UNCOVER DISCOVER LLC

Helping people build lives worth protecting.

GREATER AWARENESS BRIGHTER TOMORROWS

What Happens When Good Enough Feels Like Failure?

Understanding perfectionism, high standards, and the cost of never feeling **finished**

Perfectionism is not the same as caring about quality. High standards can be healthy and motivating. It becomes a problem when your sense of worth, safety, or control starts depending on getting things exactly right. When "good enough" never feels like enough, it can lead to stress, self-criticism, avoidance, and a diminished ability to enjoy your progress.



Low Standards

- Avoid effort
- Cut corners
- Settle too quickly
- May not follow through

Healthy Standards

- Put in consistent effort
- Value quality and growth
- Can tolerate mistakes
- Stay flexible and realistic

Rigid Perfectionism

- Overcheck and redo
- Delay due to fear of imperfection
- Feel anxious about mistakes
- Rarely feel finished

Where do I tend to land most often?

Take a few moments to reflect on the questions below. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. Where in my life do I notice perfectionism showing up most often? (e.g., work, school, relationships, health, etc.)

2. What do I fear would happen if something were only "good enough"?

3. How do I know when my effort has crossed the line from healthy determination into obsession?

4. What are some of the costs I experience when I can't feel finished?

5. What would be different if I allowed myself to aim for "good enough" more often?

> *"The issue is not whether I could do it better.*
> *The issue is whether doing it better is worth what it costs me."*

UNCOVER DISCOVER LLC

Helping people build lives worth protecting.

GREATER AWARENESS BRIGHTER TOMORROWS

Where Is My Good-Enough Line?

Learning to recognize the point where effort stops helping and starts costing more than it gives.

The goal is not to become careless, but to notice when extra effort stops meaningfully improving the outcome. Good enough can be responsible, thoughtful, and high quality, while still leaving room for your well-being, relationships, and other important parts of life.

Below My Values

- Rushed
- Incomplete
- Not aligned with my values
- Avoidant

Good Enough

- Responsible
- Solid
- Thoughtful
- Aligned with my values
- Ready to let go

Beyond the Point of Return

- Overchecking
- Redoing
- Delaying
- Obsessing
- Exhausting myself

The Cost of the Last 10%



What does the last 10% often cost me?

Time	More hours with little added value
Sleep	Harder to rest, more mental noise
Peace of mind	Increased anxiety and what-ifs
Momentum	Slower progress on other goals
Relationships	Less presence with people I care about
Confidence	More self-criticism, less self-trust
Flexibility	Harder to adapt when things change

Time for Reflection

1. What does "good enough" actually look like in one area of my life?
2. How do I know when I have crossed from care into overcontrol?
3. What am I usually trying to prevent by going past the good-enough line?
4. What do I tend to lose when I keep chasing a perfect result?

"The question is not only, 'Could I do more?'
The better question is, 'Would doing more actually be worth what it costs?'"

UNCOVER DISCOVER LLC

Helping people build lives worth protecting.

GREATER AWARENESS BRIGHTER TOMORROWS

Standards, Consequences, and the Perfectionism Loop

A standard may sound admirable. The real question is what it costs me to pursue it this way.

Perfectionism often disguises itself as responsibility, commitment, or excellence. Wanting to do a good job and holding yourself to high standards can be positive. However, the method can become harsh, rigid, and self-defeating when your worth, safety, or self-acceptance depends on getting things exactly right.

Standards vs. Consequences

What standard am I trying to meet?	What is it costing me to meet it this way?
Do excellent work	Constant anxiety about performance
Be prepared	Overpreparing and exhaustion
Avoid mistakes	Procrastination and missed opportunities
Keep others happy	Resentment and neglecting my own needs
Look competent	Avoiding new challenges or taking risks
_____	_____
_____	_____

The Perfectionism Loop



Time for Reflection

Take a few moments to reflect on the questions below. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. Which part of the loop do I recognize most in myself? _____
2. When I miss my standard, what do I tell myself it means about me? _____
3. What standard sounds good on paper but harms me in practice? _____
4. What would a healthier version of that standard look like? _____

> *"Perfectionism is not simply wanting to do something well. It is when my sense of safety or worth starts depending on getting it exactly right."*

UNCOVER DISCOVER LLC

Helping people build lives worth protecting.

GREATER AWARENESS BRIGHTER TOMORROWS

Practicing Good Enough on Purpose

A behavioral experiment for loosening perfectionism without abandoning your values.

One of the best ways to challenge perfectionism is to intentionally practice stopping at a responsible, values-aligned point and then notice what actually happens. Rather than waiting to feel less anxious, we can take action, test our predictions, and learn from real experience.

1 Choose One Area

Pick something in your daily life.

Examples:
email, cleaning, paperwork, work task, appearance, planning, exercise.

2 Set a Good-Enough Target

Decide what "good enough" looks like for this experiment.

Examples:
one draft, 45 minutes, clean not spotless, prepared not overprepared.

3 Name the Prediction

Get curious about your expectations and fears.

What am I afraid will happen if I stop here?

What do I think it will mean about me?

4 Do the Experiment

Put your plan into action.

Stop at the target.
Leave it.
Do not go back and fix it immediately.

5 Review the Results

Notice what actually happened.

What actually happened?
Did anyone notice?
What did I gain?
What did I learn?

My Good-Enough Experiment

Area: _____

My target: _____

My prediction: _____

What happened: _____

What I learned: _____

What I want to practice next: _____

What helps self-esteem grow?

- Consistent action, even when it feels uncomfortable
- Following through on what you say you will do
- Tolerating imperfection and learning from mistakes
- Acting from your values, not just your fears
- Finishing what matters (rather than chasing perfection)
- Building self-respect through esteemable acts

> *"Self-esteem grows less from being perfect and more from living in a way I can respect."*