



PYT Weekly Training & Support

Lesson #39 The End of Perfectionism

by Jim Katsoulis

Alright, welcome to this week's lesson. What I want to share with you this week is something that I think a lot of people do but don't realize; and it's the idea of shooting for perfection and expecting perfection.

Now, I've talked about this in different ways before but I want to talk about it very, very clearly and, more importantly, I want to get us to a new solution and a new way of thinking about what we're looking to do because what I've noticed over and over again is that this perfection idea that so many people hold in their minds as what they're aiming to do is really one of the biggest reasons that they ultimately fail, that they ultimately sabotage themselves.

Now, I've found this within myself as well, and it regularly comes back to this idea of perfection; and if that's what I'm trying to do all the time, and I don't reach it, it creates all sorts of turmoil in me.

So, I want to make it very clear that you need to recognize this within yourself and change it. Now, that might be hard to do. Some people don't want to do that because they get addicted to the feeling of thinking about themselves and fantasizing about themselves in this perfect way. And while the fantasy might be enjoyable, the reality is that it creates a lot of tension, a lot of upset because it's impossible to live up to.

Now, there are different types of perfection. There's the perfection idea of what you want to look like, the perfection idea of how you want to eat, how you want to exercise, these ideals that you're shooting for. Now, there's nothing wrong with ideals, obviously. You want to move in a certain direction.

However, you need to be realistic as well. Now, use that word "realistic" with caution. What's "realistic?" Well, it's different for each person and it's up to us to define what that is. But you need to recognize that along this path of creating change in your behaviors of changing your body and changing the way you feel, there are going to be setbacks. You're not going to be on track a hundred percent. There's no such thing. No one's on track a hundred percent of the time. It doesn't happen.

So, what are we shooting for? Again, I've had so many sessions where I'll say this and I could see people feeling awkward. They don't want to give up that idea of being perfect because what happens if you're not perfect? And so, a lot of people have this all-or-nothing mentality. If they're not perfect, then they're going to be totally off the wagon. They're going to just eat everything and let go of everything.

So, what I want to share with you is that you can aim towards perfection and you can hold this ideal, but you also need to add into that this feeling that you know that it's impossible to reach perfection and to be comfortable with that because what is the alternative? What if you're not perfect?

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I want you to think about this because what if you're not absolutely and 100 percent perfect? What happens? What happens to your body? What happens to your energy? What if you're 90 percent perfect? That's not perfection, by the way, just 90 percent perfect.

How does your life look? These are the things you need to begin thinking about because you need to give yourself some flexibility and some space. You can't be black or white when it comes to your weight and when it comes to your energy because there are too many things involved with it.

You can't be eating a hundred percent perfect all the time. It's impossible. There's too much eating that you have to do. There are too many situations that you're in. So, if you're starting off with the idea that that's what you have to be in order to be successful, then you're setting yourself for a guaranteed failure and people know this.

They've gone through it over and over again but I am going to suggest that this is the reason why when you start a new diet plan and you say, "Okay, I'm going to do it," you start feeling nervous about doing it because you know how hard it is to be 100 percent on track.

So, we need to kill this idea of being perfect. Again, we can kill this idea and know that we can never be perfect and, at the same time, shoot for perfection, but there's a difference there. You understand that difference.

The other difference is that we're constantly moving in that direction and doing everything we can to move in that direction but we also understand that we are human and that we're not meant to be perfect.

So, let me share with you a personal experience so you can understand this because, again, I'm telling you that this is something I deal with regularly and I see it all the time in my clients. And if it's not dealt with, it can sabotage you.

So, this is a story I tell and this is one specific one but I find this in all different areas of my life. I spent a lot of years very intensely doing yoga, doing hypnosis, meditating, and relaxing. Those are real big focuses in my life.

And I remember driving one day in the car and I found that my shoulders were tense. Again, I'm always checking my body to see if I was tense or not and I found myself tense. Then, I got really mad. Why am I tense? I'm relaxing all the time, I'm doing everything I need to do, and I'm still finding myself tense.

Now, notice. That became an issue because the idea I had in my mind was that there was going to be a moment of time when I was always relaxed. No matter what happened, no matter what situation, I was always going to be relaxed.

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That was the image of perfection I had in my mind. And I find myself in the car, and I noticed I was tense, and I got mad that I wasn't that perfection idea.

So, at that moment, though, I asked myself a question. I said, well, I have two options right now. I can either let the shoulders go, relax, and continue to notice my body. When I find them tense, let it go and relax. Or I can quit noticing it and I can just let myself be the way that I'm going to be and the way that I've been in the past which, in that case, was tense; and so, basically, give up because I was never going to hit that idea of perfection.

Do you understand how detrimental this mindset and this outlook could be? And at that moment, it became very clear to me that I can't go back to the other way. There's too much pain involved with that. The tension that I'd had earlier in my life, it was too much. It was stressful. It was uncomfortable. So, I was not going to go back to that.

And so, it was at that moment that I accepted to give up perfection that I was never going to hit perfection, that for the rest of my, there were going to be times and regular occasions when I got tense and the best that I could do was to recognize it, let it go, and relax in that moment and to keep on doing that because the more that I did that, the more relaxed I would be and the closer I would be to that idea of perfection.

But, at that moment, I'd given up that idea of perfection and I've given that up to this moment. So, I no longer look for this perfect idea that I'm going to hit someday because I realized that it's a constant journey. It's this constant awareness. It's this constant effort. It is effort but, at the same time, it can be a relaxing and calm effort.

So, if I find myself tense now, I just let it go because that's the best that I can do. Does it make sense? I can't be perfect. I just can't; and to try and expect myself to be perfect only creates stress and in this situation, it creates the exact opposite of the feeling I want. It creates a level of tension, anger, and frustration.

So, letting that perfection go, actually, helped me relax more so that now if certain events or situations come up and I do get tense, I can just let it go and that's it! There's no conversation about being perfect. How long is this going to take? What do I have to do? I know what to do. I just let go. I relax.

So, I share this with you because this happens in all situations. You have a day where you eat poorly and instead of saying, "Oh, man, I'm never going to be perfect" ... that's right, you're never going to be perfect, that's fine. But just get back on track. Tomorrow, eat better.

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Diets are so strict and they have this finite period on them. You say, "Okay, once I lose 20 pounds, I'm going to stick a hundred percent to this plan. If I lose 20 pounds, then I can go back to the way I used to eat."

But you can't do that anymore. What's it's about is being present, being in the moment and doing what you can now. Sometimes, you do the right thing; sometimes, you do the wrong thing. When you do the wrong thing, you become aware of it; you accept it; you fix it; and you move on knowing that you're going to do the wrong thing again at some point. That's just the way it goes.

We're always going to do something wrong. But the difference is that the perfection gets us focused in this whole story in our mind and it [inaudible] **08:45** feeling bad.

And when you make a mistake, you can just accept it in the moment, recognize it for what it is, and move forward. It's a whole different experience. It's a whole different thing.

And that's what I'm suggesting you do. So, when you catch yourself trying to be perfect, expecting that you're going to be perfect, begin to question that. I want you to take a little bit of time with this and think about this. I want you to take a few minutes after this video and think about what perfection is to you.

Do you really believe you're going to be perfect? I want you to think about this because I know I'm saying it; I've gotten to this point. But I want you to internalize it and experience it because I swear that if you can let go of this desire to be perfect, this idea that you need to be perfect, if you can genuinely let it go, it's just such a relief. It's such a weight off of your spirit.

That's what I believe for myself and what I've seen with a lot of people I've worked with. So, I want you to come to peace with perfection. Think about it. Think about if what I'm saying makes sense to you. If it doesn't, make sense with your definition of perfection. Can you be perfect? Is it even possible to be perfect forever?

I want you to take a little bit of time and think about this because if you can make peace with this, you can let it go, and, again, shoot towards perfection. Let that always be the goal but also, at the same time, with the awareness that perfection is unattainable in a lot of areas in our lives.

Make peace with that kind of paradox because then you can constantly move towards it and when you screw up, it's not the end of the world. You just fix it and move forward.

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If you can absorb that and internalize that sort of mindset and idea, I think you're going to notice that you have a lot more energy and you're going to notice that there's a lot of this conversation in your head making yourself feel bad all the time.

So, I hope this helps you and I'll talk to you next week.

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