

Ten Tips for Combating Perfectionism

1. Be average for a day. Allow yourself to be messy, late, incomplete...imperfect. Then celebrate your success.
2. Get involved in activities that are not graded or judged—activities that focus on process, not product.
3. Take a risk. Sign up for a course with a reputation for being challenging. Start a conversation with someone you don't know. Do an assignment or study for a test without overdoing it. Alter your morning routine. Start a day without a plan.
4. Give yourself permission to make at least three mistakes a day.
5. Stop using the word "should" in your self-talk. Remove "I have to" from your conversation.
6. Share a weakness or limitation with a friend. Recognize that he or she doesn't think any less of you as a result.
7. Acknowledge that your expectations might be too high, even unrealistic.
8. Savor your past accomplishments. Write about how good they made you feel.
9. Ask your friends to help you "cure": your perfectionism. Perhaps they can give you a sign or a word when they notice you are being a perfectionist.
10. Join the human race. It's less lonely when we accept our own and others' imperfections and feel part of life.

Excerpted from *The Gifted Kids Survival Guide: A Teen Handbook* by Judy Galbraith and Jim Delisle, 1996. Available from Free Spirit Publishing, 1-800-735-7323.
