Pressure & perfectionism

Doing well is a good thing. It's great to be proud of your schoolwork and have it recognized and rewarded. However, when achievement becomes a constant source of stress in your life, then it has become a problem that needs attention.

Here are some signs that you may be dealing with perfectionism:

- Continually refining your work and that of others' until it is "perfect"
- Constantly feeling inadequate
- Feeling frustrated and upset when you can't meet the standards you set for yourself
- Occasionally missing deadlines because your work is still "just not right"

Many artists tend to be perfectionists. They devote hours to the process of creating and perfecting their craft. However, the best artists realize that perfection in a piece or music or a painting can never be achieved. Perfection is an unattainable goal, because in the real world, it doesn't exist.

What's necessary to overcome perfectionism is a shift in thinking. Instead of just criticizing yourself and your work, step back and look at the bigger picture. And try to bring in some positivity!

Here are some tips to move your thinking from critical to balanced:

- Replace "practice makes perfect" with "practice makes better"
- Strive for what is actually required to meet expectations and deadlines, rather than some imaginary perfection
- Appreciate what you did well, and seek feedback on what you could do better
- You are a work in progress—try to enjoy the process and learn as much as you can
- Remember that there is no "should," try using "could" instead