



# Be Happy Without Being Perfect: How to Break Free from the Perfection Deception

*Alice D. Domar , Alice Lesch Kelly*

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Do you have trouble going to bed at night when there's a mess in the kitchen? Do you think you would be happier if only you could lose weight, be a better parent, work smarter, reduce stress, exercise more, and make better decisions?

You're not perfect. But guess what? You don't have to be.

All of us struggle with high expectations from time to time. But for many women, the worries can become debilitating—and often, we don't even know we're letting unrealistic expectations color our thinking. The good news is, we have the power to break free from the perfectionist trap—and internationally renowned health psychologist, Dr. Alice Domar can show you how.

*Be Happy Without Being Perfect* offers a way out of the self-imposed handcuffs that this thinking brings, providing concrete solutions, practical advice, and action plans that teach you how to:

- Assess your tendency toward perfectionism in all areas of your life
- Set realistic goals
- Alleviate the guilt and shame that perfectionism can trigger
- Manage your anxiety with clinically proven self-care strategies
- Get rid of the unrealistic and damaging expectations that are hurting you—for good!

Filled with the personal insights of more than fifty women, *Be Happy Without Being Perfect* is your key to a happier, calmer, and more enjoyable life.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

## Be Happy Without Being Perfect: How to Break Free from the Perfection Deception Details

Date : Published March 4th 2008 by Crown (first published January 1st 2008)

ISBN : 9780307354310

Author : Alice D. Domar , Alice Lesch Kelly

Format : Hardcover 304 pages

Genre : Self Help, Nonfiction, Psychology, Audiobook

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## **Charity says**

Maybe if this had been one of the first books I'd read about happiness, I might have a different opinion about it. I ended up skimming most of it. It was written in a casual, upbeat tone, began with a quiz, and was set up like a typical self-help book. The recommendations in each chapter also seemed a bit repetitive.

The book isn't bad, but as I seem to have moved into a more inside-out approach with my happiness project, the simple "try these 5 techniques" style of this book isn't really what I'm looking for.

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## **Maria McGrath says**

I listened to this as an audiobook, read by the same woman who reads the Mrs. Piggie Wiggle stories to my kids. It was very helpful and gives great tips about cognitive restructuring and interesting quotes from real women, some who are still struggling, and some who have made big steps in the right direction. Domar helped me understand perfectionist traits in myself and my offspring, but not in a condemning way. Very helpful.

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## **Leah says**

Have you ever read a book and thought "They have totally got my number!" ? Well, this book is painfully accurate about my life.

Co-written with a psychologist, this book starts out by addressing the social influences and pressures, especially on women beginning in the 1940's, to have everything perfect. It points out that media and consumer culture (especially the culture of Martha and Rachael Ray) exists purely to sell us an image that is basically unachievable (unless you also have scores of makeup artists, set dressers, cooks, etc. helping you) and in turn sell us things to make us feel more successful.

Once the societal pressures are covered in the first few chapters, the following couple of chapters help identify whether you are a perfectionist, or essentially discover whether you're letting perfectionism affect your life and create anxiety and depression. (Here I check a big box for YES and ALSO YES)

After that, it introduces coping mechanisms, exercises, and a chapter-by-chapter examination of how perfectionism can play out in careers, scheduling, decisions, and relationships. I hate to use the term "eye-opening" but it really was.

One of the best takeaways from this book is the point that everyone should be mindful of their priorities when making decisions. When you are saying "yes" to one thing and agreeing to spend your time on it, you are saying "no" to spending your time on something else. And if the thing you're saying "no" to is more important to you, you need to spend more time making decisions to be able to really follow what you want.

This may include turning down things that sound fun, or just essentially developing the habit of telling people that "you'll get back to them" in order to give yourself time to ruminate. As someone who perpetually overextended herself, I find this incredibly important in re-evaluating how I make decisions.

If you find yourself continually stressed about issues like housework and whether you're doing enough for your friends, then it would probably be a good idea to check out this book. I'm returning the library copy tomorrow!

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**shirley says**

The target audience for this book is the married woman with kids. Several examples are geared toward this audience.

Chock full of coping mechanisms including mindfulness (meditation, breathing exercises), thinking distortions (negative thinking, catastrophysinnng, black and white thinking), interpersonal skiils (gender differences) even time mannagement (prioritizing)

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**Kristen says**

2.5stars. The author's voice bugged me. Her views on stay-at-home parents seemed to have a little condescending undertones with the examples or generalizations she gave (and I've been a working mom, part-time working mom, stay-at-home mom, and work part-time from home mom so I've been all of it.) Her facts are spot on but her examples for improvement & suggestions felt a little too "just snap out of it & do it different" to me. Good for recognizing perfectionist patterns & where you should be, but less helpful on steps in between.

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**Susan says**

Much of this book was not relevant to my life because I don't have kids (lots of stuff on dealing with kids) or a negative body image and I, apparently, am not as much of a perfectionist as my family would have people believe. It was also a bit redundant and boring, but had a few good tips on relaxtion and re-training the brain. Would recommend to individuals who I feel truely have an issue with perfectionism, but I'm not sure that I know anyone who does. Would not recommend the audio version to others...stick with the book. The reader on the audio version is a bit annoying.

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**Majdahalmazroei says**

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## **Erin says**

So, I was ironing my pillowcases when I decided to take a break and read this book. But then I got distracted and had to make muffins from scratch and fold the towels correctly. Then, later that day at work, I got annoyed because no one moves as fast or works as hard as me. Then I decided to work out, but after realizing that I wouldn't be able to devote a full hour to lifting, said "screw it" and went home to spend three hours doing freelancing. I'm pretty sure this book has nothing to do with me anyway.

Ok, so this book got a little too "self-helpy" at times but it was excellent just for the fact that it made me recognize when my all or nothing thinking is getting in the way of enjoying life - at work, at home and in my marriage. Of course, I am married to a super perfectionist so there is probably no hope for us.

However, this book also made me question - what's **WRONG** with striving for the best? As long as it is not causing undue anxiety or problems with relationships?

Anyway, I laughed when they described examples of crazy perfectionism: recopying grocery lists because they are not neat enough (guilty), rewashing dishes washed in the dishwasher because they have water spots (guilty), thinking people are dumb b/c they do things differently or slower than you do (triple guilty).

I need a lobotomy. This is all my mother's fault.

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