



When Perfect Isn't Good Enough: Strategies for Coping with Perfectionism

Martin M. Antony , Richard P. Swinson

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The relationship between what we do and the anxiety we have about it is complicated. In moderation, anxiety motivates us to get organized, work hard, make a good impression on others, and perform at our peak. Someone who doesn't care at all about doing well is less likely to make an effort, complete tasks, or meet expectations.

When Perfect Isn't Good Enough: Strategies for Coping with Perfectionism Details

Date : Published December 1st 1998 by New Harbinger Publications

ISBN : 9781572241244

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Format : Paperback 252 pages

Genre : Psychology, Self Help, Nonfiction, Personal Development

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From Reader Review When Perfect Isn't Good Enough: Strategies for Coping with Perfectionism for online ebook

Lisa says

A good starter book for anyone who is concerned about perfectionism. Unfortunately, I've already read several starter books for OCD and other anxiety disorders, and it's basically all the same. From "how does it start?" and "how does it manifest?" to "how to use cognitive behavioral therapy", it's all the same as every other self-help book (or at least the same as all the ones written by an MD or PhD).

Sasha says

"Have you considered that you might be a perfectionist?" my therapist asked me. "No," I told her, "I'm not nearly good enough at anything to be a perfectionist."

If that made you laugh, you might want to read this book.

Hellen says

This book was alright in the end, but I can see now how valuable a relatable narrative throughout self-help books can be. This book read like a pamphlet from the waiting room of your doctor's office (very formal and uninspiring). The author tried to substitute the narrative with snippets of conversations between perfectionists and a therapist. Sadly these felt as if they had been made up to illustrate the points, even though I'm sure they're the gist of real conversations. They just didn't seem realistic.

But fair enough, it was helpful. Follow the instructions on keeping a journal, even if you don't do all the exercises.

Plenty was mentioned about habits and disorders closely related to perfectionism. Some were obvious, such as OCD, but others I hadn't really thought about, such as how perfectionism's connected to anger and worrying. In particular the relation between perfectionism and worrying, however obvious in hindsight, was very valuable for me to consider - I hadn't thought about it before.

Nikki says

My psychologist recommended this to me. Turns out I have perfectionistic tendencies. Who knew?.....No seriously, would you think I did? I thought it was ridiculous...until I read the book. Very enlightening read.

Andrew says

One of the better self-help books out there on the market which explains how perfectionism manifests, and

prescribes effective methods of curbing and reducing high expectations to realistic standards.

Jane says

Perfectionism is not always what you think. Sometimes if someone struggles with perfectionism, they might avoid doing something at all in fear of their inability to do it perfectly. For example someone who doesn't keep a clean house or make an effort to make themselves look more attractive may actually be suffering from perfectionism. I've learned this before but it was great to have it all explained in this book. The book is structured as a self help format, with exercises to help you identify areas of perfectionism in your life and it offers strategies for overcoming it. It also explains how perfectionism can be a cause of mental health problems such as anxiety disorders and depression. I found it all very interesting but I think it would be difficult for someone reading this to do the steps on their own. I think it's an eye opening and worthwhile read but if you have significant difficulties with perfectionism, I would recommend also getting professional help from someone who understands the material in the book and practices cognitive behavioral therapy.

Vicki Zhang says

Typically, I am not a self-help reader. I was given this book to read, and I thought I would give it a try. Not a hard read, but not particularly compelling.

The narrative was a bit too simple for my tastes. I like my non-fiction to be humorous but a little bit pedantic as well. This just read like a workbook; it may be valuable to those who this is marketed for, but it wasn't for me

The most interesting part was when the authors discussed the reasons behind potential patients, based off of patients that they have seen in the past. Reading and digging a little into the minds of these individuals for whom perfectionism is a fundamental aspect of their personality was intriguing.

A lot of material was covered, perhaps making it overwhelming to read for those who need this book. A lot of techniques to combat perfectionism, OCD, worry, social anxiety and depression was introduced.

Kathryn says

I had picked up this book earlier this year (it was on the half-price table at Barnes & Noble) and started reading it early in July; I finished reading it last night, not because I couldn't put it down, but more out of a sense of obligation. Indeed, I have perfectionist tendencies; but I felt that this book would have been much handier to have back when I was first working out some of my problems. (Not that I am done working through my problems – indeed, more seem to crop up – but this book is fairly elementary.)

The book is set up into three major sections. Part I is Understanding Perfectionism; The Nature of Perfectionism, The Impact of Perfectionism, Perfectionism and Thoughts, and Perfectionism and Behavior. Part II covers Overcoming Perfectionism; Assessing Your Perfectionism, Developing a Plan for Change, Changing Perfectionist Thoughts, and Changing Perfectionist Behaviors. Part III then deals with Working With Specific Problems and Perfectionism; Perfectionism and Depression, Perfectionism and Anger, Perfectionism and Social Anxiety, Perfectionism and Worry, Perfectionism and Obsessive-Compulsive

Behavior, and Perfectionism, Dieting, and Body Image.

Throughout the book the authors invite the reader to compile worksheets and assessments, and give space for doing so in the book; I tend to dislike such invitations, because I was raised that one never writes in a book (except to put one's name in the front), although I did relax this rule in college, when one highlights material in one's textbooks.

I did get some useful information out of this book, especially in the section relating to Perfectionism and Depression (the black dog has been with me, off and on, for many years), but a lot of it was old news to me. However, I can see where this book would be of great use to a reader who is only now realizing that their perfectionist tendencies may be impacting his or her life in a negative manner.

Alexis says

This a great introduction to self-help strategies to deal with perfectionism from a cognitive-behavioural perspective.

Carey says

A great read if you are one that is struggling with perfectionism in order to please others. It gives great strageies on what you can do to work on not being so perfect all the time and let yourself make mistakes because it's okay. I have read this book twice

Mohamed Adam says

Going along with my perfectionism treating journey
more academic than "how to be imperfectionist"
helpful with good suggestions for further readings
and still have more and more to do with my psychological problems
thanks to all the books for being true friends and real lovers

Beth says

If I said the "perfect" book, would that be too ironic?

Alex says

If you feel like perfectionism might be a problem for you, and you are open to seeking ways to treat it, don't hesitate before trying out the strategies outlined in this book.

What's particularly good about it is that it's not really a self-help book per se; the strategies that the authors

present are actually backed by scientific research, and they explain not only how to begin treating the issues you might have, but why these strategies work, too.

Of course, it won't do you much help if you aren't willing to consider that you might have a problem, and if you don't actually try to complete the exercises suggested within. Changing problems ingrained in your personality is hard work, and just reading the book won't be of much help unless you are willing to put in the work.

Having been doing some of the exercises regularly for the past week and a bit, I can attest that they really can be effective. I can already see my perfectionist tendencies diminishing, and I'm looking forward to seeing further improvements.

Diana says

This book actually made me realize I am a perfectionist and it introduced me to the idea of cognitive disconnects. I was shocked to realize I had so many of these. I think if only for that it was very helpful in listing out all of them.

I especially appreciated that it had a warning in the beginning not to try to do all the things recommended (which is an essential thing to tell perfectionists).

Anita Zinn says

Great book! My daughter knew I needed this, so she agreed to read a book I recommended, if I would read this one. Ha!

Here is a quote: " I focus the attention of my mind only on those things that I can do something about. If I can not affect it or direct it - I accept it."

. Read 7-24-07
