

Perfectionism vs Optimalism
(from The Pursuit of Perfect- Tal Ben Shahar)

Are you a perfectionist or an optimalist?

- Rejecting failure vs. accepting failure
- Not distinct qualities that are entirely independent of each other- on a continuum
- We may be optimalists in some areas of our lives and perfectionists in others
- In general the more a perfectionist cares about something, the more s/he is likely to approach it with the perfectionistic mindset

Perfectionist	Optimalist
Journey as a straight line	Journey as an irregular spiral
Fear of failure	Failure as feedback
Focus on destination	Focus on journey and destination
All-or-nothing thinking	Nuanced, complex thinking- can find value and satisfaction (in other words happiness, in less than perfect performance
Defensive- wants to look good and therefore tries to appear flawless by deflecting criticism	Open to suggestions
Faultfinder- no matter how successful, short comings and imperfections eclipse all accomplishments	Benefit finder
Harsh- extremely hard on himself/ herself as well as on others; belief that it is possible to go through life smoothly, without blunders	Forgivable- take responsibility for his or her mistakes; learns from failures
Rigid, static- only one way to get where he or she wants to go, that route is a straight line; language to communicate his or her intentions is categorical, even moralizing: ought, have to, must, should; Feelings are irrelevant to decision-making process; obsessive need for control; change is the enemy, improvisation too risky; playfulness unacceptable	Adaptable, dynamic- also sets ambitious goals for himself or herself but is not chained to these commitments; does not chart direction according to rigid map