

Just Hit “Send”:

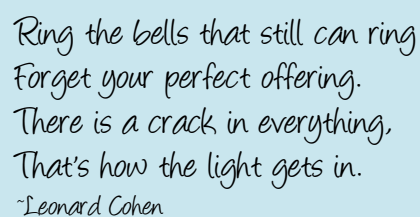
Four Steps to Getting Past Perfection

By Beth L. Buelow, CPC

Do you have a little voice that tells you that whatever you put out into the world must be perfect? Here are some ideas to help you give the boot to Perfectionitis.

Every once in a while, someone’s Facebook status strikes me as profound. This happened a few weeks ago, when my friend Robin wrote “Just hit ‘send.’” She was writing a paper for her doctoral seminary program, and like me, she has an “A+ student” streak and wanted the paper to be perfect before send-off.

Her short update has become one of my new mantras. In addition to being a great companion to my other mantra, “better done than perfect,” it also reminds me of my Virtuoso Gremlin. Virtuoso is a hold-over from my years of training as a classical musician, when perfection was the only acceptable standard. It tries to tell me that unless something’s perfect, it’s not ready for the public. After all, no one’s going to buy a CD with wrong notes.



Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering.
There is a crack in everything,
That's how the light gets in.
~Leonard Cohen

Perfectionism is one of the reasons I decided to make music my avocation rather than vocation. Musician friends who only focused on the mistakes (because it made them feel superior) drove me crazy. I realized that I loved music too much to become a musician.

That’s why it’s important to me now to keep that Virtuoso Gremlin at bay. I love coaching and supporting people as they become their best selves. I love to write, share, lead and teach. **Getting too much in my head, and allowing Virtuoso to keep me stuck, could lead to Perfectionitis and the slippery slope down towards procrastination, excuses and inertia.**

Because I want to avoid that fate, I brought this challenge to the attention of my coach. Together, we processed through how I could “just hit send” more often. The result of my new way of thinking was my third Biznik article, “[Don’t Poke Yourself in the Eye with a Stick.](#)” I wrote it in a few hours, didn’t have anyone else read, edit or wordsmith it, and published it without reading it over 100 times first. And once I published it, I let it go. The entire experience was empowering and liberating. I trusted myself! No one said it was a terrible article! The Earth kept spinning, even if what I published wasn’t perfect!

Do you have your own version of the Virtuoso Gremlin? Does it keep you from finishing that article, calling the prospect or media contact (“the pitch must be perfect!”), putting on the workshop or sending the proposal? **If your answer is YES, here are four steps that may help you move past the perfection:**

1. Set an Intention

What is the purpose of your task? How does it serve you? How does it move you forward? An intention reflects what you gain – and give others – by doing the work. For the “Don’t Poke” article, my intention was to share useful information and build inner trust in my abilities as a coach and writer.

Bottom Line: Clearly state what’s important to you and keep that intention front-of-mind.

2. Set a Deadline

One of my challenges as a solopreneur is that there are certain tasks that are totally on my timeline. Without a firm deadline from someone else, I can use perfectionism to procrastinate. It’s one reason everything takes longer than I think it’s going to take! Setting a deadline with my coach, which created accountability, was key to getting the “Don’t Poke” article done.



Bottom Line: Set a realistic completion date, share it with your accountability partner, and schedule time on the calendar to focus and make it happen.

3. Set Your Butt Down in the Chair



Sit down, pick up the phone, send the e-mail, write the story, update the website, craft the proposal. Keep your intention in mind, honor your deadline and talk to your accountability partner if you get stuck.

Trust yourself and show up authentically through your task.

There is no way you can fail. You are your harshest critic, and your high standards won’t allow you to create something that’s flat-out bad. And if negative chatter surfaces, let it out. Give it

a voice, and ask yourself: what evidence do I have that supports my fears? The evidence is usually slim to none; it most likely tells you “I have a track-record of success.” Trust your previous experiences that show you are brilliant!

Another thing to remember: What’s more important than perfection? Passion! Let your passion for your work, your message and what you have to offer shine!

Bottom Line: Trust yourself, share your passion and just hit "send."

4. Set It Aside & Celebrate

You did it! Now, acknowledge yourself for getting it done! Part of my perfectionist tendencies includes obsessing about whatever the thing was long after I’ve hit “send.” I re-read, replay the conversation over in my mind, or check my e-mail for a reply two seconds after I’ve sent the darn thing. Instead of celebrating, I’m obsessing. It was a relief after publishing the “Don’t Poke”



article to let it go and let it be what it was. The celebration was e-mailing my coach and saying “I did it!!” and feeling proud I’d kept my intention throughout the process. I felt my trust building. It’s been easier since then to share unedited-Beth with the world. My website blog has helped me further deepen my inner trust.

Bottom Line: Celebrate your accomplishment, let go of the outcome, and reward yourself with a new challenge.

*No one is perfect...
that's why pencils
have erasers.*

-Author Unknown

The mantra that Robin unknowingly gifted me is a gift for all of us who are trying to make friends with our inner perfectionist (yes, it can be a force for good; that’s a different article!). My passion is more important than perfection. My voice – and your voice – flaws and all, is one that needs to be heard. **As Henry van Dyke put it, “Use what talents you possess; the woods would be very silent if no birds sang except those that sang best.”**

For Your Consideration

- If you have a tendency for perfection, where does it show up most?
- What would you be able to accomplish if you trusted yourself more?
- What works for you when you get struck by Perfectionitis?

This article was originally published on www.biznik.com in July 2009. Visit <http://biznik.com/articles/just-hit-send-four-steps-to-getting-past-perfection> to view reader responses.



Beth Buelow, CPC, is a Personal Coach, Speaker and Writer, Beth’s purpose is to partner with people who aspire to live a more intentional life. Her passion is supporting individuals as they move from scarcity and fear to prosperity and choice.

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