

SUPPLEMENT 12 PERFECTIONIST CHECKLIST

- Do you have an excessive need to get it right the first time?
- Do you often set high and unrealistic goals?
- Are you proud of being a workaholic or overachiever?
- Are you a micromanager?
- Is it hard for you to delegate?
- Is it hard for you to be a good listener?
- Are you afraid to make mistakes?
- Do you often labor over decisions, both small and large?
- Do you feel responsible for things outside your span of control?
- Do you tend to be overly concerned about what others may think of you?
- Do you frequently avoid making important phone calls for fear of rejection?
- Are you prone to going over and over your work until it meets with your total approval?
- Do simple tasks take up a lot of your time?
- When you finish a job, do you often think that perhaps you could have done it better?
- Do you feel elated and pleased about yourself when you turn in some excellent work, but feel a little depressed at other times when your work has not been as well done, as you would have liked?
- Is your self-esteem largely dependent on how well you do at work?

If you answered 'Yes' to any of the above questions, you likely have issues with Perfectionism! Dysfunctional Perfectionism, which is a major productivity killer often disguised as a favorable trait. Although some may feel proud of or brag about being a major productivity killer often disguised as a favorable trait. Although some may feel proud of or brag about being a perfectionist, it is a classic form of self-defeating behavior. This is not referring to the desire to make a reasonable effort to get things right. Dysfunctional perfectionism takes on many forms. Here are a few that directly create disorganization. Trying to develop the perfect filing system. Meanwhile nothing gets filed or the filing system is changed again and again. Trying to develop a perfect system to keep up with names, phone numbers, addresses, etc. Meanwhile the names pile up or the several “systems” are in use at the same time. The need to find the perfect system keeps dysfunctional perfectionists from implementing or sticking with any system. Setting up a filing system (or a contact database) and maintaining it is not something that requires perfectionism. The excessive need to get things right usually stops forward progress on whatever you are doing. Remember again, the key issues that help determine any type of dysfunctional behavior are Frequency, Duration, Intensity and Negative life consequences of that behavior. A healthy desire to get things right is not dysfunctional perfectionism. Even if this is not a problem for you personally, it makes sense to learn about it since it is difficult to get through life without having to interact with dysfunctional perfectionists.

PERFECTIONIST SOLUTIONS

So, how do you deal with your insatiable quest for perfection? How can you come to terms with this self-defeating behavior? And importantly how can you change? ACCEPT that you are making unreasonable demands on yourself, and that what you see as 'substandard' is perfectly acceptable to others. The Pareto Principle is based on the belief that 20% of our efforts produce 80% of our results. Question time: "What is the minimum amount of work that I can put in, to get the same outcome?"

1. Estimate the amount of time needed, bearing in mind how much time is justifiable for the task. After all, reserving two hours for writing a simple memo is hardly sensible.
2. Learn how and when to delegate. Do not be overly concerned that other people can turn in work to your high standards, just that they are up to doing it well.
3. Keep things in perspective. Ask yourself this: "Will this still be important in 100 years?" Most often the answer will be "No". We all make mistakes - but remember them, and learn from them.
4. Try to determine the source (this is not absolutely necessary, but it helps if you can determine it). Realize how bizarre it is that as an adult you are still being controlled by things that happened so long ago.
5. Study the topic and develop a deep understanding of what causes perfectionism and how it can undermine your success in life.
6. Use your perfectionist tendencies to get rid of perfectionism.
7. Seek professional help if you do not make progress on your own.