

**EPREUVES D'ADMISSION
QUATRIEME ANNEE CIT**

SESSION DE MARS 2016

LANGUE DE TRAVAIL : ANGLAIS

TRADUCTION ANGLAIS – FRANCAIS

EPREUVE DE LA MATINEE : 9h – 12h

Traduisez vers votre langue maternelle la section du texte entre crochets ainsi que le titre.

How to be a better perfectionist

A little perfectionism can be a good thing. It generates an image of a future we care about and the energy to strive for it. But too much and we can quickly become overwhelmed, lose confidence, frustrate others and underperform. So it's crucial to be able to tolerate, and even embrace, imperfection at work, at home and in relationships.

[It's not entirely a personal failing. After all, our imaginations evolved to visualise how things could be better, without which there would be no human progress. More insidiously, many of the social messages we are exposed to tell us that we can and should make any and all areas of our lives perfect. When this, inevitably, doesn't happen, we blame ourselves or others rather than accept the impossibility of the endeavour. It's not only society that shapes our tendency towards perfectionism. It is also influenced by our family background.

As children, we may have felt pressure to be "perfect" in order to be cared for. As adults, this makes it difficult for us to weather failure and criticism, which is key to growth. The perfectionist is rarely able to bask in a deep sense of fulfilment. On the contrary, they are much more likely to feel impatient, harsh and afraid.

Whatever the root cause, and wherever it crops up, perfectionism comes at a cost: we get stuck and fail to complete anything, we can't delegate, we fall apart when things don't go exactly as we imagined, we can't negotiate or compromise, we can't own success wholeheartedly, and we can't accept "good enough". We reject anything and anyone that doesn't live up to our high ideals and believe we need to be perfect to be accepted.

The standard line is that perfectionism is impossible and should be given up on. In some cases, that would be a wise strategy. In love, for example, we can strive to learn from our partner's attempts to help us change. In other areas, such as working in a team, we can try to understand why some tasks are harder and more frustrating for others, and how much work is actually required to do them well. We can try to better accept when things are outside our control. We can also shift some of our perfectionist energy into rewarding and even therapeutic pursuits such as tai chi. We might then become better managers, partners and friends.

Good perfectionism can lead to higher levels of achievement, but only if we are able to tolerate the stages of imperfection that are part of the process of creating something good, even great. The person who is intolerant of imperfection often chooses goals that are easy to accomplish. They may be able to have a perfectly clean kitchen but won't be able to write a book, because that requires too much mess and incompetence for too long.

In perhaps the greatest challenges for a recovering perfectionist, it can be helpful to surrender perfectionism, taking inspiration from the Japanese philosophy of *wabi-sabi*, which finds beauty in imperfection and impermanence.] But the biggest issue with our failures of perfectionism is that we keep them private. That's understandable, but collectively we pay a cost. We misjudge our own tribulations. The same might be said of our perfectionism. Of course, one can never strike out towards a flawless attitude on perfectionism either – but it doesn't hurt to try.

Fiona Buckland, The Guardian, Monday 18 January 2016