

## Ep #24: Perfectionism



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Olivia Vizachero

## Ep #24: Perfectionism

You're listening to *The Less Stressed Lawyer* podcast, Episode 24. We're talking all about perfectionism. You ready? Let's go.

Welcome to *The Less Stressed Lawyer*, the only podcast that teaches you how to manage your mind so you can live a life with less stress and far more fulfillment. If you're a lawyer who's over the overwhelm and tired of trying to hustle your way to happiness, you're in the right place. Now, here's your host, lawyer turned life coach, Olivia Vizachero.

Hi, my friends, how are we doing today? I hope all is going well in your neck of the woods. Things are pretty exciting over here. I am getting ready to go on a pretty lengthy trip, some for pleasure, some for work, down to Florida.

I'm going to be in Miami with some friends. And then, I'm going to Orlando for my mastermind with my business coach. I'll be there, at the Four Seasons, for about a week. So, I'm super excited. That's right around the bend. I'm getting ready for that trip over the course of the next couple of days, and it'll be hot down there. But I like summer. So, I am looking forward to it. I hope you have something that you're looking forward to.

Another thing that I'm looking forward to is the topic that I'm going to be talking to you about today, and that is perfectionism. This is the second segment of this essentially three-part series on the three P's, the main problems that my clients struggle with: people-pleasing, perfectionism, and procrastination.

So, in the past few episodes, I talked about the essential qualities or skills you need to have, that you want to have as a foundation as we go into covering these topics. Which was, to make sure that you're resourceful, patient, and coachable.

And once we covered that, I started to dive in to the first P, which was people-pleasing. And I went through why you do it, why it's a problem, and how to stop. We also talked about how to set and honor boundaries, as a way to get around people-pleasing and guard yourself against doing it.

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Now we're going to move into talking about perfectionism. And specifically in this episode, I'm going to cover this in two parts, sort of like I did with people pleasing. In this episode, we're going to talk about what it is, why you struggle with it, what it looks like in practice. So, you can get clear on whether or not you are a perfectionist, and how your perfectionism may be negatively impacting your life.

Then in the next episode, I'm going to teach you everything you need to know about how to overcome it. All right, so let's dive in. What is perfectionism? And, do you struggle with it? Perfectionism is one of the most common characteristics I see with my clients. Which is why it's one of the three P's that I'm talking about in this series.

Now, people often think they aren't perfectionists because they aren't perfect. And newsflash, you guys, no one is perfect. So, being imperfect doesn't mean that you're not a perfectionist. And I'm going to repeat this one more time, because I really want you to hear me on this. Absolutely no one is perfect. And I think people can say that they understand this on an intellectual level.

And I have a good friend, she's also a life coach, her name's Jenn Deal. She always says that if you say you get something intellectually, you don't actually get it. Because you're essentially saying, "No, no, no, I get it intellectually. But in practice, in application, it doesn't really make sense to me."

We see that all the time with things like; we're not responsible for other people's feelings. People will say to me, "Olivia, I get that intellectually, but like in this specific instance, I really feel like I'm the cause of their disappointment." Which really just means that you don't believe the concept, and you don't get it.

All right. So, the same thing is true with perfectionism. People will often say to me, "No, no, I understand. There's really no such thing as being perfect," and yet, in practice, they're constantly striving for it. Now, if you find

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yourself constantly striving to be perfect, I just want to offer you this reminder. It's not attainable; there is no such thing as it. No one is perfect.

All right, so all perfectionists are imperfect. Even the ones who might think that they're perfect; but I haven't met anyone who thinks that they are. But all perfectionists are imperfect, yet they're striving for perfection. So, if you think; oh, I'm not a perfectionist, because I'm imperfect. Guess what? That means that you can still be a perfectionist, right? Every perfectionist is imperfect because no one's perfect.

Now, a lot of people think that perfectionism looks like being someone who's type A; very organized, does everything ahead of time in a very orderly manner, and obsesses over something, and is generally error-free, with a lot of the stuff that they do. Again, no one is perfect. So, it's just a perception that someone is error-free because no one is error-free all the time.

But a lot of people think that that is what perfectionism looks like, or is. That it's being very type A. And yes, perfectionism can look like that. It can look like those type A tendencies, control freaks, people that obsess over things, and put a ton of extra thought, maybe more than is necessary, into whatever it is that they're doing. That is perfectionism.

But it's not the only kind. There are other options. So, a lot of people, in fact, I'll go as far to say most people who are perfectionist aren't type A. Instead, they look like the opposite. They're procrastinators. They're messy. They're disorganized. They have a lot of clutter.

They tend to start and stop things. They have a lot of unfinished projects. They struggle with following through. They tend to not be someone who follows through. They quit the things that they start, and they engage in a lot of avoidant behavior and ignore things. All right.

Those are all symptoms of perfectionism, too. And I'm going to explain why that is in a second. But first, I want to get even more clear on what perfectionism is. It's generally described as an extreme and obsessive

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striving for perfection. And I hate a definition that uses the word in the definition. So, I'm going to flesh this out a little bit more.

Perfectionists are often people who hold themselves to impossibly high standards. And, "impossible" is really the key word there. They often think that what they do is never good enough. They have this belief that things can always be better. And in addition to that, because I'm someone who also believes that things can always be better. All right? But perfectionists, more than anything, think things should be better. All right?

And that's the difference here, the use of the word "should". It's one thing to believe that things could always be better, because there probably always is room for improvement. That's part of the human condition, I believe.

But that being said, there's a difference if you think things should be better. That there's a problem right now because they aren't as good as they could be. So, perfectionists fall into that camp; they think things should be better, and that things aren't good right now, because they aren't as good as they could be.

If you're like me, you will have the belief that things can always be better. But you work hard to find sufficiency in the present moment, in the status quo, as well. So, both things get to be true. Right now, can be good enough and there can be room for improvement. There can be sufficiency in what you have right now and your current results, and things can be a little bit better. Rather than, things not being better in the moment being a problem. All right?

So again, this perfectionist tendency is different than having a simple desire to improve and up-level. You're sort of interested in up-leveling, not because you feel badly now, but just because it's a fun process; always improving, always pursuing something new, something greater than what you're doing.

You're doing it to have more fun. And really see what's possible for your life, versus believing that you're currently inadequate and unworthy as you

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are right now. And believing that you have to improve and be better, in order to be enough. Right? The status quo is insufficient, simply because there's room for improvement.

Now, another caveat here about people that may not identify as perfectionists, a lot of people may not use the word perfect to describe what they are striving for. And I think that's a workaround because a lot of us, like I said earlier, have this general understanding that perfection isn't attainable, so they swap out the word perfect and use something else.

They'll oftentimes use terms like, I just want to do the best job. And if you can explain to me the difference between best and perfect, I challenge you to. Every time my clients use that standard, what they tend to mean is this unachievable standard of perfection, right? It's not possible to ever get there, but they're constantly striving for the best.

Best, then becomes synonymous with perfect. If you don't use best, you may use better, but not be able to articulate a clearly defined standard for what you mean by better. Or, you want to be more of something or less of something, but you really don't have a clearly articulated standard for what that looks like in practice.

So, this may be you. You may be using terms like best, better, more, or less, without any understanding of how you would actually get to those finish lines, and really no clear understanding of what that would even look like, once you're there. Right? And I talked about that in a previous episode when I talked about defining "enough".

So, if this is you, you want to be on the lookout for it, how it shows up in your life, and what it feels like when you're striving for something that you haven't defined, that is really ambiguous, and oftentimes unattainable.

Now, a lot of perfectionists like to tell themselves that they're only perfectionistic in one area, or a select few areas of their lives. And that tends to be really unlikely and very uncommon. Instead, what I find is that if

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it shows up in one area, it probably shows up in most, if not all areas of your life.

And this is because how we do one thing tends to be how we do everything. So, if you're a perfectionist with things at work, you're probably a perfectionist when it comes to things in your personal life; your personal space, how you show up in your roles as a friend, as a spouse, as a sister, as a parent, in addition to in your work roles.

You also probably have really high standards for the people in your lives. It's really likely that you impute your perfectionism, onto the relationships that you have in your life.

So again, if you're someone who tells yourself, "Oh, I'm only a perfectionist in this one limited area," I just want to challenge you, be on the lookout for how perfectionism may be showing up in other areas of your life. You just may not be very aware of it, but we want to create that awareness.

Now, I want to give you some examples of what perfectionism looks like in practice, so you can spot it yourself, in the event that you aren't quite convinced that you are a perfectionist. And I've said this a million times, but I'm going to say it again, it's so important to know what to look for and become aware of your habits.

Because awareness, you guys, is really everything. It is necessary to creating any change; you can't change what you don't understand. So, I'm going to give you some examples. So, you're more easily able to spot perfectionism coming up in your life, so you can change it.

Now, you may be asking yourself, "Wait a second, Olivia. Why would I want to not be a perfectionist? Being a perfectionist is a good thing." And, you might be thinking that sounds crazy. But believe it or not, some people still see being a perfectionist as a positive attribute versus an albatross. Alright?

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And if this is you, I just want to offer you, being a perfectionist is not a good character trait. And you're going to see why, as I go through the list of ways, perfectionism may be coming up for you, what it looks like in practice, all right? But I assure you, it's not something that you want to strive for.

So, let's create some awareness so we can spot it, and then you can change it. Alright, first things first: If you often believe that nothing is ever good enough, that's going to be perfectionism. All right? You are never satisfied with any success that you amass. There's always more room for improvement. And, you feel really awful because of that.

You're rarely content with the status quo, and you just want to keep constantly getting better at things. So, when you're doing this, when success is never enough and you're constantly moving the goalposts, you end up being constantly dissatisfied.

You also tend to engage in quite a bit of compare and despair. You may feel jealous or envious, when you're comparing yourself against other people and the results that they have. You may feel really inadequate or discontent with your current results. Nothing is ever good enough, right?

You also might feel ashamed and embarrassed about the current results that you have, because you believe that they're not good enough. If you're a perfectionist, you're also probably very concerned with the end result of what you do. You care very little about what happens in between, any of the wins you have along the way, any progress you make that doesn't involve getting the end desired result, that you set out to create. All right?

So, you really minimize any small wins or incremental progress along the way, you're only concerned with that ultimate end goal, that end outcome. And you'll feel really annoyed or devastated, or disgusted or disappointed, if you don't achieve that end result. Even if you made some really great progress along the way.

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You often become depressed when you don't achieve your goals. So, you really dwell and indulge in maybe self-pity, or self-punishment, right? You'll constantly spin over what went wrong. And ask yourself questions like; if I had done something differently, could it have come out a different way? And you'll really engage in this spin cycle, right? Feeling like; If only I had done something different, it would have come out perfectly. Which is just a really inefficient use of your time. All right?

If you're a perfectionist, you probably also feel like you're under a constant state of pressure. There's no room for mistakes. Mistakes are going to be the worst-case scenario for you. And when you see an error, on the front end, you're going to be the first person to jump in, fix it, correct it, because you want to make sure there are no mistakes.

And you probably, in the event that you do incur a mistake, you probably feel extremely embarrassed or ashamed when you do something imperfectly, especially when other people see it. So, mistakes are really the worst-case scenario for you.

Not only, as a perfectionist, do not tolerate mistakes, you typically also tend to be pretty intolerant of things being done in a manner that's different from how you think they should be done. So, you'll be very critical of yourself and other people, if anything gets accomplished in a way different from how you think it should have been accomplished.

This normally impacts your ability to effectively delegate and productively work with other people, because you're really controlling over the 'how'. Even though you're concerned with the end result, you're also concerned with the process, not in the positive way to celebrate any progress or small incremental wins. But in a negative way, where you're hypercritical and really controlling and micromanaging, believing that it has to be done a specific certain way, otherwise it's unacceptable.

And because of this, people probably don't love working with you, right? Because you're really hyper concerned with how things are done, rather than just getting an outcome that is sufficient and acceptable. So, a lot of

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people may find it hard to work with you, hard to be supervised by you, any of those things. And obviously, that's not good for your long-term success, right? Long-term success normally relies on teamwork, and being able to delegate, and being able to supervise in an effective and efficient manner.

Being a perfectionist normally really encumbers your ability to do that. Speaking of mistakes, you probably, as a perfectionist, constantly spot mistakes, even when other people don't see any. And, this is going to come out in a couple different ways. When you spot them, if they're your mistakes, you're going to really bully yourself and beat yourself up when you see them.

You're also constantly going to be concerned about other people's opinions of you; you're going to be worried about their opinions. And, do they think that you made a mistake? Do they think you did something perfectly or imperfectly? You're going to be really hyper concerned with that.

You're also likely to be hypercritical of other people. So, other people might not see any issue with what they've done, but you're taking issue with it. And again, it's really going to erode your relationships with people; it's not going to lead to anything good.

You probably also can't take a compliment if you're a perfectionist because you're always finding flaws in your work. It's never quite good enough, you always think that it could be better. So, you're not able to accept a compliment when it's given to you, and you can't celebrate your successes.

Whether other people are celebrating you, you often downplay it, and you really never give yourself permission to celebrate yourself. All right? Because again, because there's room for improvement, it means what you've currently done is inadequate, insufficient, and just not good enough.

Now, if you're a perfectionist, you probably also struggle with completing things. And, that's going to show up in a couple of different ways. Number one, you probably spend way too much time trying to get something to be perfect. It's not uncommon for you to sacrifice sleep, personal time, and

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your well-being just to bring your work to an even higher level, even if it's not necessary.

And you often will probably do this, despite there being a diminishing return on your investment of time. So, even if something only gets 1% better, you're willing to invest a lot of time into achieving that 1% increase, right? Even though it may be nonsensical; it might not make sense based on everything you have to do on your to-do list. And this may put you further behind.

You will also struggle to complete things because you will feel unmotivated to even get started, and procrastinate on the front end. And normally, this is because on the front end, you're telling yourself the work you do isn't going to be good enough, it's going to be inadequate.

And, that is really an unmotivated thought pattern, right? You're going to feel discouraged, and defeated, and inadequate on the front end. And that's not going to drive you to take massive action. You're likely going to slip into really avoidant patterns.

If you do get started, you also may struggle to complete things because you interrupt yourself along the way. Because when you're thinking what you're doing isn't good enough and that it could be better, and feeling inadequate because you're thinking about your work product in this way, or whatever you're doing, not just work. This could go for completing a project within your house, that has nothing to do with work.

Whatever it is that you're working on, you may start and stop a bunch of times, constantly interrupting yourself because you're feeling like it's not good enough. So, it's really hard to maintain momentum. It's like why bother, or you're afraid of being judged on the work that you do. So, you keep stopping; it's really hard for you to get to the finish line.

There's also a really insidious way that procrastination and perfectionism are tied together here. Not only do you avoid getting started and finishing

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something because you're afraid of doing it badly, but your procrastination also gives you an escape hatch from ever being judged on your best work.

So, what this looks like in practice is, you'll wait to the last minute because you're worried that you're not going to do something good enough. And then, finally, when the fear of not doing the thing starts to outweigh your fear of doing it poorly, you get started.

And again, this is tied with procrastination and perfectionism, because then you create an escape hatch where you're never being judged on your best work. Something might not be that great, it might be imperfect, but it's not because you weren't capable of doing a perfect job or a "good enough" job. It's simply because you didn't give yourself enough time.

So, procrastination is a scapegoat here, it helps you avoid ever being judged on your best work product. If you had all the time in the world, of course, it could have been way better. That's never actually happening.

You're never being judged on work that you had all the time in the world to complete, because you purposely, even if it's happening subconsciously or unconsciously, you waited to the last minute and then created a scenario where you put out B+ or maybe B- or A- work.

And of course, people aren't happy with it, but it's not because you do poor work, in and of itself. It's just because you waited to the last minute, because you're bad with time management, and you didn't give yourself enough time. Had you had enough time, it would have been way better, because you're really capable. You're not imperfect; you're not flawed, right?

That's the narrative that people will tell themselves. And, that's how procrastination helps people avoid feeling inadequate and avoid feeling imperfect. So, the two are tied together. It's really insidious, and it's a little circular, but they really work together to protect you. Even though they ultimately lead to a lot of self-sabotage, overwhelm, stress, feelings of

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inadequacy anyways, and really don't create anything good, as far as your goals are concerned. But that being said, it is still protectionist.

Alright, other examples of perfectionism. If you're a perfectionist, you probably don't like to do new things. I used to have that self-concept. I used to tell myself all the time, that I hated doing things that I wasn't good at. And, I kind of was proud of that for a really long time. Like, oh, I only like doing things I'm good at. I only like doing things I'm good at. And yeah, does it feel great do things that you're already good at? Of course, it does.

But what I realized in my late 20's, was that if I was always going to identify as that person, who only liked doing things they were already good at, that the rest of my life was probably going to be pretty boring. Because that means from my late 20's, on, I wasn't going to try anything new.

Because if you try something new, you have to risk not being good at it in the beginning. And the chances are, you likely won't be good at it in the beginning. You're probably going to have to learn how to do new things. And there's so many benefits to learning how to do new things; the personal growth, you get new skills, you get new hobbies, you have a more dynamic, robust life. So many good reasons why you want to get outside of your comfort zone and try new things, right.

But if you're a perfectionist, that's going to be really uncomfortable for you. Because in the beginning, you have to do something imperfectly. So, that may be something that you encounter in your life; you don't like to do new things, because you're not inherently good at them.

If you're a perfectionist, you probably also have a habit of creating unrealistic goals. All right? Really elaborate plans that are totally undoable, super unrealistic, and then you never complete them; you never keep them, you don't stick to them, you don't implement them, you don't get to the finish line.

Sometimes these elaborate plans look like trying to do everything all at once, when clearly, that is just not possible. We see this oftentimes, around

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New Year's resolution time, when people set all these lofty plans, all these unrealistic goals, and they try and do everything all at once, experience all this change, all this transformation, and it's just too heavy of a lift. So, they fail, right?

Or, people will make really elaborate plans and unrealistic goals, and just never get started. Because they're so heavy, and they're so unrealistic. And they would take so much effort to achieve, that it's really hard to get yourself in the position, in the mindset, to even start to take action.

It's like, why would I get started? Because deep down, I know that this isn't going to be achievable. It's not going to be possible for me to accomplish this end result. So, people will create these unrealistic plans and goals and never get started.

Or, you'll start, and you'll have one setback, one hiccup, things don't go smoothly, and then you give up very quickly. All right? These are hallmarks of perfectionism. You engage in really fanciful fantasy planning and goal setting, and you really never have any intention of following through with it.

It sounds great, but if you had to rate on a scale of 1 to 10, how likely you are to actually complete this “unrealistic, lofty” goal, you're going to rate that very low. Probably like a one or two, even a five. I like to say, if you can't rate your goal, or plan an eight or higher, that you're likely to complete it, follow through and accomplish it, you're probably engaging in a little bit of perfectionist fantasies, okay.

I also see this as being super common with perfectionist; they have a lot of “tomorrow” thinking. And, “perfectionist fantasies” and “tomorrow thinking” were two terms coined by another life coach I know. Also, a former lawyer, her name is Kara Loewentheil. And I love those terms, they're so perfect at describing, no pun intended there, but they're really great at describing what this phenomenon looks like in practice, right?

You come up with a complete fantasy goal, that you're never going to follow through on. And then you tell yourself, “I'm going to get started

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tomorrow.” And we normally do this because we love the idea of a fresh, perfect start. Can't start today because today's already imperfect. We're already in the middle of things. And we want that clean, fresh start.

So, we're constantly putting off getting started, in order to start perfectly. You'll also see this if you think that there's a right moment to do something. You're constantly waiting for that right moment to work on your goals. So, you've got to start on Monday.

I used to do this with time management, I'd procrastinate because I would want to start at the beginning of the hour. I'll get started in five minutes, at 10 o'clock. And then, it would be 10:01, and I'd need to wait to 10:30 or 11:00. That's total perfectionism coming up, you're waiting for the right time. You think that there's a best time to get started.

And you only want to start when you're “ready”, so you can deliver your best quality of work. So, if you're really obsessed with starting when you feel ready, you're probably indulging in perfectionism. Because the state of readiness really never seems to come. Right?

Readiness is just a figment of your imagination. I tend to think that we're never ready. We just have to get started, even while we feel unready. And if you're obsessed with starting at the right moment, or starting when you feel ready, you end up just perpetually waiting. And, you never accomplish what you set out to accomplish.

Over time, what planning in these really elaborate, unrealistic ways, that are really just indulgences and fantasy planning, what this ends up doing is it really erodes trust with yourself. And planning and goal setting for you, ultimately, just becomes a futile exercise.

You'll make a plan knowing you have no intention of sticking with it, because it's really lofty and unrealistic. And then, you never get started. Maybe you tell yourself, you're going to start tomorrow. But then, tomorrow never comes; you never do. And, you never go about actually taking action and working towards your goals.

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So, you really fall out of integrity with yourself, and erode your self-trust. That's so detrimental to accomplishing the things in your life that you want to accomplish. You tend to not believe yourself when you say you're ever going to do something.

When you don't trust yourself, you really have a low opinion of yourself, and that seeps its way in and further substantiates your sense of inadequacy. And it ultimately leads to, again, a ton of inaction a ton of avoidant behavior, more procrastination, it doesn't lead to anything good.

Also, with perfectionists, you tend to quit pretty easily when you err. Alright? So, if you quit a lot in your life, it's probably coming from perfectionism. And you'll tend to be very all-or-nothing, there is no in between. So, you'll either do something and stop, if it wasn't perfect, because it's not worth it at that point.

Or, if you don't think you can do it perfectly, you won't even bother doing it at all. I see this all the time with cleaning, right? You'll be cluttered or messy because you can't clean everything all at once, so why bother doing it? Or, people won't plan their time at all, because if they can't stick to a schedule perfectly, it's not worth planning even a little bit. So, it's very all-or-nothing thinking; everything in between is a no-go.

If you are a perfectionist, you also probably have a really significant fear of failure. Failure is a crippling concept for you. It's your worst-case scenario. If you're not a perfectionist, you either are like me, and don't believe that you can fail.

Because I like to choose to believe you're always either winning or learning. But if you err or falter or make mistakes along the way, it's not a problem. It doesn't mean anything about you. You're still totally sufficient, adequate, and worthy. It's just a learning opportunity.

Or, you believe that failure's no big deal, and it's just part of the self-improvement process; you're going to fail, you're going to win, you're going

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to have everything in between, and that it isn't an issue. You just keep trucking along. All right?

But if you're a perfectionist, you don't think in either of those two ways. You have a really significant fear of failure, and you think it's the worst-case scenario. All right, you can see from these examples, that being a perfectionist really isn't a good thing. It causes a lot of problems, and a really unpleasant emotional experience.

Not only does it impact your results, at the end of the day, and have you indulging in a lot of procrastination, a lot of inaction, a lot of quitting, a lot of failure ahead of time, because you never get started. But also, it feels really terrible because you're constantly measuring yourself up against the standard that you can't meet.

So, it's a really painful process that you get to totally opt out of if you want to. Now, why do we indulge in perfectionism? I just want to let you know that perfectionist typically strive to be perfect, in part out of fear that they will be judged or exposed or rejected, if they're not perfect. And they also have a desire to fit in and be accepted.

So, it's kind of like two different sides of the same coin. And, this is very similar to why we people-please. We want to be accepted by the people in our lives. We want to be part of the group, and perfectionists tend to believe that if they are perfect, they will be accepted. And, if they are imperfect, they will be rejected.

And, this is just a remnant of our primitive conditioning. It's a survival mechanism. Back in the day, when we were hunters and gatherers, and we survived based on being part of a herd, being part of a group, a tribe, we needed to fit in, we needed to be accepted.

If we were rejected by the group, we wouldn't make it on our own. And we just haven't evolved enough to have gotten rid of this primitive conditioning. So nowadays, we still strive to be accepted, we still strive to fit in. And we

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think that if we're perfect, that's a way to accomplish avoiding ever being rejected.

Now, like with most things, nowadays we don't need to do this to survive, right? But we still use this against ourselves. So, you just want to know your brain indulges in this because it thinks it's protecting you. But you get to tell yourself; hey, brain, that's not actually the case. This isn't serving us any longer. And, you get to put a pin in it. All right?

I have just one more thing that I want to add, before I wrap up this episode. And I'm going to do a whole 'nother episode, a part two, essentially, on how to overcome perfectionism. So, like I said, this is essentially a two-part episode. But before I leave you today, I just want to say this. I don't want to leave any confusion.

Perfection is complete and utter bullshit. And I learned this from my one-on-one coach, she specifically asked me this question, when I was talking about perfectionism, she said, "Perfect to who?" And that really was life changing for me because I realized that perfect is completely subjective.

It's a totally arbitrary standard; no one's going to agree on what perfect means, what it looks like in practice, how we define it. Everyone's going to have their own different definition for perfection, which means it's bullshit; there is no such thing.

So, I just want you to keep that in the back of your mind. If you've been someone who strives for perfection, and is constantly trying to get to that unattainable endpoint, I want to turn you on and give you a little time to marinate on the truth of the matter, which is that perfect, and perfection are utter bullshit concepts, right? They're subjective and arbitrary. There is no such thing.

Now, if you were still on the fence about whether or not you're a perfectionist, even after me going through giving you all of those examples, here are a couple questions for you to run essentially, your own litmus test on yourself: Do you believe that if you were perfect, you would be happy?

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And, if maybe you don't use that word “perfect”, if you were better, that you would be happier, right? Or, you would be more worthy? Or, that you would be enough? Your answer to that question, if you're a perfectionist, is likely, ‘yes’.

Another question: Do you believe you're good enough right now? As you are, without needing to change a single thing? If you are a perfectionist, your answer is likely ‘no’. Now, if your answer to that question is ‘no’, I also want you to ask yourself; do you even know what it would look like to be good enough? do you know what that standard is for yourself? The answer to that is probably ‘no’.

And if you can enumerate that standard, which is probably pretty rare, most perfectionist can't enumerate it, they haven't defined it; it's just this really ambiguous concept. But if you have enumerated a standard, is that standard of ‘good enough’ attainable? Again, if you're a perfectionist, the answer is likely ‘no’.

Now, a couple other ways to identify whether or not you're a perfectionist. When you make plans, I mentioned this earlier, but when you make plans, if you were to rate the plan, is it highly likely that you will follow through with it or that you will be able to achieve it? If your answer is ‘no’, if you'd normally say that it's pretty unlikely that you'll follow through with it or be able to achieve and complete your plan, you're probably a perfectionist.

I often tell my clients that they want to, instead of striving for perfection, the standard that they want to strive for is like A-, B+ work. One of my coaches often says that you want to be striving for B minus work. And, as a perfectionist who is now in recovery, that still makes me a little queasy.

So, I want you to check-in with yourself, when I tell you that you should be striving for A-, B+ work. If that makes you kind of want to vom, if it makes you a little nauseous, you're probably a perfectionist.

And, last but not least, if you see small, consistent action as really boring, underwhelming, and pointless, you're probably a perfectionist who likes to

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indulge in those elaborate fantasy plans that you're never going to follow through on. You want it to be all-or-nothing. You want to do all the things at once. And, you're really underwhelmed by the idea of small baby steps, even though, the truth of the matter, is that is the way you get the furthest the fastest.

All right, my friends, those are some questions for you to marinate on, over the next week. In the next episode, I'm going to teach you everything you need to know about how to overcome your perfectionist tendencies. I can't wait to dive in to that part of this topic.

And until then, I hope you have a marvelous week. I will talk to you in the next episode.

Thanks for listening to *The Less Stressed Lawyer* podcast. If you want more info about Olivia Vizachero or the show's notes and resources from today's episode, visit [www.TheLessStressedLawyer.com](http://www.TheLessStressedLawyer.com).