We are going through extraordinary days when there is uncertainty, anxiety and many other difficulties. Perhaps you are trying to study in conditions that you are not used to, to follow your courses on-line, to do your homework, etc. This period requires us to develop new skills, habits, routines and different perspectives.

It is quite normal and expected to have fears and anxieties in this process. Sometimes this can lead to disintegration, difficulty in achieving and focusing on the goals we set. We may not be able to maintain our daily routines. Under these circumstances, we don't have to be- and sometimes can not be-motivated right away. We can remind ourselves that the most important thing is to sustain our vital resources.

At this point, we would like to inform you about “perfectionism”, a personality trait that can make your life more difficult.

**Perfectionism**

Perfectionism is like a double-edged sword. One believes that it should reach the highest standards and never make mistakes. While this may seem like a positive feature at first glance, it actually means desperately trying to reach an inaccessible standard.

**What’s Perfectionism?**

Perfectionism is often confused with the effort to do the best. However, there is a difference between perfectionism and trying to do the best in a healthy way.

Those who strive to achieve the best enjoy this effort to succeed or achieve their goals. Perfectionists, on the other hand, constantly live in anxiety about themselves and what they do because they believe that there should be no mistakes under any circumstances.

Among the many negative beliefs that accompany perfectionism are:

• **Fear of failure:** These people have built their self-respect and self-esteem on their success. So the slightest failure can be devastating for them.

• **Fear of making mistakes:** These people consider making mistakes equal to failure so, they miss the opportunities for growth and self-development because they avoid making mistakes.

• **Fear of disapproval:** These people believe they will not be accepted by others when they make mistakes. Trying to be perfect is an effort to protect themselves from negative criticism and judgment.

• **Rigidity:** These people have “shoulds” and “should nots” in their lives. They are generally not flexible neither to themselves nor to their environment.

**Perfectionist Behaviors**

Perfectionists tend to show the following behavioral traits:

• Continuous checking and approval,

• Repetition and correction,

• Excessive planning, editing and sequencing,

• Difficulty in making decisions,

• Procrastination and/or avoidance

• Effort to change others.

**What You Can Do**

Coping with perfectionism requires courage because it means we accept that we are not perfect.

For this:

• **List the advantages and disadvantages of being perfect:** You can see that the costs you pay are much more when the pros and cons are listed. For example, having problems in your relationships or constant worrying.

• **Be aware of your critical thinking style of “all or nothing”:** Learn / try to substitute more realistic and logical thoughts for your critical thoughts you are accustomed to. When things that aren't perfect done by yourself or someone else, try to find the good things about what has been done. Then ask yourself these questions: Is it really as bad as I feel? How do other people think about it?

• **Be realistic about what you can do:** As you set realistic goals, you will gradually realize that “incomplete” results do not end as negatively or tragic as you anticipate.

**• Try to be flexible and even reward yourself for being so:** It’s humane to make mistakes. When you make a mistake, try to look for proofs that nobody is hurt or it not the end of the world. Giving yourself a reward when you accept your fault/mistake and treat yourself tolerably, may cheer you up and motivate to be more flexible to yourself in the future.

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