When perfect isn’t good enough!

About perfectionism behaviors

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Agenda

• What is perfectionism?
• Mapping perfectionism
• Strategies for change, some examples
Being a student
What is perfectionism?

• The resentless striving for extremely high standards
• Judging your self-worth based largely on your ability to strive for and achieve such unrelenting standards
• Experiencing negative consequences of setting such demanding standards, yet continuing to go for them despite the huge cost to you
What’s good about being a perfectionist?

• I like to do things well
• I get pleasure out of achieving what others can’t do
• It makes me feel special
• I like to go to bed leaving no tasks undone
• I get satisfaction knowing I’ve tried my hardest
• I like being top of the class
• I like being efficient
• I like being organised
• I never loose anything because I’m so well organised
The other side of the coin...

- I have no free time
- No achievement is ever enough
- I blame myself if things aren’t done just right
- I can’t stand it when other people don’t do things my way
- I don’t trust others to do as good a job as I do so I end up doing it all
- I have to go over my work many times until it’s acceptable to me
- I have to do more and more in order to feel accepted by others
- I’m so afraid of failing that I never get started
The other side of the coin...

- Constantly on edge, tense and stressed out
- Leaves you little chance of meeting your goals and feeling good about yourself
- "Putting all your eggs in one basket"
- Avoiding things that can give you energy and higher quality of life
- A significant impact on your wellbeing...
Is it worth it?
When am I a perfectionist?

- Studies
- Work
- Housework
- Relations
- Organizing
- Food/weight/
- Appearance/ hygien
- Workout/ sports
- Health
- Decisionmaking
- Other...
Our feelings

• **The Scared**: worry, anxiety, fear, panic...

• **The Sad**: disappointment, despair, sadness, shame, guilt, sorrow...

• **The angry**: irritation, frustration, jealousy, anger, hate...
The body

Tension

- Increased pulse
- Increased breathing
- Weakness in knees

Hot and cold flushes

- Feelings of unreality
- Pressure over the chest
- Numbness/tingling
- Perspiration
- Upset stomach

Dry mouth

Blushing

Perspiration

Dry mouth

Blushing

Feelings of unreality

Pressure over the chest

Numbness/tingling

Upset stomach
Automatic negative thoughts

• What if I fail
• What if I´ll get rejected
• What if they don´t like me
• What if it´s not good enough
• What if I´m missing out on something
• I´m incapable of doing anything
• I´m an idiot and unintelligent
Unhelpful thinking styles

Black-white-thinking
✓ If I make one mistake, I am a complete failure

Mental Filter
✓ Noticing the one error on a report and ignoring the fact that the rest of the report is flawless

"Shoulding" and "Musting"
✓ I must never make mistakes

Catastrophising
✓ It’s terrible that I wasn’t able to clean my apartment today

Labelling
✓ I’m an idiot for not knowing the capital of Brazil

Jumping to conclusions
✓ If I don’t have the right clothes, people will think I’m a slob and they will reject me

Magnification and minimisation
✓ I got a high grade just because the standards in the education is so low
Unhelpful rules & Assumptions

- Doing well isn’t good enough, I have to do better
- I have to check my work over and over again before I show it to someone
- I can’t let anyone else do a task in case it goes wrong
- My work is never good enough
- I must be perfekt or others will realise what I am really like
- I must study all the time or I’ll become a lazy slob
Perfectionism Behaviors

- Not knowing when to stop
- Reassurance seeking
- Excessive organising and list making
- Attempts to change the behaviour of others
- Overcompensating
- Repeating and correcting

- Failure to delegate
- Difficulty making decisions
- Slowness
- Give up too soon
- Procrastination
- Other...
Situational analysis

A → B → C → C₂

Write a paper/essay

Inceased pulse, tenstion, fear

“What if I don´t pass the exam”

Low selfesteem

Study whitout any breaks day and night, ruminatiíng

A temporary releaf

Rest and other values are set aside

Anxiety grows stronger

Patterns becomes consolidated

Low selfesteem
Self-esteem
If you had a good self-esteem...

• What would you do then?
• What would you use it for?
• How would others notice it?
What’s important to you?

• What is it that is really important to you - deep inside?
• How would you like to spend your time here on earth?
• What kind of person do you want to be?
How do you spend your time...

- Study
- Home and household
- Meet friends
- Exercise
- Sleep
Consequences

If I keep on going like this, what would my life look like...

• 1 month
• 6 month
• 1 year
• 5 year
• 10 year...
The ability to make mistakes makes you flexible

Brainstorm on possible behaviours to ...

- To be late
- Say No
- Set boundaries
- Misspell
- Relax
- Say the "wrong" thing
- Failing to wear make-up
- Cancel a meeting in the last minute
Behavioral experiments

• Choose a negative thought/rule to test and rate how much you believe in it (0-100)
• Plan an experiment for testing the thought
• Write down what you think will happen and how much you believe in it (0-100)
• Think it through. What could stop you?...and make the decision.
• Carrie it out!
• Evaluate the result, how did the result match your prediction (0-100)
Planning your challenges

**TODAY:** Studying / thinking of studying / all the time otherwise I'm lazy

**END GOAL:** To study only on weekdays between 9:00 and 17:00

- Not study after 19 o’clock
- Be completely free from studies on Sunday
- Be completely free from studies on Saturday and Sunday
- Not study before 9 o’clock or after 17 o’clock on weekdays and not on weekends
### Milestones:

- Meet friends two evenings a week
- Relax (do nothing) two evenings a week after 19:00
- Practicing yoga 1 day / week
- Study-free weekends
Reward yourself, Give yourself credit

...when you do things outside of your comfort zone
Throw the dice ...
Hey!
I`am your
anxiety.
Who makes the decisions in your life?
What do you need to put in?

• Relax in term och your standards and start thinking in scales of gray
• Be willing to try something new
• Be willing to try it again and again
• Be prepared to give time and effort
Approach

- Practise NOT be perfect
- Give yourself permission to make mistakes
- Remind you of the consequences
- Do not take life too seriously
- Reward yourself when you do something outside your comfort zone
Possible target

- My goals are high, but realistic
- I do not like mistakes, but I can accept them
- I balance the negative with the positive
Student Health service

- Open lectures every Monday!

- [www.mah.se/studenthealth](http://www.mah.se/studenthealth)
Have no fear of...

PERFECTION

You will never reach it anyway...

-Salvador Dali-