

# UNDERSTANDING PERFECTIONISM:

Is it affecting your day-to-day functioning?

## BOB'S ORDEAL WITH PERFECTIONISM

Bob was a talented artist who loved to paint. He would spend hours on a single painting, constantly tweaking and adjusting every detail until he found his painting to be "perfect." But as time went on, his passion for art turned into an obsession with perfectionism. And slowly, he was entirely focused on getting a flawless painting instead of actually enjoying the process of creating it. Naturally, this made Bob anxious and irritable, constantly second-guessing his work and isolating himself...



Until one day when he stumbled upon a group of children painting carefree in the park. Seeing their joy of creating without worrying about the outcome, made Bob realize he had lost sight of what was truly important about art - the process of creating it and how calm it made him feel.



From that time, Bob started to work on letting go of his need for perfectionism and started painting for the sheer joy it brought him. He embraced the imperfections in his work and started sharing his art with others again. He understood that his idea of perfectionism was holding him back all this while, and by letting it go, he could live a happier and more fulfilling life.

And this little anecdote tells us that while it's great to have high standards and a desire for excellence, being a perfectionist can also have adverse effects on your mental health.

## The Perfectionism Checklist

Here's a little checklist to help you understand yourself and your trait of perfectionism, a little better.

Let's get started:

- Do you feel a strong need to be perfect in everything you do?
- Do you often set impossibly high standards for yourself as demonstrated by?
- Do you find yourself spending an excessive amount of time on tasks or projects in order to achieve perfection?
- Do you frequently criticise or judge yourself harshly for perceived mistakes or flaws?
- Do you struggle to enjoy the present moment or feel a sense of satisfaction because you are always striving for the next goal?
- Do you find it difficult to delegate tasks to others, or trust others to do a task to your level of satisfaction?
- Do you experience anxiety, stress, or fear of failure when you are unable to meet your own high standards?
- Do you tend to avoid trying new things or taking risks because you fear failure or not being perfect at it?
- Do you frequently compare yourself to others and feel inadequate if you do not measure up?
- Do you find it hard to accept compliments or positive feedback because you feel like you could have done better?

### Scoring Interpretation:

Use the following scoring key to understand your levels of perfectionism:

Score 1-3: Low perfectionism

Score 4-6: Moderate perfectionism

Score 7-10: High perfectionism

If you scored low on this checklist, it could imply that you may have some perfectionism tendencies, but they may not be affecting your daily functioning in a negative manner. That said, check in with yourself from time-to-time to evaluate if things have changed, and if your perfectionism is adversely affecting you in any manner. For this, it might also help to keep this checklist handy and revisit it later.

If you scored moderate to high on this checklist, it may help if you discuss your perfectionism tendencies with a mental health professional to determine if it's impacting your life in negative ways.

## Being a perfectionist is like having an all-or-nothing mindset

While perfectionism can motivate you to try harder and aim for the best, if gone too far, perfectionism can become the source of unhealthy habits and mental health concerns.

Here are some ways perfectionism can affect your mental well-being:

### 1) Increased stress & anxiety:

Constantly striving for perfection can add a lot of pressure to perform 'perfectly'. It can make even a small mistake seem like a big one. **And the fear of making mistakes can cause more stress & anxiety.** It's as if you're climbing up a ladder. One wrong step can cause you to fall, and the fear of falling can cause anxiety.



### 2) Procrastination:

Wanting to be perfect all the time can feel exhausting, leading to procrastination. **For instance, imagine that you're given an assignment but you are just not able to start working on it. Why? Because the thought of having to do it perfectly is so intimidating that it prevents you from even starting.**

### 3) Make you be too hard on yourself:

As a perfectionist, you may often end up being your harshest critic. **It's like having a little voice in your head that is always mean to you and makes you feel inadequate and incompetent.** With this, your self-esteem can easily take a hit, thanks to this little voice.

## 4) Impact your relationships negatively:

Perfectionism can hurt your relationships because it can make you expect too much from the people you love. **And if your loved ones don't meet these expectations, you may start to resent them.** Here, task-focused expectations can have an impact on both; one's relationship with oneself and with others. When we expect others to complete a task in a specific way, it can create tension and strain in relationships. However, it is important to note that these expectations are not related to emotional needs.



Head to the next module to understand perfectionism may be affecting you. And, once you have a better understanding of it, we'll help you figure out how to deal with it effectively with the next set of modules and worksheets.

If you, or someone you know is looking to seek professional help, reach out to us at [The Mood Space](https://www.themoodspace.com/getstarted), <https://www.themoodspace.com/getstarted> and our Care Team will get back to you within 24 hours.

Not looking for professional help just yet? We understand, keep browsing through our Care Space tools and explore our self-help handouts and worksheets to navigate mental health-related challenges in a better manner.