

You Are a Beautiful Work in Progress

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Lisa here. Does it feel like you need to get things right the first time? Or that you should've reached your goal by now? Does the fear of not being perfect stop you from trying things? These are very common worries that Sarah and I help our patients with every day.

It can often feel like everyone around you has it all together. You may see other people making strides in their careers while you feel like you've stalled. Or maybe you see other parents enjoying great relationships with their kids, while you and your kids can't seem to stop arguing. You see other families with happy, well-adjusted kids while yours are struggling in school or with peers.



Part of this is because often people only share the parts of their lives that are going well. Most people do not broadcast it to the neighbors when they get passed over for a promotion or post online about their 9 millionth argument with their kids about cleaning their room. Unless they're teaching someone how to do something, most people don't share the journey of how they achieved something great or made something interesting. They just show the final product.

The other issue that hangs people up is focusing on the wrong thing. Yes, the final goal is what you are working toward, but if you only focus on that you are more likely to get in your head and start second guessing yourself. If you struggle with perfectionism, focusing only on the goal is more likely to trigger worries about getting things "right" or being "perfect." As you know, these kinds of worries can be paralyzing.



Here's what's important to remember - the things that really matter usually take hard work and do not happen overnight. Perfection is unattainable and is an unhelpful ideal that does not allow for the natural process of growth. So, perfectionism isn't a helpful goal. Progress requires messy action. Whenever we are working toward a goal, whether it's a goal in your career, in school, or as a parent, we try things, we make mistakes, we hopefully learn from our mistakes and then we try again. The more we do this, the more we grow and change. You aren't going to be a perfect parent, friend, partner, or coworker – those only exist on Pinterest! Instead, you're going to be human – imperfect and messy, but also open to learning and putting yourself out there even when you're uncertain.

Remember that each tiny step, no matter how insignificant it may seem, is moving you closer to where you want to go. This is not just an important lesson for you, it's also a vital lesson for your kids to learn. If you and your kids keep plugging away at what is important to you, things will get better. The trick is sticking with it!



Rather than shooting for perfection, why not aim for growth? Learn something from your mistakes & apply that knowledge moving forward. Before you know it, you'll reach the goals you've been working toward. And in the meantime, life will feel better when you learn to appreciate the process.