

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the Authors.....	4	
Dedication / Acknowledgements	5	
Introductions by Janet and Amy	6	
Background Research		
Why is This Resource Needed?.....	8	
What Do We Know About Perfectionism?.....	9	
Are You a Perfectionist?	10	
What Are the Effects of Perfectionism? (chart)	11	
How Can Parents and Teachers Help?.....	12	
Parent Articles.....	13	
Excellence VS Perfection (chart).....	20	
Perfect Pals Storybook		21
Facilitator Discussion Guide for story.....	47	
A Little Imperfection (poem).....	48	
Student Activities / Reproducible Worksheets		49
"You Might Be a Perfectionist If..."	50	
"Let's Get Real! Is Perfection Possible?"	51	
"Setting Realistic Goals"	52	
"Recognize Steps of Progress Toward a Goal"	53	
"Mistakes are OK"	54	
"Famous Failures"	55	
"Zap Negative Thoughts!"	56	
"Fly High With Uplifting Thoughts"	57	
"Stressed Inside"	59	
"10 Ways to Stay Stress Free" (2 pages)	60	
"Learn to Relax"	62	
"Balancing Work, Play and Rest"	63	
"Trying New Things Can Be Fun"	64	
"Trying New Things"	65	
"Celebrate Accomplishments! Yours and Others"	66	
"Celebrate Success" (group activity).....	67	
"Proud to Be Me!"	69	
"Learn to Juggle"	70	
Juggling Directions Diagram	71	
Resources and References on Perfectionism		72

What Are the **Effects** of Perfectionism?

MENTAL

- Procrastination
- Underachievement
- Self-criticism
- Anxiety/guilt
- Moodiness
- Over-commitment
- Workaholic/task overload
- Laziness
- Obsessed with winning
- Extremely independent
- Overly responsible

PHYSICAL

- Stress-related symptoms
- Gastrointestinal ailments
- Headaches
- Cardiovascular problems
- Rapid breathing
- Exhaustion
- Insomnia
- Nervous jitters
- Eating disorders
- Difficulty relaxing

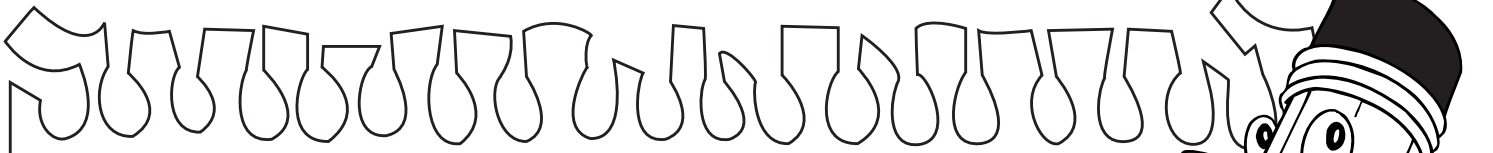
EMOTIONAL

- Feelings of worthlessness
- Excessive need for control
- Fear of failure/making mistakes
- Self-mutilation/harm
- Obsessive compulsive tendencies
- Fears/phobias
- At risk for suicide

RELATIONAL

- Overly critical of self/others
- Poor communication skills
- Unforgiving
- Attracted to people with superficial characteristics
- Avoid intimacy
- Sacrifice relationships for activities
- Difficulty complimenting others
- Too busy for fun
- Parental pressure
- Competitive with siblings
- People pleaser

Do these seem
"perfect" to you?



Points of Excellence For Parents

Help Your Child Realize That Mistakes Are Okay

Some children are underachievers; some are overachievers. Underachieving children do not perform as well academically as their potential indicates they can. Overachieving children are constantly working; never completely happy with the end result. What do these children have in common? Perfectionism!

Both underachievers and overachievers feel that mistakes are bad. Underachievers often times are afraid to try new things for fear of making mistakes. They may only attempt activities in which they can easily be successful. Overachievers work constantly to get everything right, in order to avoid making mistakes or getting something wrong. Sometimes they develop unrealistic expectations, believing they can accomplish something when they don't have the talent or ability that's necessary.

Do you find that you have perfectionist qualities? Are you an underachiever or overachiever? Perfectionists don't tolerate mistakes in themselves or their children (Dinkmeyer, McKay, & Dinkmeyer, 1997). Anything less than perfect is considered bad.

Perfectionists can learn to admit their mistakes. Remind yourself and your children that mistakes are not the end of the world. In fact, mistakes can be good! Often each time we make a mistake, we learn something new.

Perfectionists can learn to focus on their efforts and improvements, as well as those of their children. Forget past mistakes; focus on what you and your child have learned to do right. Notice each step that is made toward a desired goal.

Perfectionists can learn to laugh at their mistakes. Aren't mistakes humorous sometimes? Mistakes are not as painful once we learn to laugh at ourselves. Try to chuckle at yourself when mistakes are made. Your children will be watching!

When Your Goal Is...

Excellence...		Perfection...
Achieving steps toward a goal.	YOU FOCUS ON...	Setting and achieving unrealistically high goals.
Joy and challenge of achieving a goal.	YOU ARE MOTIVATED BY...	Fear of failure or disapproval.
Personal satisfaction from good performance; can share in joy of the accomplishments of others.	YOU FEEL...	Inadequate if less than perfect; envious of others and diminished by their success.
An accumulation of previous accomplishments.	YOUR SELF-ESTEEM IS BASED ON...	Each perfect personal performance or accomplishment.
Able to celebrate accomplishments, enjoy tasks for entertainment value. Good sport.	YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARD TASKS, SPORTS, and PLAY IS...	"I'm never good enough," always competitive, poor loser, often angry and depressed if not successful.
Modesty and humility	YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS MAY DEMONSTRATE...	Boasting, criticism of others.

**Adapted from: Hendlin, Steven J. When Good Enough Is Never Enough: Escaping the Perfection Trap. 1992. G.P. Putnam's Sons. New York, NY.*

LET'S GET REAL!

Is Perfection Possible?

Perfection

is defined as: "complete in all respects; flawless." We know that all living things grow and change from day to day.

Is it possible for a growing, changing person to be "complete in every way"?

Is it possible for anyone to be perfect? Why or why not?

Excellence

means: "superior; unusually good."

Is it possible for a living, growing person to be "superior or unusually good"?

Is it possible for a person to be excellent in some things? Why or why not?

When you try to be perfect, you may feel unhappy or nervous much of the time because you are trying to do the impossible. When setting goals for yourself, always try to choose goals that are possible for you to reach.

Think about the following goals/thoughts. Mark **P** or **E** to show whether these thoughts come from a person striving for **P**erfection or **E**xcellence. It will help to imagine the feelings that go with each thought.

1. ___ I must get this right, or the teacher will be disappointed in me.
2. ___ I'll feel good if I do better this week on my spelling test than I did last week.
3. ___ If I don't get good grades, no one will like me.
4. ___ I have to win this contest so people will notice me.
5. ___ Even though I didn't win today, I tried my best.
6. ___ It's not fair that my sister made all A's.
7. ___ If I make 100%, I can finally stop worrying all the time.
8. ___ I wonder what others are thinking and saying about me.
9. ___ My brother is a good basketball player and I'm good at soccer.
10. ___ I had fun learning something new today.
11. ___ If I can't be the best, I won't even try.



Check yourself.

Statements #1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 11 are perfectionist thoughts.

Statements #2, 5, 9 and 10 are excellent thoughts.

Positive Self-Talk: "I will get real with my expectations for myself and others."