How NOT to strive for...

PERFECTIONISM

Perfectionism is the pursuit of perfection. This can be socially-oriented, performance-oriented or focused on maintaining control. Therefore, perfectionism can be present in **different areas** of your life, e.g.: at school, at home, while pursuing hobbies, and so on.

Perfectionism can have **advantages**, but when perfectionism is too strong, **disadvantages** can outweigh advantages.

Advantages

- Perseveres; does not give up easily
- Provides motivation / Gives a "drive"
- Reaching high goals
- To be organized
- Have an eye for detail
- Great sense of responsibility

Healthy perfectionism

Disadvantages

- Being demanding
- Having high expectations of yourself
- Always wanting to be useful
- Strict internal critic;
 'never good enough'
- Stress for making a choice
- Fear of failure
- Confirmation urge
- Low self-esteem
- People pleaser: wanting to please everyone
- Putting yourself under pressure

Unhealthy perfectionism



With whom does the focus lie?



Myself

I want to do this because I think it's important.

Others

I do this because it is expected of me by others.



How to deal with perfectionism?

STEP 1

Becoming aware of advantages and disadvantages:

Core quality:

What benefits does perfectionism give me?



Allergy: What if others are already good at challenging perfectionism? What are things that annoy me about that? Tip: link this to your challenge.

Trap:

What are the disadvantages when perfectionism is too



Challenge:

What can I do to avoid falling into my trap?

STEP 2

Take a closer look at your own thoughts and behavior:

- Reflect on your internal voice that criticises and urges you to always perform better. Do you really need to do this?
- Distinguish between things you can and cannot change. For more info, see infographic overthinking.
- **Goals:** Realistic goals are behavior-oriented (see infographic <u>SMART goals</u>):
 - **Behavioral-oriented:** 20 minutes of studying and a 5-minute break.
 - Results-oriented: I have to pass my exam.
- Don't attribute failures only to causes within yourself:
 - · Internal: I should have started on time so I could have made the deadline
 - · External: There have been delays with collecting data in the preparatory work that were out of my control, causing me to miss the deadline.
- Learn to set boundaries.
- Task: do something **not** perfect for once.

STEP 3

Develop gentleness and empathy for yourself: Be compassionate towards yourself. This involves three main things:

- Allow the feeling you experience when you do not achieve your perfect goal or when you experience the feeling of failure. Let this feeling sink in for a moment.
- Know that it is **human** not to do everything perfectly and that you are not alone in this.
- Say a kind word to yourself as you would to a friend when they come to you with the same situation for comfort or help.

It can be helpful to keep track of these three steps in a notebook, especially in the beginning. It can also be helpful to look back on your process later on.