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My Perfectionism Worksheet

Notice the rules, count the cost, then try 'good enough' on one small task. If perfectionism is tied up with checking, rituals or food, please also speak to your GP.

01 Where it shows up

Tick the places where 'it has to be perfect' turns up for you.

- [ ] Work or study
- [ ] Emails, messages and what I say
- [ ] How I look
- [ ] My home, or how tidy it is
- [ ] Cooking, hosting or giving gifts
- [ ] Parenting or caring for others
- [ ] Creative things I make
- [ ] Exercise, food or my health
- [ ] Being on time, or never being late
- [ ] What other people think of me
- [ ] How others do things (I find it hard to let them)

The place it bothers me most, and what it looks like in practice:

02 My rules

Write the rules you hold yourself to, the way they sound in your head. Words like 'must', 'should', 'always' and 'never' are clues. Then ask where each rule came from, and what it costs.

The rule	Where it came from, or who it's for	What it costs me
'I must...' / 'It has to be...'	Someone? A time in my life?	Time, sleep, joy, people

Would I hold a friend to these rules? What would I say to them instead?

03 What I'm afraid will happen

Underneath perfectionism there can be a fear. Say it out loud on the page, then look at it.

If I let something be 'good enough', I'm afraid that...

How likely is that, really?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not likely — Almost certain

If it did happen, what would I actually do? Who or what would help me?

What have I let be 'good enough' before, and what happened?

04 Good enough, for one task

Pick one small task from your week. Decide what 'good enough' looks like before you start, then stop when you get there. Skip this section and speak to your GP if it sets off checking, repeating or food worries.

The task:

What 'good enough' looks like (specific, so I'll know when I'm there):

How much time I'll give it, and when I'll stop:

One small imperfection I'll let stand (a typo, a crooked picture, an unanswered message):

What I'll do with the time I save:

05 A kinder reply

When you fall short, notice what you say to yourself. Then write the reply you'd give a friend.

What I say to myself when I get something wrong:

What I'd say to a friend who got the same thing wrong:

A kinder reply I can try next time:

06 Standards I want to keep

You don't have to give up caring. Which of your standards really serve you?

A standard worth keeping

It helps me and the people I care about

A standard to loosen

It costs more than it gives

07 Check back in a week

Look at what happened without grading yourself on it.

What I did	What happened Including what I feared	What I noticed

How hard was it to stop at 'good enough'?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Easy — Very hard

Next time, I'll try:

When you're done, a moment to reflect

- Whose voice do I hear when I think 'that isn't good enough'?
- What would I do with my time and energy if this rule loosened by ten per cent?
- Which of my standards come from what I care about, and which from fear?
- What do I admire in other people that has nothing to do with them being perfect?
- What is one thing I did this week that was good enough, and I let it be?

Free worksheet from selfgrowth.org. Free self-growth worksheets for real life. Fill it in online and it saves as you go: selfgrowth.org/worksheets/perfectionism-worksheet

If things feel heavier than a worksheet can hold

These are self-reflection tools, not therapy. If you're struggling, especially if you have any thoughts of harming yourself, please reach out to someone now. In the US, call or text **988**. In the UK & Ireland, call **116 123** (Samaritans). Elsewhere, find a free helpline at **findahelpline.com**. If you're in immediate danger, call your local emergency number.