



## PERFECTIONISM: A FACTOR OF PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT OR A PSYCHOLOGICAL RISK (SCIENTIFIC REVIEW)

<https://doi.org/10.57033/mijournals-2026-3-0335>

**Robiya BEKTEMIROVA**

*Third-year student, Psychology Programme,  
Tashkent International Kimyo University*

**Abstract.** *This article examines the problem of perfectionism from a psychological perspective. The striving to be perfect at all times and to work without error is becoming an increasingly common phenomenon among many people today. The article analyses two manifestations of this phenomenon: its positive side, which motivates personal growth, and, conversely, its negative side, which leads to constant anxiety and self-dissatisfaction. It also considers the question of when high self-demand is a beneficial trait and when it becomes a psychological problem, and examines the role of the family environment, parenting style and social networks in the formation of perfectionism.*

**Keywords:** *perfectionism, healthy perfectionism, unhealthy perfectionism, high standards, socially prescribed perfectionism, depression, parenting style.*

### INTRODUCTION

In modern society the full realisation of an individual's potential, the achievement of high results and continuous self-improvement are regarded as among the important conditions of social and professional success. Setting high standards in education, professional activity and interpersonal relationships, analysing one's own performance and striving to improve results may have a positive effect on personal development. From this point of view, perfectionism – a psychological characteristic defined by the setting of high demands on oneself and on the results of one's activity, by sensitivity to errors and by the striving for perfection – is one of the topical objects of research in contemporary psychology.

The psychological content of perfectionism is not uniform. In some cases the setting of high standards, goal-directedness and the need to improve one's own performance may be connected with personal growth, self-development and academic or professional effectiveness. However, setting impossibly high criteria for achieving perfection, perceiving an error as a failure, excessive self-criticism and a high degree of dependence



on the evaluations of others are associated with the dysfunctional forms of perfectionism. For this reason it is more important to carry out a differential analysis of its adaptive and maladaptive aspects than simply to evaluate perfectionism as a positive or a negative characteristic.

## **MAIN PART**

Today the demand to achieve the best result in every field and to work without any shortcomings is growing stronger in our society day by day. This situation is felt not only at school or in the workplace, but also in people's outward appearance and in their relationships with one another. Precisely this state of constantly striving for perfection is called perfectionism in psychology. On the one hand this characteristic encourages a person to move forward and to achieve high results; on the other hand, if this striving exceeds the norm, it may have a negative effect on a person's mental state and give rise to constant anxiety and self-dissatisfaction. It is exactly this twofold character that makes the subject of perfectionism require deep study in psychological science.

The term "perfectionism" was first introduced into scientific use in 1965 by the American psychiatrist M. Hollender, who described this phenomenon as a person's behaviour of demanding high quality and precision from themselves or from others (Hollender, 1965:94–103). Later, in 1978, the American psychologist D. Hamachek proposed dividing perfectionism into two types: normal, or healthy, and neurotic, or unhealthy, perfectionism. In his view, normal perfectionists strive for perfection without damaging their self-esteem and derive pleasure from this process, whereas neurotic perfectionists strive for unattainable goals and live in a state of constant dissatisfaction (Hamachek, 1978:27–33).

In order to understand perfectionism better it may be conceived in three forms. The first is a person's excessively high demands on themselves, that is, constantly expecting a perfect result from oneself. The second is a person's demanding the same high result from those around them, for example from colleagues or close relatives. The third is the state of feeling obliged to meet the standards set by society, the family or people regarded as important. The last form in particular – the need to correspond to expectations imposed from outside – may give rise in a person to constant internal pressure, anxiety and even depression, since acting in order to look good in the eyes of others rather than out of one's own inner need has a heavier effect on the human psyche.



In 1990 the American scholars R. Frost and colleagues developed a multidimensional model describing perfectionism through six components: personal standards, concern over mistakes, doubts about actions, parental expectations, parental criticism and organisation (Frost et al., 1990:449–468). This model shows that perfectionism is connected not only with the individual but also with family upbringing: the excessively high demands or critical attitude of parents may create the ground for the formation of unhealthy perfectionism in a child. The Canadian clinical psychologists M. Antony and R. Swinson, in their book on strategies for overcoming perfectionism, emphasise that people with self-oriented perfectionism are unable to accept their own mistakes and criticise themselves constantly; in their view, when this state is combined with difficult life events it may give rise to mental problems such as depression (Antony & Swinson, 2020). This view also corresponds to the conclusions of Western researchers concerning unhealthy perfectionism.

It should also be said, however, that perfectionism cannot be regarded as having only negative aspects, because people who strive for perfection in a healthy way usually set high goals, are responsible, approach their work in a disciplined manner and make efforts to achieve results. Such characteristics, on the contrary, lead to success both in study and at work. The question, therefore, lies not in perfectionism itself but in how a person relates to it. If a person criticises themselves mercilessly for every error, perceives even a small mistake as a great catastrophe and measures their own worth solely by the results they achieve, precisely this leads them towards unhealthy perfectionism.

Today the wide spread of social networks is also intensifying this state. People constantly compare the apparently “perfect” lives, successes and outward appearance of others with their own. As a result, many people, especially the young, come to feel inadequate and develop the thought that “I am not enough”. In fact this too is a need to meet the hidden standards imposed by those around them, that is, a contemporary manifestation of socially prescribed perfectionism.

The family environment and parental attitudes occupy an important place in the formation of perfectionism. Parents’ expectation of excessively high results from their children leads to the formation in the child of high demands not only towards themselves but also towards others. In the children of parents who adopt a critical attitude towards the child’s mistakes, socially prescribed perfectionism – that is, the feeling of being



constantly subject to high demands from those around them – is manifested particularly strongly. In addition, the parenting style is also of considerable importance: a strict and controlling parenting style leads to the intensification in children of such signs of unhealthy perfectionism as fear of mistakes and doubt about their own abilities, whereas a parenting style that combines balanced demandingness with affection partly protects the child from such conditions. These data show that perfectionism is not merely a natural characteristic of the person but a phenomenon that develops under the influence of family relationships formed in childhood and of parental demandingness and critical attitudes. For this reason the correct balancing by parents of high demands and affection towards the child is of decisive importance in the child's formation in the future as a healthy personality.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, perfectionism is a complex psychological phenomenon that exerts differing effects on the development and psychological state of the personality. Its adaptive form may encourage the setting of high goals, responsibility, discipline and work on oneself. Conversely, maladaptive perfectionism may lead to excessive self-criticism, fear of mistakes and unrealistic demands. Family upbringing, social expectations and comparisons on contemporary social networks are among the important factors in the formation of perfectionism. For this reason, particularly in work with young people, it is important to develop realistic goal setting, a constructive attitude towards mistakes, self-acceptance and psychological flexibility. It is therefore expedient to assess perfectionism not simply as a positive or a negative characteristic, but as a psychological construct whose adaptive and maladaptive aspects are analysed together.

## **REFERENCES**

1. Antony, M. M. & Swinson, R. P. (2020). When Perfect Isn't Good Enough: Strategies for Coping with Perfectionism. 2nd ed. St Petersburg: Ves. 352 p. (in Russian)
2. Frost, R. O., Marten, P., Lahart, C. & Rosenblate, R. (1990). The dimensions of perfectionism. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, 14(5), pp. 449–468.
3. Hamachek, D. E. (1978). Psychodynamics of normal and neurotic perfectionism. *Psychology*, 15(1), pp. 27–33.
4. Hollender, M. H. (1965). Perfectionism. *Comprehensive Psychiatry*, 6(2), pp. 94–103.