel in control. [2, 9]

In order to shield ourselves from judgment and shame, perfectionists often try to achieve perfection. In order to live a perfect life, one must

continuously seek approval from other people and prove their worth. Being authentic is not what we strive for, but being "enough." Being pretty, successful, smart, whatever we feel we lack, is what we strive for. [2, 10]

CAUSES for PERFECTIONISM

The development of perfectionism can be influenced by many factors. A few include: [1]

- An insecurity or feeling of inadequacy caused by frequent fear of disapproval from others.
- OCD sufferers and people with anxiety disorders. Perfectionism and OCD may share a correlation, but not every perfectionist has OCD, or everyone with OCD is a perfectionist.
- An attempt to achieve perfection is discouraged if the parent exhibits perfectionistic behavior or disapproves. Parents may be abusive if they encourage their children to be perfect in all areas of their lives.
- Early attachments that are insecure. In adults who have had trouble self-soothing as children, they may experience symptoms of a troubled attachment to parents. The outcome may not be perfect and they have trouble accepting it as good.

The pressure to live up to previous achievements can sometimes overwhelm people with a history of high achievements. Their perfectionistic behavior is often a result of this. It is also possible to develop perfectionistic tendencies in children who are frequently praised for their achievements. [2]

EXAMPLES OF PERFECTIONISTIC BEHAVIOR

Aiming for success does not automatically signify perfectionistic behavior, but working hard to make your dreams a reality does. In general, people who consider themselves perfectionists believe that whatever they do must be perfect before it is worth doing. Many people compare their work to others or focus on achieving flawless output instead of being proud of their progress, learning, or hard work [4, 11].

Perfectionistic individuals may still be dissatisfied even when they receive their desired results. Their belief that they would not have had

to work so hard if they were perfect may lead them to believe that they wouldn't have had to do so. [4]

Perfectionism happens to most people sometimes or in certain areas of their lives. Perfectionists who strive for perfection almost constantly may feel compelled to achieve it. In addition, they may: [3]

- A task cannot be performed unless it is perfectly performed by them.
- Any endeavor should be viewed from the standpoint of the end product. Because of this, they may not be able to focus on learning or completing a task efficiently.
- Until a task is completed according to their standards, it will not be considered finished.
- Procrastinate. In order to complete a task successfully, a perfectionist may wait until it is perfect.
- A task that takes others a short period of time may be taken twice as long by you.

HEALTHY Vs. UNHEALTHY PERFECTIONISM

It depends on how perfectionism impacts a person whether it is healthy or unhealthy. High achievement and improved performance are the results of good perfectionism. In order to achieve goals and grow, people with good perfectionism strive for perfection. [1]

In addition to perfectionistic striving, those with unhealthy perfectionistic tendencies have high levels of perfectionist concerns and demands, i.e., they fret about making mistakes and place increased demands on themselves to perform perfectly. Insecurity, anxiety, stress, and uptightness often result from the combination of expectations, concerns, and demands to be perfect. [1]

ADVANTAGES OF PERFECTIONISM

Perfection is often seen as a positive characteristic in modern society. As a result, these tendencies are easily misinterpreted as positive traits. Perfectionists, for instance, tend to be perfectionistic: [3]

- **Performance is enhanced.** In order to achieve strict goals, perfectionists often go to great lengths to accomplish them.

- **Motivation is more important.** A perfectionist works harder since he or she has a clear understanding of the short- and long-term goals.
- **Conscientiousness at a higher level.** Conscientious people (one of the Big Five) take their responsibilities seriously and strive to perform well.

Those who strive for perfection usually end up becoming burnt out because of their unrealistic expectations.

DISADVANTAGES OF PERFECTIONISM

It may appear beneficial to perfect some behaviors, but perfection doesn't guarantee success. The following are possible effects of perfectionism: [3]

- **Achievement levels are lower.** Taking too long to complete a task results in less work being done as a result of procrastination.
- **Distress psychologically.** It is common for perfectionists to suffer from negative emotions such as stress, anxiety, depression, and shame.
- **Burnout.** It leads to burnout when perfectionists work excessively to meet their unrealistic expectations.

IMPACT OF PERFECTIONISM

Although perfectionistic tendencies are not intrinsically detrimental, some manifestations of these traits can have negative effects for Assessing a person's mental health and quality of life. The majority of perfectionism's negative consequences are the result of inclinations that are widespread in people who have unhealthy kinds of perfectionism. High levels of self-criticism, intolerance for mistakes, and unfavourable self-evaluations are among them. Perfectionists hold themselves to unattainable high standards. They assume that nothing they do is sufficient. [1]

Setting high goals and aiming for excellence are admirable qualities, but perfectionism is unhealthy. Perfectionism is often misunderstood as a positive construct, although this is not the case. Perfectionism can lead to dissatisfaction with one's life. Depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and self-harm are all possible

outcomes. If you keep trying to succeed, you may eventually give up. Your personal connections and education may suffer even if you are charged with a minor crime. [3]

It is possible to suffer from perfectionism as an adult or as a child. School, sports, clubs, community service, and jobs are frequently pushed on children and teenagers. As a result, there is an obsession with success. One may end up unable to accomplish it as a result. [3, 12]

The effect of perfectionism on a variety of outcomes has been studied by researchers. According to previous studies, people with Perfectionism at a higher level have suffered stress are more prone to feel emotional distress. [2]

Perfectionism has been linked to suicidal ideation and behaviour throughout the period of several decades of studies. Perfectionists are more often than most people realise to have suicidal thoughts and impulses. According to studies, chasing the phantom of perfection all the time might be detrimental to one's psychological health and well-being.[2]

CONCLUSION

There is no inherent harm in having perfectionistic traits, but certain expressions can lead to ill health, dysfunction, and overall poor quality of living. It is common for people with unhealthy forms of perfectionist tendencies to experience most of the harmful effects of perfectionist tendencies. An unhealthy form of perfectionism often involves unrealistically high expectations that lead to people feeling like they have consistently failed. In contrast to unhealthy perfectionists, who always find something to criticize, even when they accomplish their goals, healthy perfectionists tend to be more realistic about their expectations and feel proud when they accomplish them. An unhealthy form of perfectionism is characterized by overly critical self-talk. [4]

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