

Undoing Perfectionism

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What is Perfectionism?

- *'Perfectionism, in psychology, is a personality trait characterized by a person's striving for flawlessness and setting excessively high performance standards, accompanied by overly critical self-evaluations and concerns regarding others' evaluation.'* (Wiki)
- *'For perfectionists, life is an endless report card on accomplishments or looks. A one-way ticket to unhappiness, perfectionism is typically accompanied by depression and eating disorders.'* (Psychology Today)

Am I a Perfectionist?

1. You are highly conscious and hyper-critical of mistakes. Hence, you have an extremely sharp eye toward details.
2. You aim to be the best in everything you do, even if it is something that you are not interested in.
3. You spend copious amount of time, right down to the last moment, to perfect something. You would rather sacrifice your well-being (such as sleep, eating time, etc) than let something be less than it can be.
4. You set absolute ideals. There is only black and white, no grey.
5. You are the harshest critic of yourself. You would beat yourself up over the smallest thing that went wrong, to the extent of being neurotic.

Am I a Perfectionist?

6. You mull over outcomes if they did not turn out as envisioned. You wonder why it wasn't a different outcome, and whether you could have done anything to prevent that.
7. You are defensive toward criticism and have a fear of failure because they suggest imperfection.
8. You only have the end goal in mind. If you don't achieve the goal, it really does not matter what happens in the process.
9. You have an all-or-nothing approach. If the situation does not allow him/her to achieve the standard he/she laid out, he/she will abandon the task because it does not make sense to spend time on something that he/she is not going to conquer.
10. You are very conscious of any situation which might give others the perception you are not perfect

Undoing Step 1: Changing your mind

Perfectionism
is
SELF ABUSE
of the
HIGHEST
ORDER

Anne Wilson Schaeff

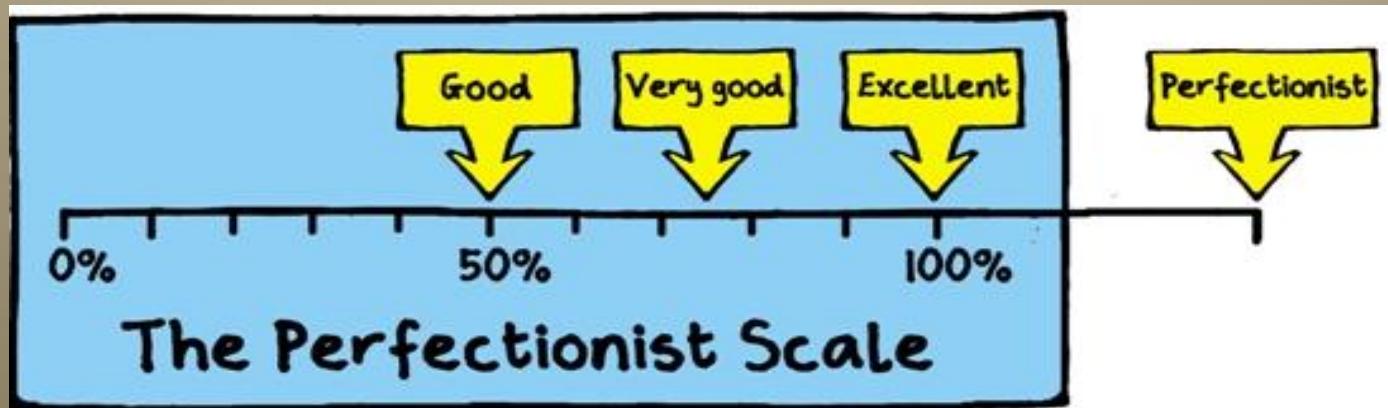
“If we retain the faulty belief that perfectionism is virtuous, we will be suffocated by its accusations and demands for the whole of our lives.”

(Im)Perfectionism

Forbes '*Perfectionism*' is problematic because it can lead to obsessiveness; inefficiency; and a multitude of serious mental health issues that affect attendance, performance, and morale. You'll often see a perfectionist procrastinate because she's afraid of failing before she starts. Alternatively, she may position herself as a martyr, "the only one" who cares/thinks/works enough about getting things "right."

3 Components of Perfectionism

1. Sociological and cultural influences (including parenting)
2. Cognitive disposition, thinking bias, emotional ‘style’.
3. Spiritual/theological distortion. Spiritual battle.



Trait Induction



- Judgemental parenting
- Early criticism
- Frustration/anger
- Poor listening
- Social isolation
- Perfection as an affirmed positive

- Guilt induction parenting styles
- Emotional withdrawal
- Unsafe environment
- Lack of affirmation
- Marital conflict
- Genetic trait



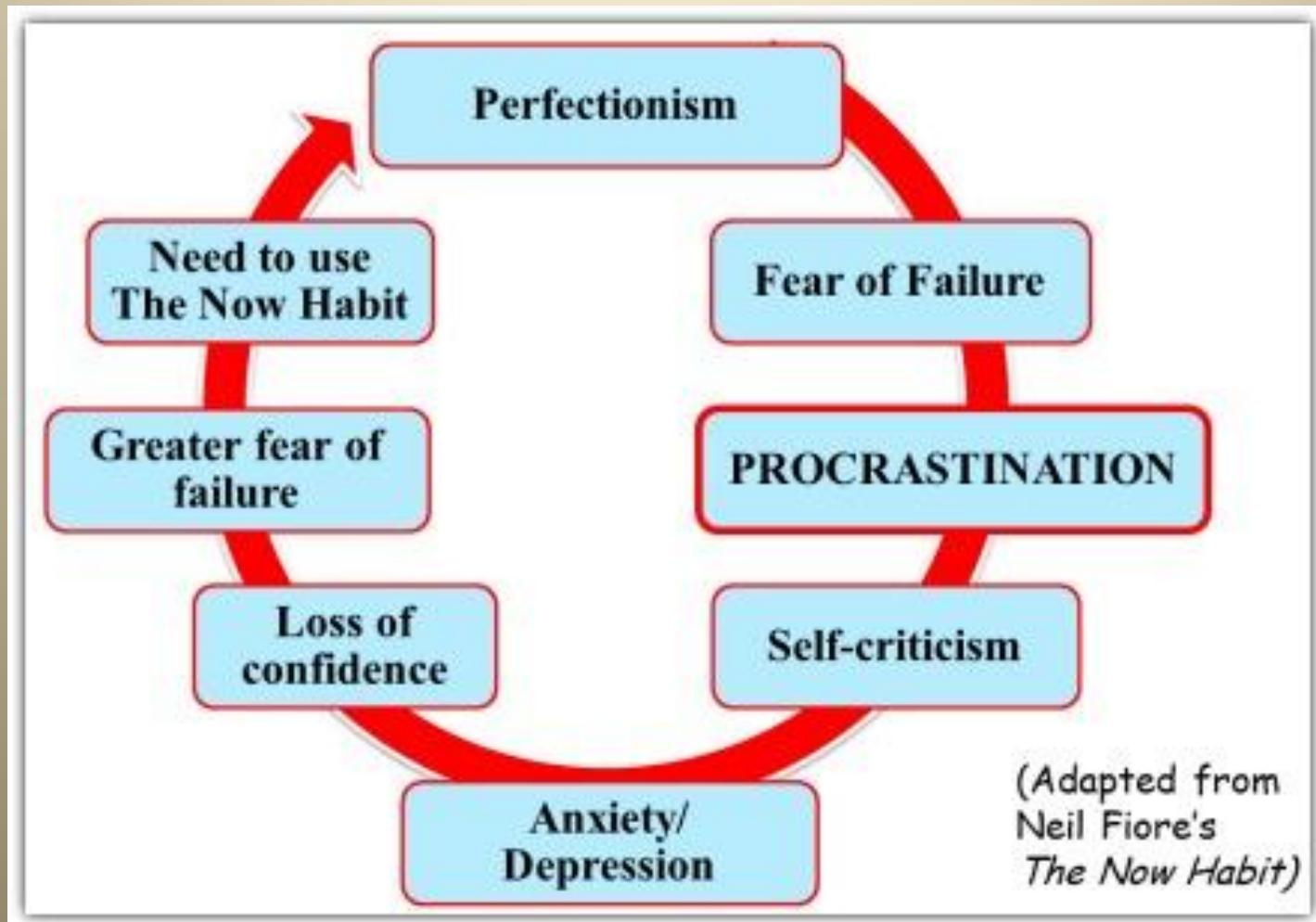
Cultural Perfection

Glamour Magazine

“Expectations of physical perfection are at an all-time high—oddly, as women have gotten more culturally liberated, we've also gotten crazier about our bodies. Americans, mostly women, spent more than \$13 billion on plastic surgery in 2007; 10 million U.S. girls a year have eating disorders.”



Perfectionism as a Safety Behaviour



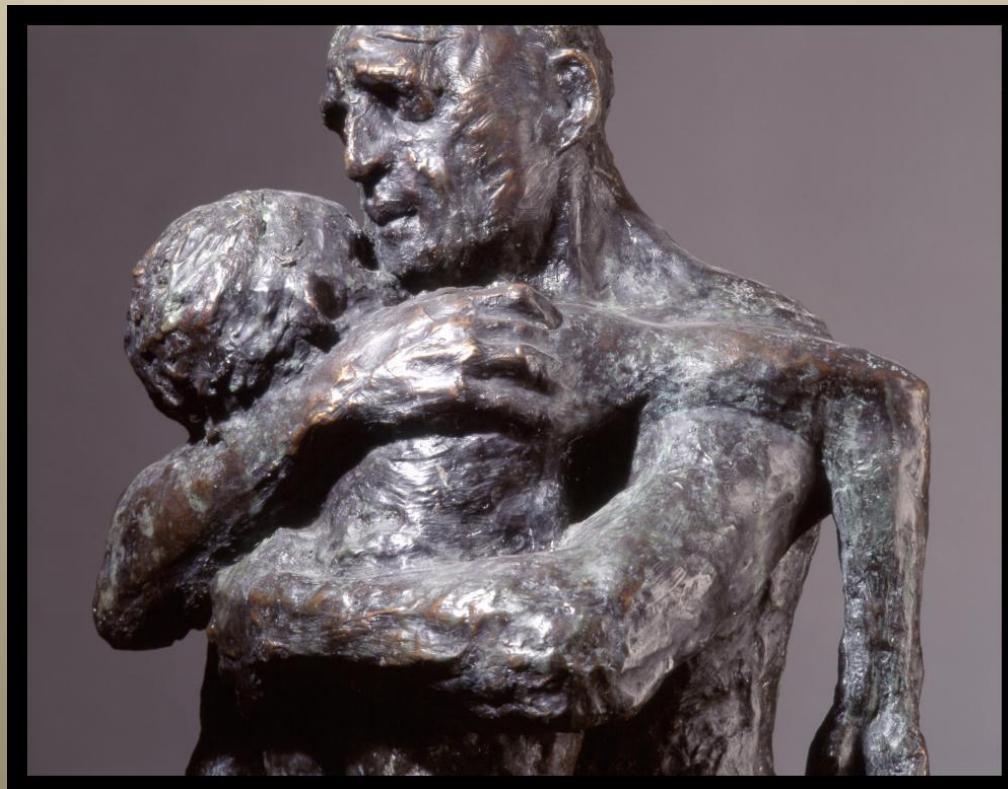
Christian Reference Point

- Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Mat 5:8)
- But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct. (1 Pet 1:15)
- Training us to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age. (Titus 2:12)



Theological Review

Greek word in Mt. 5:48 is *teleioi*, which can be translated as either "complete" or "perfect" in contemporary English.



Recovery Questions

Perception: What do I really think about perfectionism?

Purpose: What am I really trying to achieve through perfectionism?

Projection: What am I feeling inside but pushing outside?

Performance: Who am I seeking to please through seeking perfection?

Steps to Change

- Self aware
- Stress reduction
- Make new appraisals
- Behaviour modification
- Compassionate self talk
- Prayer
- Tolerate discomfort

the idea of
perfection
is so
imperfect.

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