

# Nobody's Perfect... or Are They?

## A New Paradigm on the Concept of Perfection

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*“Our image of perfection is the reason we reject ourselves the way we are, and why we don't accept others the way they are.”*

— Don Miguel Ruiz, *The Four Agreements*

“Is anyone here perfect?” When I ask seminar attendees this question, it is rare to find someone who will say that they are perfect. This is not surprising for several reasons. Most people simply believe that they are not perfect, and to think of yourself as “perfect” means you are either an egotist or grossly immodest. Some also object on religious grounds as well.

But why is it really so hard for people to think of themselves as perfect? Simply stated, because of a lifetime of mental conditioning that says, “Nobody is perfect.” At the core is an incorrect view of what “perfection” really means as it relates to human beings. The common concept of “perfection” is inherently flawed when it comes to human beings because it sets us up to fail.

Consider: when we are born, we are conditioned to strive toward what? **Perfection**. And at the same time, as we grow, we know that we can never attain what? **Perfection**. Do you not see a dichotomy here, a conflict? In other words, *we are programmed and conditioned to strive for something that we can never attain*. Do you see a problem with this picture? It is distorted and dysfunctional. How about a different perspective on perfection?

### How to Determine If You Are Perfect

Answer these two questions,

1. *“Is there anyone on this planet who is more perfect at being you than you are?”* (Hint, the answer is “No.”)

2. *“Therefore, are you perfect?”* Yes! You are perfectly you! You are unique and there is no one else exactly like you. You are perfectly you!

In my experience with hundreds of people, when I ask the above two questions, they still tell me “No, I’m not perfect.” If they do say yes, they always follow it up with a qualifying statement such as, “Okay, I’m perfect *in that sense*, but I still make mistakes.”

*“there always seems to be a reason to not feel good about ourselves”*

Most of us have been so conditioned over a lifetime of being criticized and put down, that we simply lack the self-esteem to recognize common disabling beliefs that keep us down. Therefore when pressed, we feel we must qualify our statement so that it

is acceptable to our belief system. The common concept of “perfection” is a disabling belief. It tears down and discourages; it doesn’t build up and encourage, but it should.

### Out with the Old, In with the New

The old, tired out concept of perfection / imperfection is nothing more than an ancient human belief system designed to control and manipulate through guilt and shame. It is a control tactic. It restrains us from having a healthy, realistic, and positive view of ourselves, and therefore, of others. The old concept compels us subtly and inexorably toward inner unhappiness. Why? Because “there always seems to be a reason to not feel good about ourselves.” We always seem to find some reason to justify our low feelings of self-worth. In turn, our own unhealthy self-concept lowers our view of other people.

Furthermore, the old concept of perfection also hinders us from achieving our true potential. "If we can never be perfect, then we might as well give up" is the implied subconscious message.

It is time for a new and better perspective on perfection that serves to build up and fortify a healthy self-concept. Each one of us is perfectly ourselves; therefore we are perfect in the only way that makes sense for human beings. It is a new paradigm.

### What "Perfect" Really Means

Now let me tell you a little about perfect people. Perfect people are doing the best they can with the knowledge and experience they have at the moment. Furthermore, perfect people are constantly striving to be better tomorrow than they were yesterday; they strive to grow as human beings. Perfect people realize that they are no better than anyone else; but they also realize that they are no worse than anyone else. Perfect people have Greatness to Deliver, they strive to build others up and make a difference to the world. They strive to leave the woodpile higher than they found it.

### Does Thinking of Yourself as "Perfect" Mean You Are Immodest?

Even after explaining a far better concept for perfection, many people will still resist; they are still not able to passionately say, "Yes! I'm perfect!" They feel that it is simply immodest to say that one is perfect. They feel that only arrogant and egotistical people say those things.

But have you considered that an egotist and someone with little or no self-esteem are actually both focused on the same thing? Egotists are people who think more of themselves than they should; they think they are better than others. They are self-focused.

But what is the person with no self-esteem focused on? "Other people," you say? No. They are focused on what other people think of *them*! They are self-focused, just like the egotist, although for different reasons. Modesty is about having a *proper and balanced* view of you. If you think poorly of yourself, *you are not modest*. So, think-

ing of yourself as "imperfect" is actually immodest.

### How Can You Make Mistakes And Still Be "Perfect"?

But what about the fact that we all make mistakes? How can one be "perfect" and still make mistakes? Easy. Mistakes do not diminish perfection; they enhance it to the extent that we learn from those mistakes. It has well been said, "there are no mistakes; only learning opportunities." Mistakes are how we humans learn! If we don't make mistakes, we do nothing and we *don't* learn. Making mistakes is as much a part of human nature as eating and sleeping. *It cannot and must not be resisted*. It is the only way we grow.

Making mistakes can be costly, to be sure, and costly in many ways. But this is what we call "experience," and experience cannot be acquired by book learning alone. Mistakes and experience are directly related: the more costly the mistake, the higher the value of our experience. And this only adds to our perfection!

Of course, it is not wise to be so careless that we make mistakes that we would not have otherwise made if we had just given the matter some thought in advance. Being careless only forces us to unnecessarily learn the same lesson twice.

### "Perfection" and the Guilt Factor

How many people carry around a huge bag of guilt over their shoulder? Just about everyone. How about you? How long have you been carrying around your "guilt bag"? Most of your life?

You know how it works; you screw up and make a mistake. Then you incriminate, convict, and sentence yourself to terrible mental and emotional anguish for your "crime." Then you deliberately and painstakingly add this "crime" to your guilt bag. And you continue to carry around your guilt bag with almost a distorted sense of arrogance (self-focus) that only validates your low self-worth. Furthermore, you believe that your guilt bag is invisible to others, but it is not. On some subconscious level, everyone can see your guilt bag, and you can see everyone else's. It manifests in such areas as weight problems (overweight or underweight), extreme submissiveness or extreme

*"Mistakes do not diminish perfection; they enhance it"*

aggression, giving up on life, alcoholism and drug abuse, unrealized potential, and relationship problems. The guilt bag slowly eats away at your soul like a cancer from the inside out.

What do you do with your guilt bag? Simply let go of the death grip you have on it! I know, it's easier said than done. So how do you begin to let go of it? Get angry that you have been encumbered by guilt and low self-esteem for so long! When your anger goes up, your fear goes down. Begin to view yourself in a healthy and proper way. Adopt the maxim that I learned and wrote about several years ago: "What I do is not necessarily who I am." Give yourself permission to learn the lesson from your "mistake," make amends if necessary, and then move forward guilt-free. Make the decision to cease being immodest and self-focused.

### "God is the Only One Who is Perfect"

For those who are religiously inclined, this new concept of perfection may run against your belief system. Maybe you are thinking, "no one is perfect except our heavenly Father." Is this an accurate assessment?

Doesn't the Bible state "man was made in God's image"? Did not Jesus say in the Sermon on the Mount, "... you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matthew 5:48 *New American Standard Bible*) How can you be "perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" if perfection is unattainable? Why would a loving God set you up to fail?

"But wait," you say, "We understand this to mean that we will not be perfect until we die and go to heaven to be with God." But how can this be? Jesus said, "you must be...." not "you will be...." It

is obvious that a loving God would not require something of you that you could not attain. Therefore, "perfection" must be understood in a new way; one that is attainable.

### Perfection and Self-Esteem

If you still have a hard time accepting your perfection, may I suggest that you seriously work on your own self-esteem to the point that you can have a healthy and realistic view of you.

Try this little daily ritual to boost your self-esteem: Each night, ask yourself, "What did I do today that I'm proud of myself for?" It is okay to be proud of yourself! Do you want to help your children? Why not ask them the same question each night? For little children, a "perfect" time to do this

is when you read them a bedtime story. Make it part of their daily ritual too. Then maybe they will grasp the tools to build a healthy self-concept as they grow up.

Being perfect is all about having a healthy self-concept. When you get to the point that you don't have an unhealthy concern for what others think, you will then be able to see yourself in the proper way. You will not be so self-focused. You will have a proper balance of focus between yourself and others. A healthy self-esteem is the beginning of self-empowerment.

So, are you perfect? I hope you will raise your head up high and say with passion, "Yes! I **am** perfect!" You are perfectly you, and that is simply the way it is!

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