

# 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 about what you might do differently to earn an A next time, if that's what you want. Pursuing excellence also means giving yourself credit for taking on challenging work and 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
- Developing tactics for 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?