

PERFECTIONISM

A FREE INSIGHT MINI GUIDE



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Insight Therapy and Consulting

An Insight
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THE INSIGHT

You have high standards. Caring about doing things well is a strength, until it isn't. Perfectionism is what happens when high standards become rigid, when the gap between what you achieved and what you hoped to achieve feels like failure rather than information, when the fear of making a mistake becomes so loud it drowns out your ability to start anything at all.

Perfectionism is not the same as striving for excellence. Excellence allows for learning, for iteration, for the kind of imperfect progress that actually moves things forward. Perfectionism demands flawlessness, often on the first attempt, and when that proves impossible, which it almost always does, perfectionism concludes that you are the problem. Your effort was insufficient, your talent was overestimated, you should have worked harder, prepared more, and been better. The shame spiral begins, and it often ends with you abandoning the thing entirely rather than tolerating the discomfort of being a beginner or making something merely good.

For many women, perfectionism was learned early. It was praised as conscientiousness, as maturity, as being a pleasure to have in class. It was reinforced by systems that reward compliance and punish mistakes. Over time, it became internalized, no longer needing an external judge because the judge had moved inside. Now you carry her with you, and she is merciless.

Perfectionism costs more than most people realize. It costs time, because nothing is ever finished enough to release. It costs opportunities, because the risk of being seen trying and falling short feels unbearable. It costs rest, because the to-do list is never complete. It costs relationships, because the person who cannot tolerate her own imperfection often struggles to tolerate it in others. It costs joy, because the perfectionist is so focused on the gap between reality and the ideal that she cannot enjoy what is actually in front of her.

THE ACTION

Pick one task today and deliberately do it to eighty percent, not one hundred percent. Not your usual standard. Eighty percent. Choose something low-stakes, like an email, a household task, a document, a meal. Finish it at eighty percent and then stop. Do not revise, polish. or fix the small things only you would notice.

Then watch what happens. Most of the time, nothing happens. The email still communicates what it needed to communicate. The meal still nourishes. The document still serves its purpose. Nobody criticizes you, and the world doesn't collapse. The only person who noticed the missing twenty percent was you.

The point is not to lower your standards permanently. The point is to test the belief that anything less than perfect is failure. It's not. Eighty percent is often more than enough, and the energy you save by not chasing the last twenty percent is energy you can spend on something that actually needs it, or on rest, or on simply being a person instead of a performance.

THE REFLECTION

Want to Go More In-Depth?

Perfectionism shows up across several of the patterns I work with. The Achievement Clause in the Good Girl Contract Workbook addresses how perfectionism becomes tied to worth. The Exhaustion Cycle Workbook explores how perfectionistic overdoing drives depletion. The Self-Abandonment Ladder Workbook looks at how perfectionism can disconnect you from your own humanity.

The Good Girl Contract Workbook is available for purchase here: **Good Girl Contract Workbook**. The other workbooks are under construction and will be available for purchase shortly.

You can also take the **free Pattern Recognition Quiz** here, to discover which pattern is running in your life right now.

I offer virtual therapy across Ontario for women who are ready to understand their patterns and build lives that feel authentic and sustainable. If that's you, I'd love to hear from you. Book a session with me and/or ask a question here: **Insight Therapy and Consulting**.

Let's talk about it.

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