

EXCELLENCE AND PERFECTION

Excellence is the willingness to be wrong - Perfection is being right.

Excellence is risk –
Perfection is fear.

Excellence is powerful –
Perfection is anger and frustration.

Excellence is spontaneous –
Perfection is conformity.

Excellence is accepting –
Perfection is judgement.

Excellence is giving –
Perfection is taking.

Excellence is confidence –
Perfection is doubt.

Excellence is flowing –
Perfection is pressure.

Excellence is journey –
Perfection is destination.

Excellence is surrender –
Perfection is consuming.

Excellence is trust –
Perfection is selfishness.

“ In order to strive for excellence
you certainly don't have to be
perfect - do you? ”

From Dick Hubbard

WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?

If you would like to make an appointment to see a counsellor to learn more about this topic, please contact the counselling service on your campus.

Distance students can contact any one of the campuses. Please tell the receptionist if you need an urgent appointment.

CONTACT DETAILS

ALBANY

Health and Counselling

Hours 8.30am – 5.00pm

Monday – Friday

Phone (09) 443 9783

Email: Studenthealth@massey.ac.nz

MANAWATU

Student Counselling Service

Turitea Campus, Palmerston North

Hours 8.30am - 5.00pm

Monday – Friday

Phone (06) 350 5533

Email: s.counselling@massey.ac.nz

WELLINGTON

Student Counselling Service

The Student Services Trust @ Wellington

Hours 8.30am - 5.00pm

Monday – Friday

Phone (04) 801 25 42

<http://crow.massey.ac.nz>

<http://health-counselling.massey.nz>

STUDENT COUNSELLING SERVICES

SKILLS – INSIGHT - SUPPORT

0800 MASSEY | MASSEY.AC.NZ

PERFECTIONISM

STUDENT COUNSELLING



ARE YOU ARE PERFECTIONIST?

- Do you feel that what you accomplish is never good enough?
- Do you often put off handing in completed assignments or projects because they are not quite right?
- Do you feel that you must give 100% or more on everything you do or else you will be a failure?
- Do you feel you must be the best, student, athlete, and/or friend?
- Are you often critical of yourself or others?

Perfectionism is not the search for excellence; it is the search for the unobtainable. It goes beyond doing your very best. The healthy striver has drive, while the perfectionist is driven. One definition states a perfectionist as "a person having a disposition which regards anything short of perfect as being unacceptable."

For example, a perfectionist may hand in a paper a week late or not at all, rather than hand it in on time with imperfect structure.

A perfectionist may spend so much time agonizing over some insignificant detail that a critical project misses its deadline.

A perfectionist student may find it very hard to begin a task because all aspects of the task should and must be done very well.

HOW PERFECTIONISTS THINK

Perfectionism is based on the belief that unless I am perfect I am not good enough, I am not OK.

Perfectionists use other peoples' apparent shortcomings to enhance their own feelings of self-worth when they compare themselves with "flawed" or "lesser" or "imperfect" others.

By needing to be seen as perfect, Perfectionists may set themselves up for continuous rejection, self-put downs and deny themselves peace of mind.

Even when Perfectionists do achieve, their methods often deprive them of the very love and acceptance they want so badly.

A number of negative thoughts, feelings and beliefs may be associated with Perfectionism: -

- Fear of failure - failure to achieve goals indicates a lack of self-worth.
- Fear of making mistakes - making mistakes is seen as a failure.
- Fear of disapproval - letting others see their flaws may lead to rejection or non-acceptance. Trying to be perfect is a way for perfectionists to protect themselves from criticism and disapproval.
- All or none thinking - there is a feeling of worthlessness if accomplishments are not perfect. (e.g. A straight A grade student who gets a B grade sees himself as a failure because of an inaccurate perspective).
- Over emphasis on the application of the words "should" and "must" in their lives. These words serve as rigid rules for how their lives must be led. With such an over-emphasis on "should" and "must", perfectionists seldom satisfy their own true wants and desires.
- Believing that others are easily successful. Perfectionists tend to perceive others as achieving success with a minimum of effort, making few errors, having little emotional stress and showing maximum self-confidence. At the same time they view their own efforts as unending, forever inadequate.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT PERFECTIONISM

- Set realistic and reachable goals based on your own wants and needs, and what you have accomplished in the past.
- Set subsequent goals in a sequential manner, so that as you reach one goal, you set your next achievable goal.
- Focus on the activity of "doing", not just the end result or achievement. Aim for 90% or 80% or even less. Your world will not end when you are not perfect!
- Use feelings of anxiety and depression as opportunities to ask yourself "What am I afraid of?" and "What is the worst thing that can happen if I don't do this task perfectly?" Almost always the answer will make you smile at your perfectionism.
- Recognise that many positive things can only be learned by making mistakes. When you make a mistake, ask yourself "What can I learn from this experience?"
- Avoid all-or-none thinking in relation to your goals. Prioritise your tasks and give less effort to those tasks having less importance.

PERCEPTUAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PERFECTIONISTS AND REALISTS

UNREASONABLE GOALS	REALISTIC GOALS
Can't feel satisfied	Can reward self
Compares self negatively with others	Recognises own positive uniqueness
Cannot discuss own mistake comfortably	Accepts errors as a part of life's lessons
Uses others' standards for success	Goals derived from self awareness
Focuses only on the out- come	Enjoys the "journey"
Emphasises keeping life under control	Emphasises keeping life in balance
Feels devalued unless performing well	Accepts self as valuable, not perfect

Once you have tried these suggestions, you are likely to realize that perfectionism is neither a helpful or necessary influence in your life. There are alternative ways to think that are more beneficial. Not only are you likely to achieve more without your perfectionism, but you will feel better in the process.

