Understanding Your Perfectionism

Perfectionism is the tendency to aim to be "perfect" in different areas of our lives. However, these high standards set out may lead to being hyper-critical of choices and what we've done, anxiety, and a strong desire for control. Use this worksheet to explore your own perfectionist tendencies and ways you can start practicing self-acceptance.

Example

What are your perfectionist tendencies (i.e., fear of failure, procrastination, results-focused, people-pleasing, hyper-critical, etc.)?

- I tend to be very results-focused and hypercritical because I worry about not meeting certain standards.
- This often leads to me procrastinating.

When do you find that these thoughts or behaviours show up? Is there a specific incident that is more likely to trigger them?

- I find that I'm more likely to see these thoughts and behaviours when working on a project or assignment, even if it's a personal project like art.

What are the standards you set out for yourself?

- I tend to need things to be flawless or with very little mistakes as possible.
- I also want things to work out exactly as I envision them in my mind and get anxious that they won't turn up that way.

If you look at the standards you set for yourself, do they seem reasonable? If a friend was holding themselves to these standards, would they seem reasonable?

- The standards I set don't seem reasonable I guess because I wouldn't hold a friend to the same standards.
- Sometimes the standards I set are a bit unrealistic as nobody's perfect.

Thinking about this, how do these standards make you feel? How do they impact you beyond creating certain behaviours?

- They often make me feel anxious about being able to meet the standards, which is why I often procrastinate.
- When I don't meet my standards I have a tendency to feel bad and talk negatively about myself.

How could you approach these situations in the future if you were to put the perfectionism voice to the side? How could you accomplish this? How could this impact you?

- I could probably approach this through the lens of "mistakes happen, they're human." I could repeat this to myself when I notice that I'm falling into certain thoughts or behaviours associated with perfectionism.
- If I put aside my perfectionist voice, I may be able to lower my standards that I set out for myself so they don't increase my anxiety.
- This may impact me positively and I may even procrastinate less if I know I don't have to worry about things being "perfect."

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