

Perfectionism vs. the Pursuit of Excellence

There is a healthy alternative to perfectionism. It's called the Pursuit of Excellence. Here are three ways in which the two differ:

1. **Perfectionism** means thinking *less* of yourself because you earned a B+ instead of an A. **The Pursuit of Excellence** means thinking *more* of yourself for trying something new.

2. **Perfectionism** means being hard on yourself because you aren't equally talented in all sports. **The Pursuit of Excellence** means choosing some things you know you'll be good at—and others you know will be good for you or just plain fun.

3. **Perfectionism** means beating yourself up because you lost the student council election. **The Pursuit of Excellence** means congratulating yourself because you were nominated, and deciding to run again next year—if that's what you want.

How can you become a Pursuer of Excellence? By:

- determining the sources of your perfectionism
- reassessing your feelings about failure and success
- standing your ground against people who pressure you to be perfect
- learning ways to be easier on yourself so you're free to take risks and try new things

What other ideas do you have for pursuing excellence? For avoiding the perfectionism trap?

Fill in the Blanks

Name: _____

When I get an A . . . _____

When I don't get an A . . . _____

When I bring my report card home . . . _____

If I forget to do my homework . . . _____

My parents expect me to . . . _____

Most of my teachers expect me to . . . _____

Most of my friends expect me to . . . _____

No one expects me to . . . _____

From *When Gifted Kids Don't Have All the Answers: How to Meet Their Social and Emotional Needs* by Jim Delisle, Ph.D., and Judy Galbraith, M.A., copyright © 2002. Free Spirit Publishing Inc., Minneapolis, MN; 800/735-7323; www.freespirit.com. This page may be photocopied for individual, classroom, or small group work only.