



LET GO AND OVERCOME YOUR TENDENCY TO BE PERFECT

Frustration and the feeling of not being good enough is very common for many working parents. The culprit is usually some form of perfectionism, your internal need to do everything to the highest possible standard. If you feel that this is what concerns you, here are two useful tips.

Don't use "should" in your language:

Listen to your internal voice. How often do you use the word "should" or "have to"? How motivating is it for you? Try to replace your internal "should" with "could" or "choose to" and notice the difference. We very often put pressure on ourselves, when there is no objective reason or expectation to do that.

- **Kasia:** For example, I kept saying to myself that I should pick up my children from the daycare at 3:00pm at the latest, because this is what a good mom does. One day my daughters verified this assumption by asking: "Mummy, can you pick us up later? We want to play longer with other children and stay until they serve the afternoon snack" This was when I realized my children needed something different from me (and they have every right to). So actually I was putting pressure on myself for no reason. I replaced the internal "should" into "could" and now I'm picking them up later.
- **Agata:** I myself was often putting an unnecessary pressure on myself at work by saying that I should complete certain task for example a report or a presentation on a given day, while in reality there was no real pressure nor expectation for doing that. I often had a situation when I was working hard to deliver something on a given day and the person who was receiving my work could only look at this a couple of days after. I learned to check about real priorities & deadlines and sometimes to even negotiate pushing the deadlines, so I don't work under such pressure.

Lower your bar from "perfect" to "good enough":

No one is perfect and neither are you, so relax. It's enough to be good enough. Try to do the best you can, but accept that there will always be more that you could do.

- Let me give you an example of one of my best managers - Amy. She is this kind of person who has always been first at school, having "A" grade in every subject. She transformed that into workplace being prepared for every single meeting, rehearsing for every presentation and doing all work tasks, no matter the priority, according to her highest internal standards. This approach however had been no longer sustainable once she got kids. She didn't have time for that level of perfectionism. With trial and error she allowed herself to let go some of her internal need to deliver perfectly in all areas. For some work assignments she allowed herself to lower the bar and make them good enough only. Surprisingly this approach worked very well - in most cases her team and clients were happy with the 70-80% of effort she would normally put. Of course not always. She once made a presentation to a client, putting less effort that she would normally do and got bad feedback about it. However, she sat down and improved it, putting in more energy and effort next round and finally it was a success. She learned that with this client she need to be more careful and cannot lower the bar. However there were many times where this light touch approach worked too!