

June 2016

**Focus:** Perfectly Imperfect

*What is perfection, anyway? It's the death of creativity.* – Diane Keaton

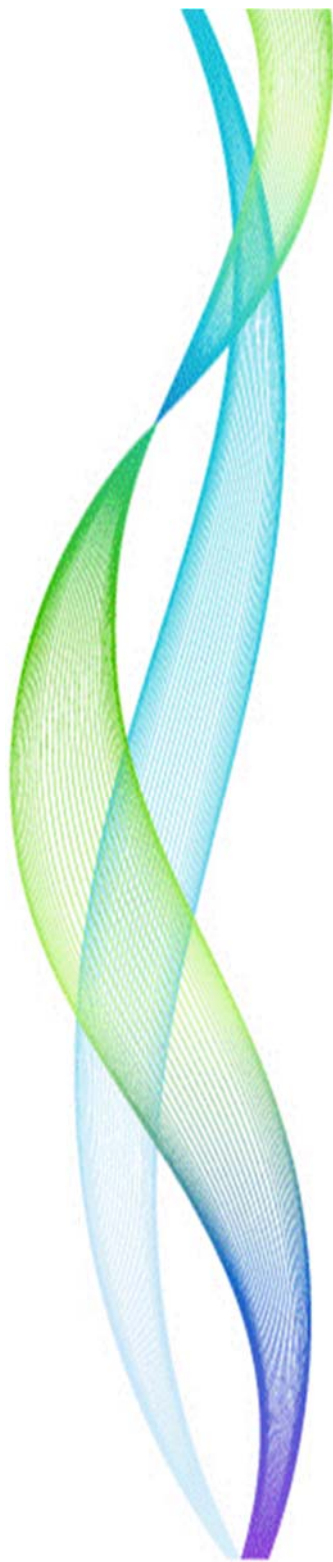
In our Instagram and selfie-driven society, perfectionism seems to have taken on new life. Now, those with perfectionistic tendencies have not only their *own* ideas of perfection to live up to—they can also instantly compare themselves to other perfection-seekers. From “the perfect baby shower decorations” on Pinterest to “the best way to wear this season’s must-have clothing item” on sites such as Who What Wear to “How to get perfectly augmented lips like your favorite celebrity” on sites such as realself.com—the question is, where does it end?

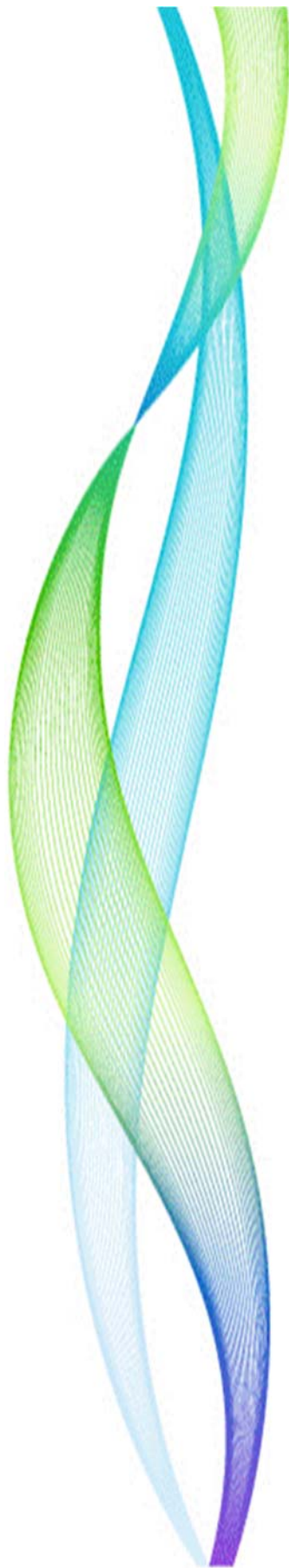
By definition, perfectionism is the refusal to accept any standard short of perfection. For an artist, chef or even a co-worker, that doesn’t seem *entirely* bad. These people care about what they produce! Isn’t that a good thing? But according to experts, it’s also the “fast track to unhappiness and often accompanied by depression and eating disorders.” (*Psychology Today*) One of perfectionism’s inherent dangers is that those who desire it tend to focus more on avoiding failure rather than simply enjoying the process of what they’re doing in the first place.

Managing perfectionism begins with awareness. The next time you feel anxiety about things not being “perfect”, ask yourself: Why do I feel this? Are these actually my standards, or perhaps I inherited them from someone else? What am I getting out of this?

And the next time you catch yourself comparing yourself to others, mindfully switch your focus on “what’s so great about them” to “what’s so unique about me.” Stop envying Instagram images of other people’s displays of “perfection” (which may be photo-shopped, anyway) and start looking at more pictures of cute kittens and puppies. The point is, use your free time to do things that make you feel *good* about yourself!

There’s no comparison to *you*





### **Reconnect:** The Couple That Walks Together...

Sometimes, the noise and commotion of family life or even just ever-present technology beeping and ringing in the background prevents couples from really talking to each other. Taking a daily stroll together provides not only an excellent form of exercise but also numerous opportunities to talk “outside the norm.” Start a walking routine with your partner today. The weather’s perfect for it.

### **Bibliotherapy:** *Alexander Hamilton* by Ron Chernow

From the author of *The House of Morgan* and *Titan*, Chernow gives us the first full-length biography of Alexander Hamilton in decades, telling “the riveting story of a man who overcame all odds to shape, inspire, and scandalize the newborn America. According to historian Joseph Ellis, *Alexander Hamilton* is ‘a robust full-length portrait, in my view the best ever written, of the most brilliant, charismatic and dangerous founder of them all.’” Don’t miss this as one of your top summer reads. (source: [www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com))

### **Time-Out:** Encouraging Feelings

“That didn’t hurt!” “You shouldn’t dislike her,” or “There’s nothing to cry about!” Do any of these sound familiar? In our best attempts to raise strong, resilient and loving children, we as adults sometimes forget that kids have their own sets of feelings, not merely reflections of our own. What we know isn’t actually the end of the world as a thirty-five year old might seem very much so to a three-year old. Ask your kids what they’re feeling, in moments when they’re calm. What makes them happy, sad or angry? If they did something they’re proud of, ask them, “How do you feel about your accomplishment?” Helping them recognize and identify their emotions will go a long way in helping them manage more challenging emotions in the future.

### **Self-Care Strategies:** Talking to Strangers

Smile at the grocery clerk. Chat up the barista. Share a laugh with the person next to you. Otherwise, you’re probably doing what the rest of us are tempted to do when waiting in line—hop on our smart phones. But always looking down, while attempting to connect with others electronically, actually keeps up from connecting with the people right in front of us. Experts say that even short, simple exchanges with strangers make you feel more a part of your community and increase joy. So go ahead...talk to strangers.



**Take Two:** *The Man Who Knew Infinity*

An official selection at the Toronto International Film Festival, this is the true story of a friendship that forever changed mathematics. In 1913, a self-taught mathematical genius (Dev Patel), travels to Trinity College in Cambridge, where he meets a brilliant professor (Jeremy Irons). Over the course of five years, the two develop a strong bond and fight against prejudice to reveal the young mathematic genius to the world. –source:

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**Our Time is Up:** Stayed tuned for our July issue...