

Overcoming Perfectionism

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"The amount of happiness that you have depends on the amount of freedom you have in your heart." ~Thich Nhat Hanh



Celine, age 5, at her first ballet performance at the Manhattan Center, NYC

Recently, at the age of 24, I came to the realization that I was not "doing" anything anymore. In my leisure time I wasn't pursuing any hobby for enjoyment, and my life had entirely become my work.

Over time, feeling lost, I started to feel that I did not even know who I was anymore. I realized I needed to "get up" out of this hole I'd created and do something to connect with myself, but I felt frozen in angst because I felt that nothing I would do would be perfect. Not knowing whether something would turn out "right" or not, everything resulted in anxiety.

However, I decided to get back into ballet lessons, which I had enjoyed in my childhood. After having thought about it for many years, and finding numerous excuses for why it wouldn't work out, I was finally making myself start ballet again. At the age of 14 I had stopped, because I was so nervous about what the teacher thought of me. At the time, any sign of criticism from her mattered more to me than whether I enjoyed dancing or not.

At my first adult class I saw clearly that this was the reason it took me so long to start again. Even 10 years later, as the instructor made one small comment to correct me, I flinched. I got that

familiar feeling, that she too disliked me, and that I wasn't good enough. However, I told myself that this couldn't be true {she barely knew me} and I told myself: "Just let go." (Even if by chance she disapproved of me, I was the one paying for the ballet class!) This underlying fear was finally healed.



Celine, age 10, preparing for a recital in elementary school