



THE WHALE WATCH

"Looking Out for Yourself and Others"

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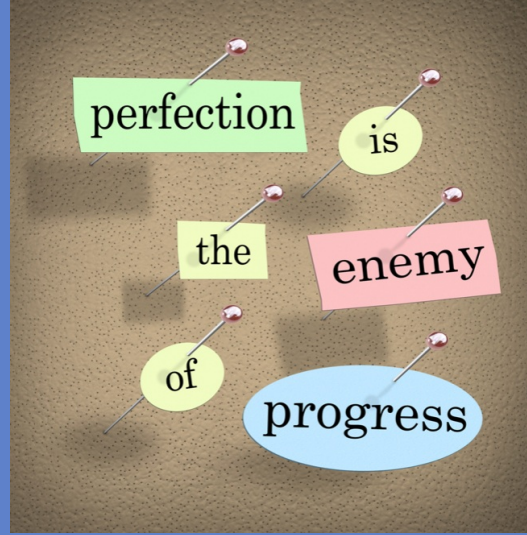
Types of Perfectionism

Perfectionism Goals and Tips

When Perfectionism Isn't Perfect

When we think of perfectionism it can be easy to highlight the traits of **Healthy Adaptive Perfectionism** such as having high standards but low self-criticism and holding high personal expectations for yourself and others. Who wouldn't want that? Unfortunately, perfectionists can also present with **Maladaptive or Unhealthy Perfectionism** traits, such as high standards with high self-criticism and being highly critical of others if "perfect" standards are not met.

People who are naturally gifted or talented are susceptible to perfectionistic tendencies because things come naturally to them without much effort (hello, NEOMED students!), so then they do not know how to handle it when something is difficult.



So how can you become even more perfect?

TIPS TO REMEMBER:

Think Flexibly

Examine Steps Taken

Avoid Goal Vaulting

Experience Making a Mistake

Give Yourself Permission to Make that Mistake

Allow for Self-Compassion

Watch your Language

Don't Limit What You Can Do

Here are some tips and goals to help you make sure you are staying healthy while still striving to do your best:

Go for Excellent-ism instead of Perfectionism:

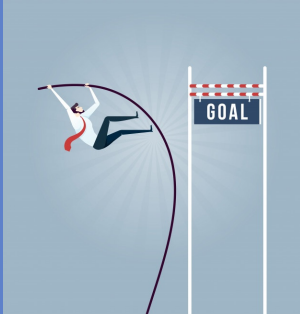
Strive to do your best, but you think more flexibly about how to do that. The focus is more on the process, which allows people to appreciate and enjoy the effort, the learning curve, and their growth along the way.

Focus on your progress, not just on your outcomes:

Called the “stairsteps/ladder approach”- examine the steps you have taken to get to your goals rather than focusing solely on the results. This allows perfectionists greater flexibility in how they address situations and reflects a style of **Adaptive Perfectionism**.

Avoid Goal Vaulting:

This is done when you set a goal for yourself and as soon as you get close to achieving that goal you continually raise the bar. In this way, you will never feel a sense of accomplishment in achieving your goals.



Engage in “Imperfect Experiments”:

Purposely live through the experience of making a mistake or not doing something perfectly. Exposure allows us to be authentic, freedom to demonstrate who we really are, establish strong relationships with those around us.

Allow for vulnerability and self-compassion:

We get it, most of us are uncomfortable with vulnerability. But people who have maladaptive perfectionistic tendencies often mask their struggles- they know they are in distress, they know they are struggling, but they don't want it to be perceived they cannot handle it on their own. Giving ourselves permission to make mistakes allows us to be perfectly imperfect.

Watch your language!

People that are gifted are often told that they are “smart”, and they tend to internalize that as a part of their identity. So when they face something that is difficult they link it to a character flaw rather than a challenge because it doesn't fit in with their idea of “who they are”. Praise your actions toward your goal and try not to label yourself or others based on accomplishments.

I.E.- “Stephanie and Dana worked hard on this month's Whale Watch” rather than “Stephanie and Dana are the best writers in the entire universe”.

Watch out for becoming the “Understriving Perfectionist”:

Sometimes a perfectionist can engage in avoidance due to a fear of success. Understriving perfectionists tend to set the bar low now in order to guarantee success in the future. Don't limit what you can do now but always believe that you can do better.

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