



PENNY HOLBURN COACHING

It's about You and Results

Are you a perfectionist?

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So are you? Generally speaking if you are then you experience more stress, hurt, anxiety and pain than you need to. Perfectionism is not a good thing. It can stop us from taking action unless we are 100% sure we will succeed, and so we aim too low. It can lead to huge amounts of anxiety when we don't measure up - which we never will because we are human beings. Perfectionism is an adaptation to childhood wounding that no longer serves its purpose when we are adults. It just stops us from being all that we can be and creates a lot of anxiety in our lives that is not necessary. It also hampers our relationships with others because perfectionists are really difficult people to be around.

Perfectionism starts with narcissistic caregivers who overly control or abuse the child and insist that the child meet very high standards. The caregivers do not see the child as an independent person in their own right. They see the child as an extension of themselves needing to live up to the caregivers dreams and desires for the child. The child is there to meet their needs. The child is there to boost their own ego. And the child had better live up to their demands (which are unreasonably high) or punishment will result.

The child learns that love is conditional on meeting the caregivers' standards. If they don't meet those standards they are a bad person deserving punishment. As a result in order to avoid the feelings of hurt, unworthiness, isolation and anger that result when the child does not meet the caregivers' standards, the child adapts by learning perfectionistic tendencies. While these tendencies help the child survive childhood, they get in the way of a successful and happy life.



So what do you do if you are a perfectionist?

1. Remind yourself that you are an adult now. You don't need the approval of others to be okay. You just need to approve of yourself.
2. Recognise that making mistakes is normal. That is how we learn and grow. If you never make a mistake then you are holding yourself back. Talk to successful and happy

people and read books about them and notice how often they made mistakes and got things wrong.

3. Learn to accept, respect, like and love yourself unconditionally. You are the only person who will always be in your corner - so always be there for you. You are a valuable human being despite your mistakes.
4. Learn to treat yourself well. Take care of yourself. Make time for yourself. Do activities that you enjoy so that you can learn who you are without having to conform to someone else's ideals for whom you should be.
5. Catch yourself using words like "should", "have to", and ask yourself if you really want to.
6. Watch your self-talk. Talk nicely to yourself.
7. When you do make a mistake don't beat yourself up. Accept your mistakes, own them and learn from them. Interestingly, people who are perfectionistic and beat themselves up for mistakes are poor at receiving feedback. Constructive criticism can be so devastating for them that they shut it all out.
8. Learn that rejection is a normal part of life. It occurs a lot. Understand that it often is not about you. As long as you are okay with your part in something, be okay with you.
9. Set boundaries and enforce them. Refuse to allow people to treat you poorly if you don't conform to their view of who they want you to be.



We learn our thoughts, and actions. We have been learning our thoughts and actions from childhood for a long time and so our thoughts and actions are well entrenched neural networks in our brains. Because we learned them (as opposed to being born with them) and our brains are very able to change (we refer to it as our brains are plastic) we can learn something different. It does take time though. Your brain needs to learn something new and different from what has been well learned. So be gentle and kind to yourself as you set about changing. It can be done though. Plenty of people have done it.

Have a wonderful August