



Exhausting Quest For Perfection, by Brene Brown

The quest for perfection is exhausting and unrelenting, but as hard as we try, we can't turn off the tapes that fill our heads with messages like "Never good enough" and "What will people think?"

Why, when we know that there's no such thing as perfect, do most of us spend an incredible amount of time and energy trying to be everything to everyone? Is it that we really admire perfection? No -- the truth is that we are actually drawn to people who are real and down-to-earth. We love authenticity and we know that life is messy and imperfect.

We get sucked into perfection for one very simple reason: We believe perfection will protect us. Perfectionism is the belief that if we live perfect, look perfect, and act perfect, we can minimize or avoid the pain of blame, judgment, and shame.

We all need to feel worthy of love and belonging, and our worthiness is on the line when we feel like we are never ____ enough (you can fill in the blank: thin, beautiful, smart, extraordinary, talented, popular, promoted, admired, accomplished).

Perfectionism is not the same thing as striving to be our best. Perfectionism is not about healthy achievement and growth; it's a shield. Perfectionism is a 20-ton shield that we lug around thinking it will protect us when, in fact, it's the thing that's really preventing us from being seen and taking flight.

Living in a society that floods us with unattainable expectations around every topic imaginable, putting down the perfection shield is scary. Finding the courage, compassion and connection to move from "What will people think?" to "I am enough," is not easy. But however afraid we are of change, the question that we must ultimately answer is this:

What's the greater risk? Letting go of what people think -- or letting go of how I feel, what I believe, and who I am?