



Overcoming Perfectionism: Finding the Key to Balance and Self-Acceptance

Ann Smith MS LMFT

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Anything worth doing is worth doing well. Practice makes perfect. Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing. Failure is not an option. In today's perfection-obsessed culture, these are the maxims we live by. Yet, the damage that they cause is stifling. Renowned author and pioneer of codependency treatment Ann W. Smith knows this first hand. Smith has dealt with her fair share of perfectionism and has bared witness to this all too common phenomenon in her professional life, having spent the last thirty years studying the impact compulsive disorders have on individuals and family. While perfectionism lacks much of the stigma attached to today's most common compulsions—smoking, gambling, sex addiction, alcoholism, and drug abuse—many of the negative connotations on self and the family system are the same.

Psychological and physical implications include:

- Headaches
- Isolation
- Anxiety attacks
- Fear of failure
- Sleep disturbances
- Digestive problems
- Back pain
- Overeating
- Sexual dysfunction
- Depression
- Suicidal thoughts or tendencies
- An inability to establish proper boundaries
- Overly critical of others
- The need to be in control
- Excessive guilt and shame

In this revised and updated edition of the original, groundbreaking book *Overcoming Perfectionism: The Key to a Balanced Recovery*, Smith describes the key differences between *overt* and *covert* perfectionism; the role early attachment, temperament, sibling relationships, and life circumstances play in developing this pattern; and how to shift toward a center of balance for a more fulfilling life.

Readers will learn how to identify and confront the root cause of their problem, how to reveal and accept their essence, and finally, they will learn the importance of forgiveness and letting go. Additionally, readers discover the key characteristics of a healthy family system, along with the single most important lesson of all—**perfection does not exist.**

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