

Perfectionism

This article is from the “Edifying the Body” section of the Church of God Big Sandy’s website, churchofgodbigandy.com. It was posted for the weekend of Aug. 19, 2017. It is an excerpt from a book titled *Time for Me*. Although the concepts are mainly addressed toward women, wise men will recognize the wisdom being expressed.

By Helene Lerner

MANHATTAN, N.Y.—Are you a perfectionist? You probably are, like most of us. But, to make sure, think about how you’ve handled specific situations as you reflect on the questions below.

- Do you set unusually high standards for yourself and others and get disappointed if they are not met?
- Are you rarely satisfied after you have accomplished a task, not giving yourself the credit you deserve?
- Do you lose perspective easily, treating a minor task as importantly as a major one?
- Are you overly sensitive to criticism and dwell on it even after the moment has passed?

If you’ve said yes to any of these questions, join the club.

Perfectionism is usually riddled with the fear that we will be judged harshly if we don’t do something the “right” way.

With women’s late entry into the workforce, we’ve had to prove ourselves on the job, often having to be twice as good as our male counterparts.

If we don’t measure up to this exaggerated standard (who could?), we are made to—or make ourselves—feel inadequate. Let’s support each other to stop doing that.

We do more than our fair share as it is. Besides, no one is really keeping score—except us.

Here are some strategies to help you change your perspective and treat yourself more kindly.

- Before you engage in an activity, think positively. Tell yourself you are about to embark on a task that will be completed in a timely and efficient manner—even if it isn’t done perfectly.

- When you make a mistake, don't dwell on it. Look at how you could have done things differently and move on. Think to yourself: Next!
- Endorse yourself when you do something out of the ordinary. For example, tell yourself "Way to go, girl!" when you make time during the week to have dinner with friends.
- If you feel yourself tensing up because your mind is racing with negative thoughts, stop whatever you are doing.
- Sit quietly and become aware of your body and what you are telling yourself. For example: My mouth is dry. I feel tightness in my throat. I am thinking that my report is not good enough.
- Now, calm yourself by affirming that what you are doing is more than adequate and that you have the time and energy to complete the task successfully.