Perfectionism in the Gifted Child

facilitated by Lisa Van Gemert

Types of Perfectionists (Adelson and Wilson)

- Academic Achievers
- Aggravated Accuracy Assessors
- Risk Evaders: all or nothing
- Controlling Image Managers: I could have it if I wanted to
- Procrastinating Perfectionists: if it stays in my mind, I can’t fail

Consequences of Perfectionism:

- neglect of other interests
- fear
- underachievement
- decreased social acceptance
- extrinsic motivation
- low self-esteem
- anxiety
- limited social interaction
- limited risk taking
- negative thinking
- stress

Healthy high standards manifest:

- mastery orientation
- capability of relaxing
- based on personal standards
- pleasure from working hard

Unhealthy perfectionism:

- based on external evaluation
- motivated by low self-esteem
- unsatisfied with high level of effort
- incapable of relaxing

Big Idea: Excellent is good enough

Strategy: 1 – 5

Big Idea: It’s the journey, and it always was
Big Idea: Don’t be your own worst enemy.

Mindset ( Carol Dweck)  
Perseverance (polar explorers)  
Grit ( Angela Duckworth)  

Strategy: Role of Goal Disengagement  

Strategy: Teach how to avoid self-talk mistakes  

Strategy: Teach how to avoid illogical beliefs  

Strategy: Ask questions (don’t tell).  

Strategy: Model strategies to deal with stress  

Big Idea: Just do it  

Big Idea: Be a Weebie and a Bozo  

Big Idea: Failure is a perfectly acceptable option  

Strategy: Fail Forward  

Strategy: The Power of a 99  

Strategy: Amish mistake  

Strategy: provide support in dealing with failure  

Practice predictions:  

Strategy: just jump  

Strategy: Is it my problem or does it belong to someone else?
Barbara Clark’s Model for problem resolution

1. What happened?
2. What is the problem?
3. What are you doing to solve the problem?
4. Is it working?
5. What are you willing to do differently?
6. Repeat 3, 4, & 5 as necessary
7. Would you like to hear what other kids have tried? Would you be willing to...?

Resources:

Books:

- *Letting Go of Perfect: Overcoming Perfectionism in Kids* by Jill Adelson Ph.D.
- *Too Perfect: When Being In Control Gets Out of Control* by Jeannette Dewyze
- *Freeing Our Families From Perfectionism* by Thomas S. Greenspon

Miscellaneous:


Movie: *Meet the Robinsons* (Disney, 2007)


Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering.
There is a crack in everything,
That’s how the light gets in.

Leonard Cohen “Anthem”
ITHAKA

As you set out for Ithaka
hope the voyage is a long one,
full of adventure, full of discovery.
Laistrygonians and Cyclops,
angry Poseidon—don't be afraid of them:
you'll never find things like that on your way
as long as you keep your thoughts raised high,
as long as a rare excitement
stirs your spirit and your body.
Laistrygonians and Cyclops,
wild Poseidon—you won't encounter them
unless you bring them along inside your soul,
unless your soul sets them up in front of you.

Hope the voyage is a long one.
May there be many a summer morning when,
with what pleasure, what joy,
you come into harbors seen for the first time;
may you stop at Phoenician trading stations
to buy fine things,
mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony,
sensual perfume of every kind—
as many sensual perfumes as you can;
and may you visit many Egyptian cities
to gather stores of knowledge from their scholars.

Keep Ithaka always in your mind.
Arriving there is what you are destined for.
But do not hurry the journey at all.
Better if it lasts for years,
so you are old by the time you reach the island,
wealthy with all you have gained on the way,
not expecting Ithaka to make you rich.

Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey.
Without her you would not have set out.
She has nothing left to give you now.

And if you find her poor, Ithaka won't have fooled you.
Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,
you will have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.