

5 Ways Perfectionism is Harmful

Perfectionism is a problem that plagues many people, especially in this day and age. We put pressure on ourselves, our employees, our colleagues, our loved ones, and our children to be successful and perfect. This causes us to hold ourselves and others to impossible standards. This can cause all sorts of problems as we or our loved ones strive to reach these impossible standards, driving themselves crazy trying to achieve the impossible: perfection. In this article, I'll explain the five ways in which perfectionism is harmful to you, rather than productive.

1) Perfectionism can affect your mental health

Holding yourself or others to standards that are impossible to achieve can, reasonably, cause a negative effect on your mental health. Perfectionism can cause depression, anxiety, agoraphobia, eating disorders, PTSD, OCD, the list just goes on and on.

Sarah Egan, senior research fellow specializing in perfectionism, eating disorders, and anxiety at Curtin University in Perth weighed in: "It's something that cuts across everything, in terms of psychological problems. There aren't that many other things that do that. There are studies that suggest that the higher the perfectionism is, the more psychological disorders you're going to suffer."

As a culture, United States citizens have a tendency to glorify perfectionism, claiming it's a positive trait. However, as you can see, perfectionism can have a deeply negative effect on your overall mental health. It can result

in you being in a permanent state of anxiety and self-deprecation.

2) Perfectionism can negatively affect your relationships

If you demand perfectionism in yourself and everything you do, you likely hold your friends and loved ones to the same impossible standards. This can not only cause a strain in your relationships but could potentially ruin them entirely. If you demand the impossible from your friends, they likely won't want to be around you anymore. You could make yourself an unnecessary source of stress and anxiety in their lives.

3) Perfectionism can keep you from growing

The common thought with the trait of perfectionism is that it always forces you to strive for better and thus it must be conducive for personal growth. This, however, is not true. While perfectionism does always force you to strive for better, it can actually hinder you from personal growth. Rather than moving on and learning from their mistakes, accepting they need to learn, perfectionists stay focused on the error, trying to undo it or perfect it. This has a tendency to cause people to be hung up in the past, hindering their growth rather than using the mistake for self-improvement.

4) Perfectionism can cause you to be more sensitive and susceptible to stress

Perfectionists tend to have trouble rolling with the punches.

They have a tendency to feel every little bump of stress and spiral into a panic. When things don't go exactly according to plan, perfectionists have trouble adjusting which can affect many areas of their lives from their career to their relationships.

Perfectionism seems to be a trait that's valued very highly in American society, but at what cost? Many find this trait admirable, seeing it as a sign of resilience and commitment. On the contrary, as I've demonstrated through this article, perfectionism can cause several negative effects on various areas of your life. From relationships to careers to personal growth.

5) Perfectionism can limit your success

When you're continually striving for the perfect result, you're never satisfied with the quality of what you've produced so you hold back, and the likelihood is your product or service never sees the light of day. You work on it and work on it and yet to you it's never good enough. You either spend far too much time on it before you deliver it to the world, or you never release it, or you don't have confidence in it which sabotages the level of rewards you get from your hard work. How are you ever going to be successful if you withhold your work, your talent, your gifts from the world and from the people who would benefit from it?

"Perfectionism is not the same thing as striving to be our best. Perfectionism is not about healthy achievement and growth; it's a shield." Brene Brown

Demanding perfection from yourself can only hold you back.

While being committed to high standards and high-quality work is a virtue, striving for perfection can cause you to struggle with mental health issues, lose friendships or relationships, have higher levels of stress, and even hinder your personal growth.

Perfectionism is a sign of insecurity and lack of self-esteem; a belief that if you don't achieve perfection you are not good enough.

If you're concerned you might be too much of a perfectionist, you might want to schedule a [free success strategy session](#) with me to help you get to the root of the problem and create the change that will lead to a happier and more joyful life.



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