

Is perfectionism a problem for you?

Some useful questions to see if your perfectionism is worth addressing, and a few things to consider if you would like to approach these things differently.

- Make yourself some **space and time** to look at this issue. Allow at least 20 minutes.
- **Look back** over the last week or so, and think of the times when you wanted things to be perfect. Not just great, but perfect. They may be small or really important, but try and think of some clear examples.
- **Ask yourself:** were your standards too **high** on any of these occasions. Did things really need to be as perfect as you were striving for? What would have been great, not perfect?
- **Ask yourself:** are your standards too **rigid** in these circumstances? Which of them could have been adjusted? Were you trying to copy a previous performance?
- Would **everyone else** have the same standards in these circumstances, or would other people settle for less (while still performing well)?
- **How do you react** when you fall below your own standards? Are you disappointed, disturbed, or stressed?
- **How do you react** when others fall below your standards? How might you make these people feel?
- Do the **costs** of having these standards outweigh the **benefits** (eg are you more depressed by falling slightly short, or delighted by achieving high goals?)

And if you want to address your perfectionism, try some of these antidotes:

- **Don't tie your personal worth to your accomplishment.** Remember that performance is a measure of a behaviour, not a person. (Leahy, 1996)
- Strive to **do your best**, instead of trying to **be the best** at something.
- Aim to become a **better performer**, rather than a better person
- **Experiment:** fall short of your standards deliberately in one small task, and see what difference it makes. Does anyone even notice?
- Try to see failures and setbacks as opportunities for learning, not as opportunities for self-condemnation.