

How Perfectionism Is Sabotaging Your Business



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Perfectionism is a problem. That's what author and researcher Jane Bluestein learned after studying adolescent girls' pursuit of perfection, then realizing the habit can affect anyone. Her new book is called *The Perfection Deception: Why Trying to Be Perfect is Sabotaging Your Relationships, Making You Sick, and Holding Your Happiness Hostage* (HCI Books, 2015) -- but there's an important concept missing from that title: Perfectionism can also sabotage your business. She explains why.

What are some common problems caused by perfectionism?

Perfectionist managers often create an environment where nobody can get it right and nobody can win, and they justify it as "there's always room for improvement." When we bring perfectionism to a relationship, we also bring expectations and standards -- whether for our self or others -- that

can create a great deal of stress and alienation. When our sense of worth depends on being right, it often comes at the expense of someone else's dignity and worth because we insist on making them wrong.

So how can a 'trep embrace their imperfections while still projecting confidence?

Perfectionists end up being more focused on how they look than how they're doing. Obviously, if you're pitching yourself, you need to look the part. But there's a point where simple honesty and authenticity count for more than we give them credit for. You're looking for that place in between bravado and self-deprecation.

How should entrepreneurs handle their missteps?

Perfectionists often have the idea that mistakes equal failures. Are you willing to learn from your mistakes, rather than label yourself as a failure, loser or victim? Call it what it is without rationalizing or falling into victimization.

A potential funder asks you about your biggest weakness. What do you say?

Portray your weaknesses as some things that you are trying to learn. Say, "I can't do certain things, but I am willing to learn, willing to delegate, and willing to make mistakes along the way." That shows you understand that you can't be perfect but you can do better.