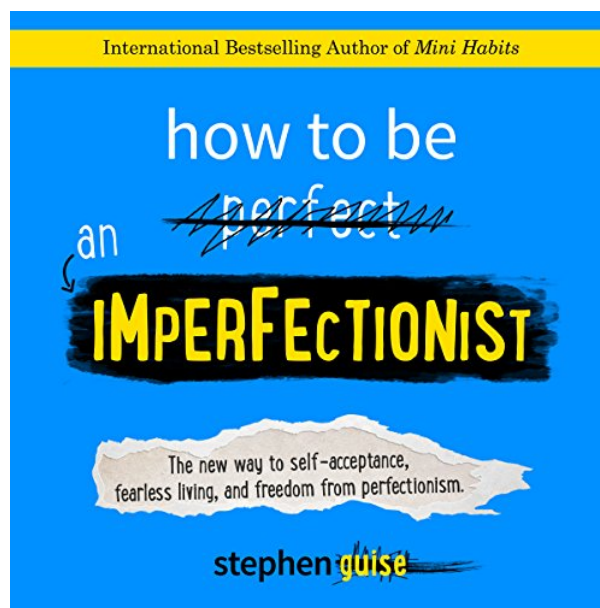


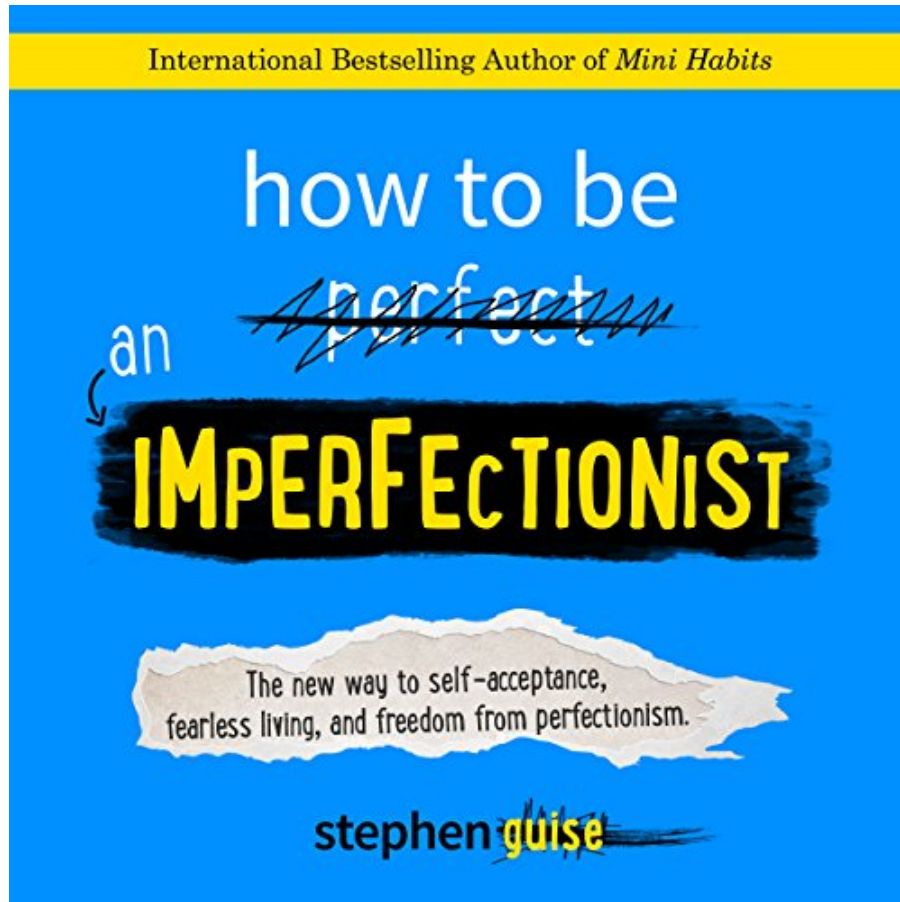
# HOW TO BE AN IMPERFECTIONIST: THE NEW WAY TO SELF-ACCEPTANCE, FEARLESS LIVING, AND FREEDOM FROM PERFECTIONISM BY STEPHEN GUISE



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International Bestselling Author of *Mini Habits*



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# **HOW TO BE AN IMPERFECTIONIST: THE NEW WAY TO SELF-ACCEPTANCE, FEARLESS LIVING, AND FREEDOM FROM PERFECTIONISM BY STEPHEN GUISE PDF**

I remember when I aimed for perfect workouts: 30 minutes was the minimum.

I was in lousy shape.

I remember when I aimed for perfect dating: it couldn't be awkward, forced, or uncertain.

I didn't talk to women I was interested in.

I remember when I aimed for perfect writing: I wanted 1,000+ words of quality material per day.

I played video games instead.

I carefully avoided mistakes, endlessly ruminated about what I didn't do, and what I did do wasn't enough.

Then, I became an imperfectionist.

Everything changed. I had fun stories to tell, like the lesbian pizza incident and the most nervous "Hi" ever spoken by a human being. I learned more. I laughed more. I lived more.

I got in great shape, read more books, and improved my social skills. I wrote *Mini Habits*, which is being translated into a dozen languages.

I found I could mess up and still win.

Perfectionism is a naturally limiting mindset. For example, kids are taught to color inside the lines, and any color outside the lines is considered a mistake that must be corrected. Imperfectionism frees us to live outside the lines, where possibilities are infinite, mistakes are allowed, and self-judgment is minimal.

While the freedom of imperfectionism is impactful, it does not preclude us from having problems. Imperfectionists aren't so ironic as to have perfect lives, they're just happier, healthier, and more productive at doing what matters.

- Sales Rank: #12409 in Audible
- Published on: 2015-07-16
- Format: Unabridged
- Original language: English
- Running time: 349 minutes

Most helpful customer reviews

20 of 20 people found the following review helpful.

I am as happy as a well-fed tyrannosaur in reading this book!

By Lisa R

I really only bought this book because I liked Guise's *Minihabits* book so much. I didn't really consider myself a perfectionist, but I discovered I could use a lot more information from this book than I expected. I also was concerned this book would have too much overlapping content from Guise's *Minihabits* book and blog posts, but it had a lot that I hadn't seen before.

**PROS:** First, the structure of this book is really clear and usable. I loved that Guise didn't waste our time with a lot of "here's how to know if you're a perfectionist" drivel and instead focused on understanding perfectionism, its causes, and its solutions. In particular, I found Guise's review of the academic literature on perfectionism to be both conscientious and valuable. It does seem true that when academics are talking about perfectionism being good, they are focusing on the aspects that aren't really a focus on perfection (like "seeking excellence" or "being organized"). Guise also does a great job simplifying the categories that the academics used and adding ones of his own when needed. Next, Guise does a great job explaining how perfectionism has to be perceived as something bad if any real progress is to be made. So long as you are secretly congratulating yourself on your "flaw" of wanting everything to be perfect, you won't understand just how pervasive the problem is or be very effective in changing it. Thirdly, Guise flummoxed me by introducing new (to me) aspects of perfectionism: insisting that the context be perfect in order for you to take action ("I'm going to speak up at the meeting at work today...no, actually, Jamie's here, and he talks too much so no one will hear me...or, oh no, it's an **AFTERNOON** meeting this time, well, that's a loss because I'll be too tired...or, I'm sitting right next to the boss? that's too much stress, forget it; I won't speak up.") and goal size (assuming a goal has to be a "Standard American Goal"--something other people would use as a goal, a big chunk of obvious success rather than small goals of incremental progress). I didn't think I was very perfectionistic until I read about these kinds. I can see how I've fallen into these perfectionisms time and time again, and just from reading Guise's book, I've already made a lot of progress in changing the way I think about context and goal size. This is especially important to people who liked Guise's *Minihabits* book, because if you are like me, you added some great minihabits, made a lot of progress, and yet still felt somehow whiny and unsatisfied because you were fixated on the external "standardized" major goal. In my case, this meant I made a lot of daily progress in writing a book, but I still felt bad because I didn't have "Publish a book" checked off my imaginary perfectionist list. Why should "publish a book" be the goal? It's too big a chunk to be focusing on right now. I just got lulled into insisting my life wasn't right until this "society-approved" goal was done, and I didn't think any smaller goals or a life of progress could count for anything.

Guise makes a lot of other great points throughout the book, but I don't have time to detail them all! :) I will say that Guise's humor is a plus.

**CONS:** Because this book was **GREAT!**, I have mostly nitpicky things to say as cons. The one thing I don't think is nitpicky is that Guise could use a broader group of examples. Nearly all his examples were about exercise, writing, and asking for dates. It is nice to write what you know, but it's also important to know your audience, and I'm sure many of Guise's readers would appreciate seeing how his concepts work for a more varied group of activities and goals (e.g. environmental goals, meetings at work, repairing a broken marriage, childrearing, saving money, investing, volunteering, apologizing, traveling, doing taxes, caring for an elderly person, being sick, getting along with difficult coworkers, etc.). Probably Guise drew from his own experience and those of his friends, but he may need to ask family members or other people of varying demographic groups (age, marital status, etc) to get ideas for more examples. That said, many readers will do fine adapting Guise's examples to their own cases without any trouble. Now for the nitpicky things: I had hoped for a discussion of perfectionism regarding **OTHERS'** actions, and that never really came up. If your perfectionism takes the form of insisting that others behave in a certain way, should the action steps be any different? (For example, I often let my husband do the dishes, then I obsess about the food gunk that is still on them afterward, and that makes him feel bad.) Are there any complicating features we need to be aware

of? Most perfectionists I know do have a problem in interacting with others, because their own need for perfect results makes them micromanage or scold other people. Should this be handled any differently than more personal forms of perfectionism? Would it matter if the relationship is long-term or just a momentary interaction with a stranger? (e.g. "That cashier just bagged my meat with my vegetables!") Most of Guise's examples involve either no interaction with other people (e.g. exercise) or very limited response from others (e.g. you ask for a date, the other person says "yes" or "no.")

Guise also uses the phrase "sunken cost" repeatedly, which I found very awkward. I'm sure "sunken" is better grammar than "sunk cost," but I've only ever heard the phrase "sunk cost," and at some point common use wins out over formalized grammar. It really threw me off trying to read that passage smoothly. Lastly (see how nitpicky I have to be to find flaws?), Guise recommends lying down in public to get over one's fear of social disapproval and says it is harmless. In most places this is probably harmless, but where I lived before (not the U.S.), men actually did this, in order to look up women's skirts. (Often they kept a hand mirror in their pockets for when the angles weren't quite right.) Anyway, just be aware that if you do this, especially if you are male, it may not be perceived as harmless by everybody. Again, probably in most places this won't be an issue.

All in all, this was a fantastic book! The cons were really unimportant, and the pros made this book a delight. I especially appreciated Guise's humorous tone. Occasionally, it would even wax a little poetic, like when he wrote: "It's like seeing a dense fog in the woods: danger may lurk behind it, but the allure of its mystery still draws in the curious ones." Nice! I am really happy that this book was so practical and fun.

16 of 16 people found the following review helpful.

Full of great ideas and strategies

By goodread21

This book was full of advice and strategies I could really use and implement daily to improve my perfectionist tendencies! I just finished the book, and I can already feel a paradigm shift happening. I especially love how he organizes the book with the "Application Guide" at the end. All too often, I read a self help book, get excited about the ideas, but then forget what exactly I was supposed to do to make it work in my life. This book allows you to easily reference daily tips to keep these strategies working for you. I also appreciate the author's writing style. When I read it, I feel like I'm having a meaningful conversation with a friend, who is going through the same ups and downs, and trying to figure it all out... who also happens to have some amazing ideas and advice! It is even laugh out loud funny in a few places! Thank you to Stephen Guise... this book will really make a difference in my life!

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful.

This book read me

By Melissa Wiederrecht

This is a very good book..... I felt it was on the same level with "The Now Habit"... Where you feel like the author really knows what they are talking about and manages to fit important and deep insights into every single page... And read me like a book.

I had to laugh when he mentioned that a perfectionist would try to fix everything all at once with mini habits and fail. I have three times now attempted to take on about 20 mini habits at the same time... I am sure you can guess what happened. And I know I really need to do like 2-3 mini habits... But I get stuck right there since I couldn't decide which few best ones to choose! And the fear of mistakes keeps me from even just picking one and trying... What if I attempt just 1 mini habit and still fail?! Trying to please a specific person keeps me stressed 24/7. I live my life feeling like I am never enough. I go through life dreaming of the great things I can accomplish... too scared to really try anything and fall short of my dreams. THIS BOOK GETS IT. Every detail of it.

Steven has done his research... He manages to unroll the messy ball of perfectionism to allow us to observe

the many different aspects and sides to it and then recommend specific and easy ways to combat each. A person who really follows his advice will probably be well onto the path to recovery. This book deserves to become a classic.

I think one of the most helpful perspectives this book offers is its emphasis of "lowering the bar" rather than psyching you up to be able to reach the high bar.

Oh, and one more thing... I thoroughly enjoy the writing style of this book. It is a joy to read.

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