

A guaranteed way to make yourself feel a failure

... Even when people stick to their rules or reach their standards, they discount their achievements, saying the task was 'too easy', and remake the rules so they are even harder to achieve. This suggestion has been supported by research in which college students performed a task with a goal and received feedback on success. Following the feedback, they were asked to choose (a) the same goal or (b) a more difficult goal for the next task. The greater the perfectionism, the more likely the participants were to choose a more difficult goal. This type of strategy is a guaranteed way to make yourself feel a failure.

Overcoming Perfectionism: A self-help guide using scientifically supported cognitive behavioural techniques (2nd Edition 2018) by Roz Shafran, Sarah Egan, Tracey Wade

An engaging philosophy

This was an article I found in a newspaper circa 2015

A study at the University of California has shed useful light on the new American disease - perfectionism.

It's old hat that raising your expectations too high is a recipe for not meeting them. Expecting perfection, then, is bound to lead to misery. A researcher at the university, who has been carrying out - would you believe it? - group therapy in perfectionist impulses, divides sufferers into three groups:

- First, there's the self-willed striver who gets depressed when he doesn't match up to his own standards.
- Then there's the outwardly focused obsessive who expects perfection from other people and ends up hating and being hated by them when they don't live up to his ideal.
- And then there are those who fail to live up to standards they think other people expect of them. This last lot are often suicidal and prey to eating disorders.

The university's cure - which worked on the perfectionism sufferers - is to expect and do less. So, never get in early for work or leave late; don't bother tidying your desk; take every single Break going. Stop chasing an ideal that only you can see.

It's an engaging philosophy. Don't just do something; sit there.