



# Perfectionism vs. Excellence

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Are you a perfectionist? Perfectionists believe that everything must be perfect all the time, they spend excessive time on trivial problems, they set impossible standards for success, and they feel upset when they are not met. Perfectionists are motivated by the fear of failure, criticism, or rejection, and they see themselves only in extremes, as either perfect or a failure. Perfectionism can cripple our ability to make decisions by second-guessing or regretting decisions. It can also leave us avoidant of risks and new experiences due to our fear of failure. Often perfectionists find themselves wrestling with procrastination, stress, anxiety, and depression.

Is there a difference between perfectionism and striving for excellence? Absolutely!

**Celebrations:** Perfectionism means never feeling that you have reached your goal. Aiming for excellence means setting attainable goals and stopping to celebrate when you reach them.

**Sense of Accomplishment:** Perfectionism means never feeling that what you did was quite good enough. Aiming for excellence means identifying achievements and letting yourself feel a sense of accomplishment.

**Realistic Optimism:** Perfectionism is unrealistic, unwilling to adjust: "It must be done this way every time!" Aiming for excellence means believing it can be done but also being willing to adjust the route while the journey is in progress.

**The Completion Question:** The perfectionist may suffer from completion anxiety. They may work hard on the project until it is almost finished, then stop. Completing the project will open them up to evaluation. Aiming for excellence means aiming to finish. Finishing is not frightening, it is the goal.

Perfectionism is a destructive, compulsive behavior. Excellence is an admirable goal.