



5–Min. Professional Development!

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Gifted 109: Perfectionism

Perfectionism Quiz

1. Do you feel like what you accomplish is never quite good enough?
2. Do you often put off handing in papers or projects, waiting to get them just right?
3. Do you feel you must give more than 100% on everything you do or else you will be mediocre or even a failure?
4. Are you working toward success or trying to be perfect - too perfect!

Perfectionism means that you can *never* fail, you *always* need approval, and if you come in second place, you are a loser.

Characteristics of Perfectionists

Behaviors	Thoughts	Feelings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over commitment • Difficulty making decisions • Must be in control • Competitive • Procrastinator • Never satisfied with own work • Constantly busies oneself • Refuses to hear criticism • Micromanages • Arrives late because one more thing had to be done 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If I can't do it perfectly, what's the point? • I should excel at everything. • Every detail must be perfect. • Things should be done right the first time. • I'm stupid • I'm not good enough • If I goof up, something is wrong with me 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embarrassed to make mistakes • Worried about details • Angry if routine is disrupted • Unable to relax • Afraid of looking stupid or incompetent • Afraid of be rejected • Discouraged • Guilty for letting others down

Strategies to help Perfectionists

- Set realistic and reachable goals
- Experiment with your standards for success. Try for 80% instead of 100%
- Focus on the *process* of doing an activity not just the end result.
- Evaluate success in terms of what you accomplished and whether you enjoyed the task.
- Celebrate your mistakes
- Teach courage: "I know you can try."
- Reward "Trying"
- Expect progress, not perfection
- "Finished" is sometimes a better goal than perfect
- Applaud persistence
- "You kept on trying, even when you didn't know how it would turn out"
- Break down the task - "Inch by inch, it's a cinch. Yard by yard, it's hard."
- Honor the time invested
- Use the term 'practice' instead of 'work'
- Model making mistakes
 - Mistakes are Universal – everyone make them
 - Mistakes show you are Learning
 - Mistakes show you are trying something new or different
 - Mistakes help you learn from others
 - Mistake help you see your own improvements

Reference:

Delisle, J. & Galbraith, J. (2011) *The Gifted Teen*. Minneapolis: Free Spirit Press.

Delisle, J. & Galbraith, J. (2002) *When Gifted Kids Don't Have All the Answers*. Minneapolis: Free Spirit Press.

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"I'm not procrastinating. I'm proactively delaying the implementation of the energy-intensive phase of the project until the enthusiasm factor is at its maximum effectiveness."