

Cultural Traditions that can Contribute to Perfectionism (and other bad stuff)*

Harmful (Familiar)	Healthier Alternative
<p>Impression management: pressure to look good; people pleasing; shape-shifting to get others' approval; cover up mistakes (shame)</p> <p>Oversimplification: black-and-white thinking; one right way to do things; judgment; simplistic; prone to extremes; need for certainty</p> <p>Scarcity thinking: competitiveness; win-lose; resistance to change; fear of losing or loss, "not enough;" only one winner; hoarding resources</p> <p>Negativity: focus on flaws, lack, what's not done, what's not done right; pessimism; despair; "never good enough," inner critic: loud and clear; fear</p> <p>Product orientation: focus on outcome; learning to know, finish, check something off list; resistance to refining, going back to improve something once it's done; orientation: future, past</p> <p>Conformity: limited, rigid set of rules and tolerances; fear of rejection; acceptance of restrictions; willing to self-abandon if necessary</p>	<p>Authenticity: safety to be self; tolerance for disapproval from others; accountability; accepts mistakes as part of the process (separate from value of self)</p> <p>Complexity and paradox: ability to see shades of gray, multiple ways to do or see things; can tolerate differences, dimensionality, ambiguity</p> <p>Abundance thinking: cooperative; synergistic; win-win; "plenty for everybody;" creative use of resources; multiple winners (and ways to "win")</p> <p>Positivity: focus on accomplishments, what's done, what's done right; optimism; "good enough for now;" inner critic: present but not in charge (can override, acknowledge, ignore); gratitude</p> <p>Process orientation: focus on experience; learning to learn, grow; persistence, willingness to go back and correct errors, refine product; orientation: present time</p> <p>Creativity: flexibility; open to challenge status quo; resistance to restrictions; loss of self is more threatening than rejection</p>

The Perfection Deception by Dr. Jane Bluestein. (Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications, Inc., 2015), 55. Adapted from a chart in *Creating Emotionally Safe Schools* by Jane Bluestein, Ph.D. (Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications, Inc., 2001). These are the primary dysfunctional or harmful traditions that increase the likelihood of perfectionism. Other traditions mentioned in the original source, including reactivity (vs. proactivity) and win-lose power dynamics (vs. win-win interactions), seem to have less influence in this instance.