When Perfect Isn’t Good Enough: Strategies for Coping with Perfectionism

Overcoming Perfectionism: The Key to Balanced Recovery
-Smith, A. (1990)

Never Good Enough: How to Use Perfectionism to Your Advantage Without Ruining Your Life
-Ramirez, M., & Basco (2000)

“...at the heart of perfectionism is fear—an inordinate fear of failing, the fear that unless one is perfect, one is worthless”
Clark, 2002, p. 173

Resources


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Perfectionism is defined as students possessing excessively high standards or expectations in relation to their personal performance (Schuler, 2000).

Gifted adolescents who possess perfectionism are not generally affected in the identification process. Rather, these adolescents are more affected by a major myth associated with giftedness and perfectionism. This myth identifies the gifted population as being flawless in all areas (Galbraith, 1983). The truth is that, all individual, regardless of their age, talent, or experiences do in fact make mistakes — especially children.

Perfectionist students work extremely hard to avoid any type of criticism, which often creates a large amount of anxiety and worry (Schuler, 2000).

Did You Know?

For the most part, you should not be highly concerned with your child’s perfectionism unless it begins to drastically influence their life.

Tips for Parents

- Set priorities
- Show acceptance of mistakes
- Set realistic yet high standards
- Model relaxation techniques
- Discuss personal experiences
- Encourage self-evaluation skills