

Striving to do things well is reasonable and satisfying. Striving to be perfect is frustrating, mentally draining and a huge waste of time.

Edwin Bliss Author of the famous book "Time Management"

### What does perfectionism do to your mind?

When a group of female students at the University of Georgia were surveyed to examine the relationship between perfectionism and self-concept, surprising results were found: those with high perfectionism scores had lower self-concept scores. They were the ones who saw their identity tied to their performance.

You have often heard people say things like: "Mahmoud is a top-tier student". The problem arises when Mahmoud internalizes the sentence and defines himself based on it. Now, if one day this student doesn't get a good grade for any reason, he thinks he's no longer himself.

It doesn't matter that he still has the same beliefs and appearance as before; Mahmoud feels that he is different from before.

Those who strive to do well enjoy their success, but those who base their self-worth on their success do not.

Perfectionists tend to link their identity to their successes, to the awards they have won, to the grades they have earned during their studies, to the records they have set, to be recognized as a talented student.

A perfectionist who bases his identity on his success will do anything to preserve it. Some people go to great lengths to preserve their identity, forbid themselves from sleep until they become ill, some cheat, some withdraw from the arena completely to avoid facing failure and some also turn to drugs.

### What games do perfectionists play

When you believe that your identity and success are equal, your thinking also gets involved. Perfectionists unconsciously use various tricks to preserve themselves and their identity. Do any of these tricks sound familiar to you?

Being fickle: You set a goal for yourself and you achieve it. You feel great at the time, but if you don't achieve it, you feel really bad. This is very exhausting. Whenever you achieve a goal, you feel excited and capable and whenever you don't achieve it, you feel helpless and embarrassed.

The numbers game: A perfectionist's way of thinking about quantity and the number of activities and achievements, rather than their quality. You look at the number of awards and papers and points not at the things you've learned and the things that are truly valuable. No number will satisfy you and you keep counting.



# Perfectionism



Shahid Beheshti  
University of  
Medical Sciences



Student Counseling and  
Mental Health Office

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### Tips

- Those who strive to do well enjoy their success, but those who base their self-worth on their success do not.
- Perfectionists play a variety of games, including being fickle, playing with numbers and focusing on the future.
- Procrastination is a complex problem that leads to irrational behaviors.

Focus on the future: You give a great speech, everyone tells you that you gave a great speech, but what's on your mind are the points you probably forgot in your speech. Your focus is now on the meeting you have next week. What if the same problem occurs there?!

You are not even willing to look at your successes: This is what perfectionists do not do. Time is too valuable to spend on reviewing the past.

Regrets of the past: "I wish...", "why didn't I do that?", "If I had answered that question, I would have gotten a perfect score." You don't let memories go. You bring them up mercilessly over and over again. These thoughts hinder progress and keep you stuck in your place.

Telescopic thinking: You use both ends of the telescope to see your achievements. When you fail at something, you look at it from the smaller end of the telescope, which makes things seem bigger than they are. When you succeed, you look at that success from the larger end of the telescope.

Prioritizing your goals: You have a choice between sleep and studying; you choose studying even if it means drinking a pot of tea or coffee and getting sick.

Doing it right: You're not satisfied with even the best work. The result has to be perfect; so you do it again... and again... and again... until you finally get it right.

All or nothing thinking: You won't be satisfied. You won't feel satisfied unless you get everything in life, all the awards, all the privileges, all the good opportunities.

The procrastination trap: Procrastination is a complex problem that leads to irrational behavior. Perfectionists use the following methods to mask their fear of doing things imperfectly:

- Not starting the project
- Not delivering a completed project
- Starting multiple projects and not having time for all of them

## 10 tips for those who procrastinate:

If you're caught in the procrastination trap, here are some tips to help you escape it. You don't have to try them all. Just pick the ones that work for you and stick with them.

1. Allow more time than you need for a project. For example, if you think writing a text will take 2 hours, allow 3 hours for it.
2. Set your goals realistically, but also not very hard. Don't hold back and be flexible.
3. Break down large, complex projects into smaller, more manageable parts.
4. Start the work now and don't wait until you are completely ready to do it.
5. Become consciously aware that your project paper or assignment will not be perfect. Being aware of this will eliminate your fear of failure.
6. Start your day with the hardest task you have to do so you can enjoy the rest of your day. This will make the rest of your day easier compared to its beginning.
7. Plan your leisure time without feeling guilty. Start with the things you enjoy the most or haven't had the chance to do yet.
8. Keep a journal to track your progress. Make a list of the things you are going to do each day. Read it from time to time and be proud of what you have done and reward yourself.

9. Remove distractions from your workplace. Keep food, internet, television, games and other tempting things away from your work area. When you go to the library, don't search sections that are not related to your work.
10. Make a list of projects that you are going to do and tackle them whenever you solve the procrastination problem.

### Perfectionist Thoughts of 5 Famous People

Leonardo da Vinci (painter & inventor): If I do not do my work as it should be done, God will not be pleased with me.

Katherine Hepburn (actress): I think most people are involved in art, but in a strange and mysterious way, only those who are either lucky or very perfect succeed.

US President Abraham Lincoln: The Gettysburg defeat (the greatest defeat of the American Civil War) was a simple defeat.

Marie Curie, Chemist: I never look at what I have done, but at what lies ahead.

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (poet): A prominent 17<sup>th</sup>-century poet who, according to her, shaved her hair as punishment for not learning Latin quickly.

