

Anat Fein, MA, LMFT

21760 Stevens creek Blvd., Suite 202

Cupertino, CA 95014

Tel: (408)-310-0800

## Perfectionism

<b>The Healthy Perfectionist</b>	<b>The Unhealthy Perfectionist</b>
Sets realistic and achievable goals	Sets unrealistic goal, desires actual perfection
Is driven by personal desire to excel	Is driven by fear of failure, as failure cannot be tolerated
Has good organization skills, works hard, persistent	Feels overwhelmed
Is motivated to do his or her best	Is motivated to control the situation and reduce anxiety
Self-worth is linked to effort: "I did my best"	Self-worth is linked to performance and feedback
Rebounds from failure	Catastrophizes imperfection, (let alone failure): "This is terrible"; "The end of the world"; "I will never succeed"
Moves on: "What is the best thing to do now"?	Is stuck in what could have been: "I should have..."
Sees self as dynamic and changeable: can improve, learn and grow	Sees self as fixed: can either be good or bad, smart or stupid, successful or unsuccessful
Uses feedback/mistakes constructively, as an opportunity to learn and improve	Self-critical: uses feedback/mistakes as an opportunity to beat self up.
Open, adaptable, flexible thinker, can make changes according to feedback from reality	Has fixed ideas of right and wrong, and therefore responds to negative feedback with anger and fear
Accepts what cannot be changed in reality	Fights with reality, as accepting it "proves" negative beliefs regarding self worth
Knows that winning or being the best is not always possible even if you do your best: "I'll try anyway, what have I got to lose? If I don't try I will not get anywhere"	Fear of failure leads to procrastination and avoidance- "it's safer to fail because I didn't try then to try and to fail, because the second option reflects on my self-worth"
Accepts being in the second place	Quits if cannot be in the first place
Finds self somewhere on the scale of success. Not always at the top, "but it's okay, I am good enough, I did the best I could under the circumstances, the knowledge and the experience I had at the time".	Perfectionism gives an illusion of control ("if I just try harder"), but actually causes more self-expectations, anxiety and procrastination. One ends up on the bottom of the scale of success due to lack of trying and underachievement.
Relationships survive as it is possible to tolerate criticism from others and take responsibility for mistakes without being crushed	Despite being self critical, cannot tolerate criticism from others. Often avoids relationships for fear of judgment or is resentful of others for their criticism