

# Learning To Love Progress, Not Perfection

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For someone who identifies as a *recovering perfectionist*, learning to love progress (not perfection) has been quite a journey. I can barely recognize some of the thought patterns I used to have! All throughout my time at school, I was constantly striving for perfection.

**Even though I would have denied it upfront, perfectionism was my biggest Achilles heel.**

At least in my experience, perfectionism has a spiraling-downward effect. **The more you cling to perfection, the more it eludes you.** The stress and tension you put into everything when you're trying to be perfect ultimately creates a worse product.

In fact, there can even be dangerous downsides to perfectionism. [This article](#) by the BBC outlines just how severe a negative effect perfectionism can have on individuals. It puts both mental and physical health at stake

Unfortunately, I've had way too many teachers and mentors that have told me to strive for exactly that. Unlearning this mindset has taken some time, but has ultimately been for the best! I love embracing the struggles of a recovering perfectionist.

Learning to love progress, not perfection, has been such a healthier mindset. Not going to lie, it gets difficult sometimes. (Sometimes you just *want* to be the very best, you know?)

So to help you out, here are some tips that have helped me embrace imperfection.

## Being Kind To Yourself

If you want to change your mindset to love progress over perfection, you'll have to go easy on yourself. It will require re-wiring your brain and changing the way you think.

Changing your patterns of thought is not easy, but it's possible if you put in the work. Your brain has been using these thought patterns because it knows that will ensure your survival! Don't expect your mindset to permanently change overnight.

If you're someone who has perfectionist tendencies, start by being kind to yourself. There are reasons why you gravitate towards perfection, and they probably aren't all good.

For myself, I know my perfectionist tendencies come largely from *insecurity*.

The more time I spent in school, the less safe I felt to make mistakes. I made the decision to go easy on myself for this! We can't be perfect all the time, and my brain was just trying to survive in the only way it knew how.

## Loving Your Past, No Matter How Messy

Like I said, some past of teachers and mentors of mine only inflamed my perfectionist tendencies. They made me scramble to produce exceptional results on the first try, and actually,

it sometimes worked. In some of my performance classes, was able to create exceptional work without any practice!

However, this meant when I really did need coaching on something and didn't get it right the first time, I felt like something was seriously wrong with me.

Though it's tempting to wish my education experience was different, I've decided to embrace my past no matter what. **Without my history of perfectionism, I would have never learned the value of *progress*!**

I love that my perfectionist past will let me empathize with others who have a similar experience. It's made me passionate about helping others who were once in the same position I was.

## There Is No Rush

Perfectionism is notorious for making people feel rushed. You need to be perfect, and you need to be perfect *now*!

Say you're trying to become a better dancer; perfectionism can really trip you up! You may feel the need to be perfect, so anything less than a perfect dance seems like a waste of time to you.

This creates a sense of urgency, tension, and frustration. **You believe that until you reach some mythical level of skill, you won't be able to enjoy or appreciate the *talent* you have thus far.**

Not only trusting the process, but learning to *love the process*, is a huge step in changing your mindset for the better.

***Try practicing the thought "there is no rush" You'll be taking so much pressure off yourself.***

## Value What You Learn, Not Just What You Create

I've set some big goals this year, but I've set them knowing that my biggest takeaway will be what I learn in the process rather than the end result. The biggest motivator I have now is to learn more and improve on myself a little every day.

With this way of thinking, I know I will gain so much, even if I miss my goals. I think this Edison quote sums it up well:

*"I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work".*

-Thomas Edison

***You have to start embracing how far you've come instead of dwelling on what you haven't created yet.*** This way, you'll have so much to show and will be able to chase your goals with abundance.

## Embrace The "Inevitable" Feeling

I *love* the feeling of inevitability!

This is the feeling of knowing that you will meet a goal *no matter what*. It takes some practice to feel this way about a goal, but it totally works! Some goals that seemed impossible last year, didn't even make my goal list this year.

*Why?*

Not because I don't think I can reach them, but because I am so *confident* I will, I don't even have to think about it!

Inevitability is a hard feeling to practice, but it definitely pays off. How would it feel to be 100% certain that you'll reach your goals? *As if they've already happened?* That's the feeling you should strive for.

It makes it so much easier to focus on progress and not perfection this way. ***It takes all the pressure off of being perfect because you know you will reach your goal eventually.***

## Stay Inspired To Pursue Progress, Not Perfection

Choosing to make this permanent switch in mindset takes a bit of work, but I promise it's worth it. Here are some more practical tips to help you pursue progress and not perfection.

- Have weekly or monthly accountability meetings, always celebrate your progress first
- Save some quotes to keep you focused on appreciating imperfection
- Keep a journal to record your progress; you'll be surprised when you look back at it later!

Incorporating these habits into your life will help you love the progress you've made, you won't even notice when things aren't perfect. In fact, you will love it all the more because of what you've learned along the way.