

Done is Better Than Perfect: Embracing Imperfection for Success

Morgan suddenly remembered they hadn't let their boss know they'd need to leave work early on Tuesday for a doctor's appointment. They ran inside to send a 'quick email' to make sure it was okay.

When they hadn't returned half an hour later, their partner, Sarah, went inside to see what was going on.

Morgan was sat in front of a laptop, typing, deleting, typing, deleting.

Sarah asked what was wrong, and Morgan sighed - "It either sounds too demanding - like I'm telling my boss I'll be leaving early without asking if it's OK - or it sounds too weak - like I need to account for every minute of my day. I just can't get it right."

Sound familiar?

Welcome to today's lesson, "Done is Better than Perfect." In the next few minutes, we'll explore a powerful concept that can greatly improve the way you work, making you more efficient, more effective, and happier with your progress.

Let's talk about perfectionism. We've all been there, right? Striving for excellence, setting high standards – what's wrong with that?!

Well, the reality is that perfectionism can often become a major barrier to success, and it can have a seriously negative impact on a person's mental health.

According to renowned writer, professor, and researcher Brené Brown, "perfectionism is a [way of thinking and feeling that says this: 'If I look perfect, do it perfect, work perfect and live perfect, I can avoid or minimize shame, blame and judgment.'](#)"

Considering how much time people are spending on social media these days, and how popular the accounts of young, rich, beautiful influencers have become, it's so easy to get caught up in the perfectionist mindset of comparing your hair, body, career, home, relationship... to the perfect images we see online.

When our own lives don't stack up to the carefully curated versions we're viewing – that's when the stress and anxiety starts taking over.

Perfectionism is also a serious problem in the workplace, because when we focus on ensuring everything is perfect before moving on to the next task or project, it's really tough actually to get things done.

Let's say you're working on an important project. Maybe you're writing an article, painting a portrait, or building a presentation. You want everything to be just right, absolutely perfect. You spend weeks, maybe even months, going over every detail again and again and again.

Every time you go back to it, words need tweaking, colours need blending, or slides need editing. It just never seems complete.

As you obsess over the little details, the clock keeps ticking, and your project still isn't perfect. It definitely isn't done, and you're left feeling stressed and overwhelmed.

That is called analysis paralysis, and it's something that most of us have experienced at some point in our careers.

Analysis paralysis is when you're so focused on getting everything absolutely right that you never actually finish anything.

Meanwhile, your colleague, who's not fixated on perfection, finishes their presentation and confidently delivers it.

Their presentation wasn't perfect. Data was missing, and some of the slides weren't formatted the way you would have done it. But now, your colleague's presentation is done.

They can move along to collecting feedback, correcting errors, or getting started on whatever's next.

You can guarantee they're feeling relieved at the chance to move on.

And you're still working on that presentation, making sure it's absolutely perfect.

Sometimes, we must let go of that idea of perfection and focus on just getting things done.

For many of us, it's hard to call something done when it's not perfect. But let's look into the alternative and talk about someone we've all heard of – the mastermind behind Amazon.

Jeff Bezos is a pretty successful guy in many people's eyes – he is one of the wealthiest people on earth. Part of what's made him so successful is that he knows how important it is to keep moving forward and keep making progress, even if you don't have everything as complete as you wish you did.

One of his golden rules of business is: "Most decisions should probably be made with around 70 percent of the information you wish you had. If you wait for 90 percent, in most cases, you're probably being slow."

Basically, he's emphasizing that waiting for perfection or complete information often leads to unnecessary delays. He's acknowledging that perfection can be a hindrance to forward momentum.

Instead, aiming for 70 per cent still gives you the information or progress you need to keep moving, allowing you to complete a task – or get it done – and come back to innovate and improve later.

This is all thanks to a game-changing mindset – "Done is Better than Perfect." It means that taking action, even if it's not flawless, is often more valuable than waiting for everything to be perfect. Taking action gets stuff done.

So now that we understand the concept, and we see how much perfectionism can get in the way of success, let's look at some ways to move past this way of thinking and shift our mindset to one that helps us take action, one that helps us get stuff done.

Changing the way you think is hard, but here are some easy steps that will help.

First, set clear deadlines... and stick to them. Make yourself accomplish your task or project in time to meet those deadlines. This will force you to prioritise and get things done. Remember, it doesn't have to be perfect; it just needs to be done.

Think about the news business. What's more important? For every story to be the perfect length, with the perfect quotes, and the perfect witnesses? Or for the story to be ready in time for the evening report or the morning headline email?

When breaking news occurs, there is inherent pressure to be the first to report on an unfolding event or story, as it affects the journalist's reputation as an authoritative source for emerging stories. Ultimately, there has to be a compromise between perfectionism and speed because deadlines have to be met.

Next, seek out feedback.... And when you receive it, embrace it. Instead of fearing criticism, welcome it as an opportunity for growth. Feedback is one of the most valuable outcomes of following the 'Done is better than perfect' mindset. When something isn't quite perfect, it leaves room for feedback, which helps you refine your work and end up with a better result in the long-run.

Lastly, celebrate your progress, no matter how small it seems. Every step forward is a victory. Acknowledging your achievements along the way can boost your motivation and keep you on track so that next time, you'll be confident enough to keep moving forward rather than waiting for perfection.

So, if there's one thing you take away from today's lesson, it's this.

Perfectionism can be a tricky roadblock on your journey to success, but by adopting the "Done is Better than Perfect" mindset, you can overcome it. Embrace imperfection, take action, and learn from your journey.

When we look at the most successful people in the world, the people who have founded the biggest companies and invented the most groundbreaking products - we see that they operate with this mindset.

Now it's your turn.