# The Anti-Perfectionist's Playbook

## CELEBRATE THE JOY OF GOOD ENOUGH



by Nadine Hinds

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“It's okay, but it could be better” – Does this sound like a familiar mantra you can’t shake off?

You’re not alone, believe me! I’m here to support you and cheer you on while you learn to show up for yourself, to **feel the joy in “good enough”** and celebrate your perfectly imperfect self 💖

Perfectionism isn’t just about being detail-oriented or striving for excellence; **it’s often a shield we use to protect ourselves** from the fear of criticism or failure. It whispers that if everything is perfect, we are safe.

Yet, paradoxically, it keeps us from truly feeling secure, no matter how flawless things seem on the outside.

I crafted this wee guide not just to offer tips and tricks but to be **a companion on your journey towards embracing imperfection**.

The chains of perfectionism can drag you down and keep you from going after what you truly desire. But **you can set yourself free** and learn that each “oops” is a laugh and each “good enough” is a victory 🏆

## WHY YOUR BODY BELONGS IN THIS PLAYBOOK

**Perfectionism** doesn’t just live in your thoughts, it **lives in your body too**.

You can *think* “I’m safe” a hundred times, but if your shoulders are up by your ears, your jaw is clenched, and your breath is trapped in your chest, your nervous system is basically replying: “Cute idea. Not buying it.”

While we often can’t *think* ourselves out of a habit, a stress spiral, or a compulsive “just one more tweak…”, **we *can* process and release what’s happening through the body**.

We can **physically move what’s stuck**, signal safety, and create a new felt experience of “good enough”.

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## GENTLE DISCLAIMER – PLEASE READ IT

Go gently. If anything feels triggering, overwhelming, or like it pulls you into panic or shutdown, **stop**.

Choose the tiniest version of the practice (or skip it entirely) and do something grounding instead: feel your feet, look around the room, sip water, step outside for air.

You're not here to force a breakthrough. **You're here to build trust with yourself**, one safe step at a time.

Also, **please don't worry if you don't feel very much at first**.

Many of us have spent years living from the neck up, so the body's signals can seem quiet, fuzzy, or even absent. That doesn't mean you're doing it wrong, it just means **you're re-connecting**.

For now, **listen for the whispers**: a tiny softening in your shoulders, a slightly longer exhale, a small "yes" or "no" in your belly.

The more you practise noticing, **the more your body learns it's safe to speak up**, and what feels faint today can become wonderfully clear over time.

Let's explore how **letting go of perfection can bring more joy, creativity, and success** into your life than striving for an unattainable ideal ever could.

Let's laugh at the little mistakes, learn from them, and continue to grow together.

After all, **life isn't perfect, but it's the imperfections that make it interesting.**

Ready to break free? Let's dive in!

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# 1) CELEBRATE THE "OOPS!" MOMENTS

## WHAT YOU NEED

A jar, colourful sticky notes, a pen

## WHAT TO DO

Every time something doesn't go as planned and you're tempted to criticise yourself, write it down on a sticky note with a twist—note what you learned or a funny aspect of the mishap. Fold it up and pop it in the jar.

For example, you decide to try a new recipe for dinner, but you accidentally add too much salt. Instead of beating yourself up over the mistake, write a note saying, "Added too much salt, but discovered I like a hint of extra spice!" and drop it in your "Oops! Jar."

## "MOVE THE OOPS"

*Before* you write the sticky note, pause and notice:

- **What just happened in my body?** (tight chest, hot face, sinking belly, buzzing hands…)
- **What posture did I snap into?** (hunched, braced, frozen, holding your breath)

Now give your body a quick **"reset message"**:

- Exhale like you're fogging up a mirror (with a sigh or any sound you feel like).
- Drop your shoulders on purpose.
- Shake out your hands for 10 seconds (like you're flicking off water).
- Put one hand on your chest and one on your belly and say: **"This is an 'Oops', not an emergency."**

Then write your note. Let the jar become a place where your body learns: *mistakes don't equal danger*.

## BENEFIT

It shifts your focus from what went wrong to the value of imperfection as a learning tool. Plus, it adds a dash of humour to your day and helps you **remember that each "Oops" is a step towards learning what works and what doesn't.**

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# 2) 5 MINUTES 'DOODLE YOUR WORRIES AWAY'

## WHAT YOU NEED

Paper, pens, your imagination

## WHAT TO DO

Are you overthinking again? Maybe you're preparing slides for a presentation at work and start obsessing over making each slide perfect or you're thinking about taking on a new project but *only* if it's perfect from the start.

Take a **five-minute doodle break**, scribbling, writing, drawing whatever comes to mind without aiming for artistic merit.

Set a timer for five minutes and doodle whatever comes to mind when you think about your current project or task, how it makes you feel, what it looks like (colours, textures, patterns, ...), what your thoughts about it are, your worries, your goals. Don't aim for a masterpiece, just let your hand move freely.

## "MAKE SPACE FIRST"

*Before* doodling, do a tiny body check-in:

- Feel your feet on the floor (press down gently).
- Let your jaw unclench (lips soft, tongue resting).
- Let your eyes widen and notice 3 colours in the room.

While you doodle, pay attention to your bodily response and ask yourself:

- What happens in my shoulders, my jaw, my belly or my breath as the pen moves?
- How does it make me feel doodling everything out of my system?

If you notice you're doodling with a clenched grip, intentionally loosen your "doodling hand" and slow down. Soften your breath and gently release tension in your body. You're teaching your nervous system: **we can create without bracing.**

## BENEFIT

This breaks the cycle of overthinking and stress. Doodling helps your brain relax and reset, providing a fresh perspective and maybe even new insights when you return to your task.

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# 3) SET "GOOD ENOUGH" GOALS

## WHAT YOU NEED

Goal-setting worksheet (scroll all the way down to find a template).

## WHAT TO DO

For your next project or task, define three levels of success: Basic (just right), Better (a bit challenging), Best (would be great but *not* essential). Aim for Better, but accept that Basic is completely fine.

For example, you plan to clean your house and start feeling overwhelmed with the idea of making it spotless. Take out your worksheet and set three levels of goals:

- Basic: tidy the living areas
- Better: vacuum and dust them too
- Best: deep clean everything

Aim for Better, but be content if you manage Basic. Your Basic is probably better than most people's Best ;-)

## "LET YOUR BODY VOTE"

When you choose Basic/Better/Best, include this quick somatic "truth check":

1. Read your Basic goal out loud. *Pause*.
2. Notice: does your body feel more open (even 1%) or more tight?
3. Read your Better goal out loud. *Pause*.
4. Notice: do you feel energised… or pressured?
5. Read your Best goal out loud. *Pause*.
6. Notice: does your breath shorten, jaw tighten, belly drop?

Now **choose the goal level that feels realistic and calm** in your body, not the one that feels most impressive.

- If your shoulders drop a little and you think, "Okay, I can do this" → that's your "yes".
- If you feel tense, rushed, or your mind shouts "I have to!" → that's perfectionism trying to take over.

**Optional**: you can add: **"How do I want to feel doing this?"** Calm, capable, playful, focused? Pick one tiny behaviour that matches that feeling: a slower pace, a tea break, softer shoulders or music on and get it done.

## BENEFIT

This approach reduces the pressure to achieve perfection in every task. It challenges your all-or-nothing thinking by establishing realistic and adjustable standards for success, reducing stress and increasing satisfaction.

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# 4) SAY NO TO FREDDY

## WHAT YOU NEED

Journal or piece of paper, pen

## WHAT TO DO

In case you read my book (in German) "Tagebuch einer ~~Verrückten~~ Selbständigen: Kreiere das magische Leben, das du liebst " (*Diary of a ~~madwoman~~ business owner. Create the magical life you love*) you are familiar with Freddy. That's what I call my inner critic. Giving him a name helps me to set boundaries and call him off, if necessary.

Whenever Freddy gets very loud in your head, write down those critical thoughts in one colour. Then, respond to these thoughts in another colour, **using kind, encouraging words** you would offer a friend or your kids.

For example, you receive feedback from your boss at work that includes some constructive criticism, and you start to feel like a total failure. Write down your initial self-critical thoughts ("I suck at my job"), then respond to them in your journal with supportive counter statements ("What can I learn from this feedback? I'm always improving and my boss also mentioned what I did well. I acknowledge myself for that.").

## "SPOT WHERE FREDDY SITS"

When Freddy gets loud, don't only write the thoughts. **Track the body pattern that comes with him**. Ask:

- Where do I feel Freddy in my body? (throat, chest, belly, behind the eyes...)
- What's the Freddy posture? (chin tucked, collapsed chest, tense forehead, rigid spine)
- What's the Freddy breathing style? (shallow, held, rapid)

Now respond with a "kindness posture" before you write the supportive counter statement (below are only suggestions, do what feels good for you):

- Sit back slightly and create space in your chest.
- Lengthen your exhale.
- Place a hand on your heart or give yourself a gentle hug.

Then write your kind response from that posture. Your body learns: I can be with myself, even when I'm criticised.

## BENEFIT

This practice helps you recognise negative self-talk, it reduces the impact of these self-talks on your self-esteem, and cultivates fostering a kinder inner dialogue.

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# 5) "PERFECTLY PRESENT" – MINDFULNESS MEDITATION FOR PERFECTIONISM

## WHAT YOU NEED

A quiet space, a few minutes

## WHAT TO DO

Spend five minutes each day sitting quietly, focusing on your breath. When perfectionist thoughts intrude, acknowledge them, label them as "perfectionism," and gently return your focus to your breath.

For example, you find yourself worrying excessively about the upcoming business meeting and whether everything will go as planned. Practice a five-minute mindfulness meditation, focusing solely on your breathing. Each time you notice your mind wandering to "what ifs", acknowledge the thought as "perfectionism" and gently return to your breath.

## "NAME IT, FEEL IT, SOFTEN IT"

When you label a thought as "perfectionism," add one more step: locate it.

Try this:

1. Breathe in normally, breathe out a little longer.
2. Ask: "Where does perfectionism land in my body right now?"
3. Name the sensation (tight, fluttery, heavy, numb, hot, prickly).
4. Instead of forcing it away, say: "You can be here, and I'm still safe."
5. Soften this area where you feel your perfectionism just a little bit by gently breathing into it.

If your mind keeps sprinting, open your eyes and do orienting: slowly look around and name 5 things you can see. This often helps the body believe: I'm here, now, and I'm okay.

## BENEFIT

This helps train your brain and body to recognise when you get caught up in anxious thoughts about needing to control every outcome and provides a tool to gently guide your focus back to the present moment. It reduces stress and increases your ability to relax a tiny bit, even when something intense and uncomfortable is ahead.

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# EXTRA TIPP

**I love to add a little bit of EXTRA for you!**

In case you are not familiar with meditation or it just doesn't seem to stop your monkey-mind from chatting, try this:

Instead of obsessing about the catastrophic "what ifs", ask yourself **"What if everything works out?"**

If your mind needs to keep busy, let it be busy with successful, motivating scenarios.

Now let's give your body a felt sense of that reality.

## BORROW CALM CONFIDENCE

1. Choose an "Everything Turns Out Well" icon: Someone famous (maybe a specific superhero ;-) ), a loved one, a fictional character, or even an animal. Choose **whoever naturally carries that steady, optimistic energy**.
2. Study their essence (quick + playful):
   - How do they stand? (open chest, relaxed shoulders, grounded feet?)
   - What's their face doing? (soft eyes, half-smile, relaxed brow?)
   - What's their pace? (rushed vs. unhurried?)
   - What do they make you feel? (warmth, clarity, steadiness?)
3. Try them on like a cape. Step into that posture. Let your facial expression match theirs. **Walk around the room for 20–30 seconds as "them".**
4. Let the attitude flow through you and feel it in every cell of your body.
5. **Imagine you're facing your current "what if" situation with their attitude.** Ask: "What would I do next if I trusted this will work out?" This can be a small thing or a tiny step. Remember, **it's not about perfectionism**, it's about taking one small "good enough" step towards more freedom and joy.
6. Return to you and take a few deep breaths in and out.

This turns "What if everything works out?" **from a nice idea into a felt experience** your body can start recognising as real.

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# NEXT STEPS

Remember, **the goal isn't to get rid of perfectionism but to learn how to manage it creatively and healthily**.

Break free from the chains of perfectionism and watch as life opens up with more joy, laughter, and growth.

You're not alone in this journey, and this guide is here to remind you of that—every step of the way.

## IN CASE YOU ARE LOOKING FOR MORE:

- sign up to my newsletter for exclusive content, insider tips, and pep talk to keep you motivated and inspired
- follow me on Pinterest
- and have a look at my offers to make you feel confident and unstoppable

Enjoy your new tools and let your perfectly imperfect journey begin.

*Loads of love,*
*Nadine xxx*

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SHOW UP FOR YOURSELF

# Goal-setting worksheet

Set "good enough" goals by defining your three levels of success. Aim for Better, but accept that Basic is completely fine.

| BASIC<br>(just right)<br><br>Notice: does your body feel more open (even 1%) or more tight? | BETTER<br>(a bit challenging)<br><br>Notice: do you feel energised… or pressured? | BEST<br>(would be great but *not* essential)<br><br>Notice: does your breath shorten, jaw tighten, belly drop? |
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