

STRIVING FOR PERFECTION: A FORGOTTEN ART OF LIVING

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ABSTRACT

This term paper dives into the world of perfection and what consequences the people have been through standing by this unachievable phenomenon. It analyzes the need for striving for perfection and to establish if at all it is necessary for humans. This will contain my experiences and difficulties that I have faced when attaining perfection in various points of my life. A study on this topic with the help of other individuals will also be done to get a detailed amount of information in the form of a questionnaire to analyze the common notion on perfection.

INTRODUCTION

Are we surrounded by the slaves of perfection or are we ONE of them?

Such a small thought yet a huge cast on the days spent to achieve a phenomenon that had us going lunatic till date and will keep on going as this has no end. I feel that we are losing out on life in search of perfection, a mere phrase that has a well-defined ontology in comparison to a supreme power (GOD), whose existence is still in question but the belief still persists. It has been seen that people often run behind non-existent entities and so is perfection. Even though there is a fictional aspect to it, there is a certain hold it has on us humans to create works with absolute flawlessness. There is a common phrase that "Nothing is perfect" yet proofs and stereotypes make me think different.

The small world we live in, everyone has tried to achieve the concept of perfection at least once. And in that process, they might have forgotten to seize certain important moments in their life. This is where the concept of life comes in.

So, what is living to the fullest? Is it an actual notion? Is it achievable?

The living life to the fullest concept came in place when people rode their train of thought away from common stations into undiscovered areas of life. They questioned the very aspect of what we humans are living for; until a certain point, people failed to notice the actual meaning of life. That is when we started to act differently and came up with a new notion of living life to the fullest. To answer the second question yes it exists in this century where people have become open minded towards change and the very interest to accept it from within. Achieving a fulfilled life varies from individuals and their standards, so yes, we have heard people saying they have fulfilled their purpose in life.

As said before reaching a state of perfection has brought in great satisfaction in people making them feel great about themselves and actually taking pride in their works. But what is the exact definition for **perfect**.

"Perfect" according to Aristotle means being "complete".

Perfect in simple words is achieving a state where everything seems flawless and feels just right. The immense pleasure the feeling provides us with is just 'perfect'.

"Perfection" is said as the degree of excellence that cannot be battled with to any extent. Also, it can be referred as the state of being perfect in simple terms.

"Perfectionism" is a personality characteristic that defines the act of being flawless and extremely exceeding high standards on activities. This makes people with high standards difficult to accept normal things as they are already used to things being done in perfection.

“Perfectionists” are those people mentioned above who demands perfectionism in every act. These mental feelings cause displeasure to a very high extend disrupting their mental peace if things are not done up to their preferred standards.

The real question is “Is this a positive trait or a negative one?”.

The actions depend on the person motive and control on one’s body. The choice lies with the person to execute his needs positively or negatively. So, it solely lies with the executioner. Being good and improving in life, for them it is considered as a success turning it into a positive trait.

Doesn’t perfection come in everything we do? Yes, we try to make the best in everything we do which is our kind of perfect. It’s more of a compulsion rather than an individualistic decision. It’s what the society puts forward to its people. And the people under the power of this invisible hand thinking that they are bound to meet the existing standards. This makes the need for acceptance turning humans into mere machines working on perfection every single day without any stop; a never-ending process. The question lies here whether we should stop it?

The element of perfection has surrounded humans from early centuries and it is very evident from the amount of remains we have from old civilizations and we are actually surprised to the see the amount of precision and effort use to make things to a point of absolute flawlessness. Taken the time into consideration we humans have actually aged backwards given the resources and knowledge on creating flawless and sustainable holdings. The point I’m trying to make over here is that even in that time the people used to be very particular about perfection. The architecture and goods showcasing the amount of perfection it holds makes us astonished thinking the period it was made. Frequent encounters of pictures on old pieces of arts and architectural works leaves me awestruck considering it is carved onto wood and rocks.

Coming into modern times, our eyes are filled with the perfection all around, failing us to accept the real nature we had once lived around centuries behind which was free and never needed any perfection to be loved. The surroundings built to perfection, food served to reach contentment and moreover words said to tease rather than please. It’s was better to live in old times not bounded by the ties of perfection and being mere animals whipped through the rails of time.

All this pressure has made people perfectionists in vain affecting the children who are forced to excel above their limits. All of this turmoil the children are forced to go through affects their productivity making them go through existential crisis at a very small age. The sad part to this is that parents who were forced to excel once during their time are reciprocating the same to their children who are living in a different kind of era. The lack of knowledge in the same and the need to actually make something out in life makes the parents take such measures deliberately affecting the child’s self – esteem, motivation leaving with zero commitment to passion.

Coming into sports, only the players closest to perfection get chances, making them actually in pursuit of perfection to make the best out of them and be presentable to the sport.

The necessities have changed so have the people. Forgetting the way of life will have a drastic negative effect on us which we will not realize now but later when the thought will strike the mind at point where nothing will be retrievable, the youth, the decisions, the experiences we gave up in order to achieve some unrealistic standard.

Procrastination and perfection have an unknowing effect in lives. The urge for perfection and the fear of failure takes a turn on the well-being of an individual. The constant need to excel in the very first try and not achieving the same can shatter some sensitive minds leaving behind the pieces hard to stick back. These repetitions continue thereby decreasing the fire inside and slowly moving the person from everything that they love. Doing things at the very last moment but the need for perfection at that time leaves behind a feeling of unsatisfaction.

Workplace perfection is a rather a cruel way to make corporate slaves who are in turmoil but have no idea on how to break free from the chain. Using the employees making them work overtime, until a point to which they realize they were being used while they were trying to make be a perfect employee.

Perfectionism comes into the way of manifestation, pulling you back from your goal. The feeling of being defeated by self over and over again until a point comes where you give in leaving behind the manifestations in the trash. But sometimes trash can also be lost treasures. The point you leave the path of perfection or at least learn to balance it, you can pull it back, the manifestations and the dreams.

The key aim of this paper is to study perfection, striving for perfection, how perfectionism is affecting mental stability and measures that can be taken.

Main Topics:

1. Perfection
2. Striving for Perfection and how it is a problem.
3. Perfectionism
4. How Perfectionism is affecting mental stability.
5. Measures to overcome perfection

What is Perfection?

Perfection, in psychology, is a broad personality trait characterized by a person's concern with striving for flawlessness and perfection and is accompanied by critical self-evaluations and concerns regarding others' evaluations. It is driven primarily by internal pressures, such as the desire to avoid failure or harsh judgment. There is likely a social component as well, because perfectionistic tendencies have increased substantially among young people over the past 30 years, regardless of gender or culture. The need to run for an non-existing standard of living.

Why are people striving for perfection and how it is a problem?

The journey of striving for perfection and the realization that has hindered the ability to truly live and be authentic. They recount experiences of pursuing perfection in academics, career, and body image, leading to feelings of inadequacy and missed opportunities.

Emphasizing on these three key points:

Perfection isn't achievable: The pursuit of perfection is exhausting as it's impossible to achieve in various aspects of life considering the amount of time being put in. Accepting imperfection can lead to a more relaxed and joyful existence as the standards just vanish and you turn to be content with the work you do.

Perfection isn't authentic: By constantly striving for perfection, individuals may mask their true selves, ignoring genuine relationships and failing in the process of self-acceptance. The authenticity is never there as you would be just competing to reach existing standards.

Perfection is stagnation: Perfectionism can lead to stagnation and gradually denying opportunities for self-growth. Embracing mistakes and taking on uncertainties opens the door to new experiences and goes a long way in personal development.

What is Perfectionism?

Perfectionism is a personality trait characterized by striving for flawlessness and setting exceedingly high standards for performance. It is taken upon by people who lack self-esteem with a need to validate themselves in the eyes of the people surrounding them. It gradually climbs upon us as a need but changes into a habit even before we get to know its consequences. Perfectionism is a double-edged sword which can motivate you to work with precision and deliver top notch work but pull you to the ground by infecting you with unnecessary anxiety, self-criticism and the fear of failure.

How is Perfectionism affecting mental stability?

Perfectionism has increased among the students and working individuals since the 1990's in a recent study affecting all genders and individuals in being: self-oriented, socially-prescribed, and other-oriented perfectionism. This rise in perfectionism is associated with higher rates of depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts among individuals. Perfectionism, particularly characterized by self-criticism and extreme distress over mistakes, is seen to have been a cause of depression in both teenagers and adults. Researchers trace the increase in perfectionism to factors such as social media, where there is a untold norm on presenting flawless images and comparing oneself

to others' compiled achievements, leading to a constant need to evaluate and prove one's value and seek validation in the same.

What are certain measures that can be taken to overcome perfectionism?

“A lot of perfectionistic tendencies are rooted in fear and insecurity,” says Matt Plummer, founder of Zarvana, the online coaching service that helps workers become more productive. “Many perfectionists worry that if they let go of their [meticulousness and conscientiousness], it will hurt their performance and standing.”

This excessive clinginess to Perfection acts counterproductively; Though many might deny this observation this is the veracity of the problem. So a few countermeasures have come up to save us from this so called necessity.

Adjust Standards: Set your standards by seeking feedback from trusted individuals early in the process. Realize that aiming for perfection may not always be necessary, and sometimes a task is already good enough and the only requirement needed is acceptance.

Create Checklists: Instead of aiming for Perfection, create checklists for tasks to ensure you meet essential criteria without getting lost in minor details.

Break the Cycle of Rumination: Identify the triggers and find means to disrupt the cycle. Refrain from trusting initial negative reactions, seek distractions, and focus on positive aspects to prevent overthinking and unnecessary dwelling.

Seek Perspective: Discuss your perfectionist tendencies with someone trustworthy and look back on your progress regularly. Observe instances where perfectionism has a positive impact and where it does not, and redirect your focus as per that.

Perfection and Perfectionism are deep wells that are hard to climb back once fallen yet not impossible ones. The researchers conducted are very well defining the concept in detail with the root cause to the measures that can be taken to overcome this complication. As per my readings, this has started to be a serious problem among humans now and its high time we leave behind these habits to lead a fruitful life.

BODY

Age

21 responses

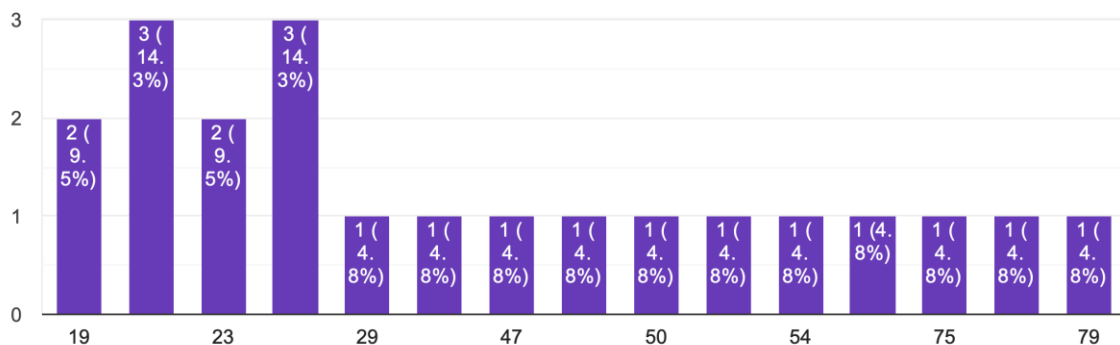


Chart No:1

Gender
21 responses

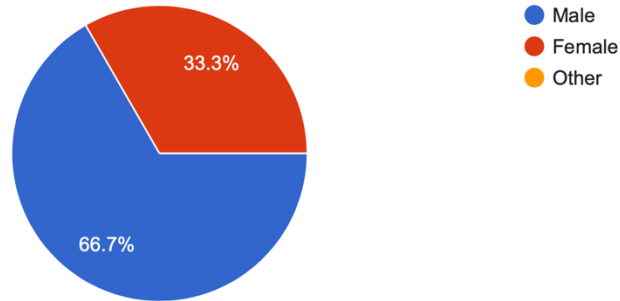


Chart No: 2



How important is perfection in your daily life?
21 responses

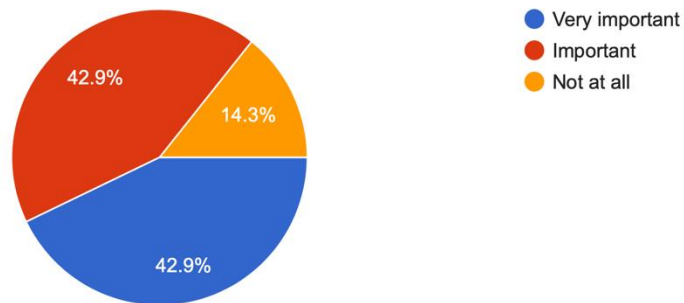


Chart No:3

Do you strive for perfection in your work or personal life?

21 responses

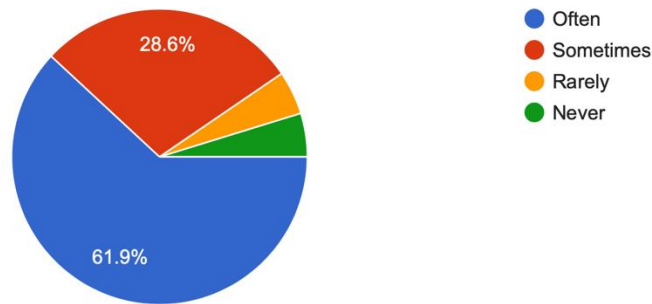


Chart No:4

How often do you feel stressed due to the pursuit of perfection?

21 responses

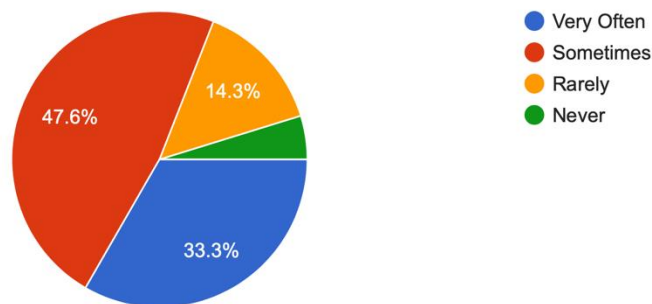


Chart No:5

Has striving for perfection ever negatively impacted your mental health?

21 responses

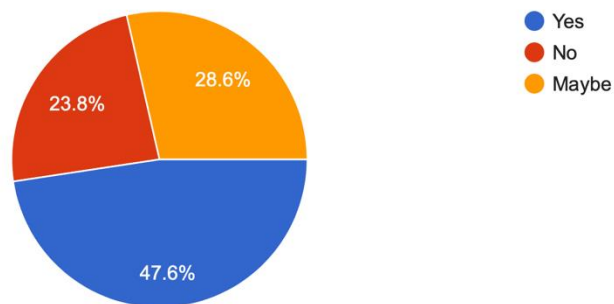


Chart No:6

Do you believe that the pursuit of perfection can detract from the art of living a fulfilling life?

21 responses

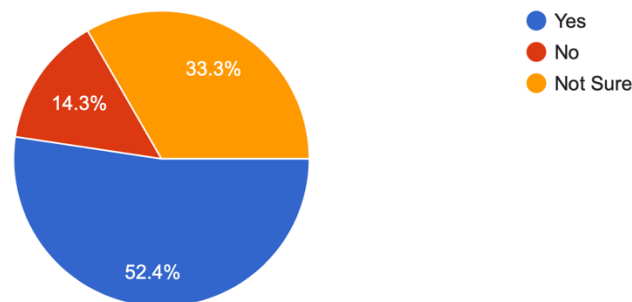


Chart No:7

I have taken responses from 21 individuals on their perception on perfection through the means of a questionnaire consisting of 16 questions those were basic and easily answerable. The responses have a higher percentage of people who are towards perfectionism making 15 people who look for perfection in whatever they do. This easily shows how a larger part of the community wants to be perfect in whatever they do.

The questions were charted in such a manner, honest reviews have been received for it. Even though the responses give the idea that everyone is a perfectionist to the very core, I believe that they prefer a more organized and structured life rather than taking things to perfection. Most of them are well aware of the fact that they are bound by perfection but still execute it as it has changed into a habit. They do understand that the life through perfection would not bring any good rather than being stressed all the time. This in turn disrupts mental stability and may create a ruckus in your schedule.

It is very clear from this experiment that people are not fully aware that they are perfectionists in nature. They are still confused and are not able to give a stern answer on the same. The majority consider the art of living very minimalistic. They just want to live under a peaceful environment with their loved ones and balancing their duties and time. Here comes the main part on which people actually fail i.e., balancing things. I feel that the majority is still facing the same problem and cannot actually find a solution to it.

The folks believe that in pursuit of perfection you can deviate your path from the art of living a fulfilling life. Here again it is seen that the people are not sure making them not sure what the phenomenon is. I believe that this is true considering my experiences in the field because this strikes me every time when I try to be perfect when I do things. I will be confused on the fact that

“Am I missing out on things when I take time to make things perfect?”.

A really huge part of the people are aware that having imperfections is good, making them accept new things and encouraging them to do things without perfection. A whole lot of things get easier once you start to accept them for what they are and this can develop a positive attitude towards things, people and most importantly to themselves. Failing till you succeed is an actual thing and so is the trial-and-error method. You cross out things that don't work by carrying those out and failing in it. This creates a mentality as to what extent we are supposed to do things in order to not be perfect, both in professional and personal life.

A response that I got from this questionnaire is aiming for perfection actually aids in progression. This is true once you find the balance in things. Finding balance is another hardship that everyone faces, because balance creates sacrifice. People who are not willing to sacrifice one thing for another may end up with difficulty in balancing things.

This specific comment that showed me the truth between striving for excellence and striving for perfection was “Perfection allows you to elevate your status in your own eyes while excellence does the same through the eyes of others.”

I have got another side to this excellence seeks validation from others and perfection is done for self-validation.

These are certain strategies that people use when coping with the pressure when striving for perfection.

1. Journaling
2. Doing art
3. Family time
4. Accepting Imperfections
5. Living in the moment
6. Sports
7. Finding peace in religious activities

CONCLUSION

This whole paper is compiled on whatever I had faced when adjusting my life to perfection and these experiences have made me understand that we need to find balance in our perfection and only give it when it is entirely required. By finding our limits and moving forward while keeping that in mind would help people through a lot of problems they had been facing till now. Giving priority to self can help in balancing in the first place. In my opinion, it is futile to fixate on “achieving that perfection”. People spend their lives trying to acquire and own perfection in their respective jobs and work. I am not to be mistaken for a critique for perfection. I only mean that, while thriving for perfection, it is essential to be mindful of the fact that not everything can be driven to perfection. It is important to be aware that perfection is in the perception and the perspective of a particular something. Perfectionism has its pros and cons, as I mentioned earlier. It can give meaning to something, a purpose to somebody or it can trigger years and years of regret or even induce anxiety, self-criticism and may make it difficult for an individual to accept imperfections and mistakes. The key is to know when to draw the line, be mindful of what we do and why we do it. However, many of us associate perfectionism with OCD. We need to keep in mind that the two can share similarities but we need to be mindful of the fact that the latter is a disorder. Concluding this, perfectionism is purely a human drive and should be accepted and viewed purely as a part of being human.

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