

# Redefining Health & Wellness

## #31

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi

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**Shohreh Davoodi:** Oh hi there my smart, beautiful, and wonderful listeners. Welcome to episode 31 of the Redefining Health & Wellness podcast. In today's solo episode I am going to talk about something I've struggled with my entire life, and that is perfectionism. Perfectionism masquerades as a positive trait, but in reality it can be extremely harmful. I'll be sharing five ways perfectionism is stealing your joy, all of which I know about from personal experience [laughs], as well as tools to help you push back against your perfectionist tendencies.

You can find the show notes and a full transcript of this episode, at [shohrehdavoodi.com/31](http://shohrehdavoodi.com/31). That's [shohrehdavoodi.com/31](http://shohrehdavoodi.com/31).

Before we get started I wanted to let you know that my intuitive eating group coaching program is open for enrollment now through the evening of Friday February 14th, or until spots fill. If you're familiar with intuitive eating, but haven't had a chance to put the principles into practice and dig a little deeper, this eight-week program will give you the chance to do so as part of a supportive online community.

Together we'll work to figure out what kinds of diet culture thinking remain in your brain, and how you can realistically eat in a way that is satisfying and enjoyable, given your unique circumstances. Through actionable steps you can practice each day, journaling assignments, discussion threads, and group coaching calls. This program will guide you away from your diet and food obsession days to help you become an intuitive eater.

If you're interested in joining us, you can go to [shohrehdavoodi.com/groupcoaching](http://shohrehdavoodi.com/groupcoaching) to get all the details and sign up for the program. That's [shohrehdavoodi.com/groupcoaching](http://shohrehdavoodi.com/groupcoaching). And if you're listening to this episode after February of 2020 and I'm not currently enrolling new participants, you can sign up for the group coaching waitlist on my website to be one of the first to know when enrollment reopens.

All right, let's go talk about perfectionism.

[Music plays]

Hey y'all, welcome to the Redefining Health & Wellness podcast. I'm your host, Shohreh Davoodi. I'm a certified intuitive eating counselor, and a certified personal trainer. I help people improve their relationships with exercise, food, and their bodies, so they can ditch diet culture for good, and do what feels right for them.

Through this podcast I want to give you the tools to redefine what health and wellness mean to you. By exposing myths and misconceptions, delving into all the areas of health that often get ignored, and reminding you that health and wellness are not moral obligations. Are you ready? Let's fuck some shit up.

Perfectionism has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. Not only as something that I have struggled with, but also something that I have really taken pride in, which is the interesting thing, right? Because perfectionism is so often seen as a positive thing, and something that we should strive for, the more negative underpinnings of it often get ignored.

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And perfectionism, like most things in life, is complicated. It has both genetic and environmental components that can create it, and for many people it actually starts as a coping mechanism for something that was going on in their life or in their childhood. And then over time it becomes habitual and you can't break out of that perfectionist cycle.

Certainly I know for myself that there are a lot of things that led to my perfectionism and that caused it to keep building on itself over time. My parents are both very hard-working people who had incredibly high standards for myself and my three siblings when we were growing up. Some of that is cultural. My dad is Iranian and he grew up in Iran and came to the United States for college. And I think that his parents were really hard on him, had very high expectations for him and his achievements.

My dad is a freaking genius. I mean seriously, I consider myself a really intelligent person, but I have maybe 20% of his smarts. So, he always performed really well and he saw that as a way to get ahead. It was his intelligence that allowed him to come to the United States and get a college degree and then go to medical school. Most people who are the children of immigrants or an immigrant have similar experiences of their parents just having incredibly high standards and expecting excellence from them.

Then you have my mom who grew up in the Midwest in the U.S., but grew up in a very strict German-Catholic household. She had five siblings. My dad has nine siblings [laughs] by the way. And the expectations on her were also very high as to who she needed to be and how hard she needed to work. And my parents brought all of that into our home as well. All of those beliefs about the importance of hard work, and not getting caught up in your emotions and your feelings, and putting school first.

So I knew from a very young age that education and good grades were extremely valued in my household. And I also discovered early on, as a middle child, that when I would excel at things like my schoolwork or in music, that elicited praise and attention from my parents. And as every middle child knows, parental praise and attention can be harder to come by, or at least it feels like it. So it becomes something that you crave.

In my mind, being smart was a proxy for being loved. And just for the record, I didn't magically put the pieces together on this, I've had lots of mental health [laughs] issues in my life and seen many therapists who have helped me figure out a lot of these things. There are a million more things that I could say about my upbringing, and who I thought that I had to be, and the crushing pressure that I felt all the time.

But I also want to talk about two particular instances that I think really stoked my perfectionism and kept it going. As I've mentioned on the show before, I actually was a music major in college. I have a music performance degree in the oboe. I first started playing the oboe at the age of 11, right before I went into middle school, and prior to that I played piano for years.

If you have ever met a classical musician before, you know that they are a perfectionist bunch, at least the serious ones. Because when you're a musician, what you do is you painstakingly practice the most minute of

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details over and over and over again, trying to make it as perfect as possible [laughs]. And of course, everyone has a slightly different interpretation of what perfect is, whether it's the conductor of your band or orchestra, or it is your private lesson instructor, or it's someone else in your section.

So it's basically an impossible task. And when you're a musician you are frequently having to audition for different things, which means you're always comparing yourself to others, and of course, if someone doesn't help you do that in a healthy way, it's really easy to internalize.

I played and performed and competed as an oboist for a decade before I ultimately decided that I didn't want to have a career in music, and then I went to law school. And law school is, of course, a land of rainbows and unicorns that isn't the least bit cutthroat, and where you're not constantly reminded of things like, if you misplace a single comma in your brief, you could cost a client a lot of time and money.

Law school is extremely competitive. It is so intense and draining, and it does a number on your mental health, especially if you're already prone to different mental health issues. And let me just say, I didn't find out that I had ADHD until a couple years after I had already graduated from law school. So I was a hot mess! But only in my own head. Despite the fear and the anxiety that I felt, I still was able to perform.

But the problem is that it was never enough. This story is going to sound like some kind of a humble brag, but there's a point to this, which is that I graduated third in my law school class, which is something that I should have been so proud of. I graduated summa cum laude; I was one of only three people to do it. I was at the top of my class, like objectively, I kicked ass at law school!

However, at the end of my first year of law school, I was tied for number one in my class. And then I took a summer class, it was professional responsibility, of course I can somehow remember this, and it was my worst grade of law school. And it lowered my GPA, and even though I got fantastic grades for the next two years, I never was able to get it up high enough that I could basically overtake being number one in my class.

I'm hearing myself say this out loud, and I know that it sounds ridiculous, but if you are someone who also is a perfectionist and who has put so much academic pressure on yourself over time, then you know what it might be like. Because once you've established yourself as the number one, you have to keep it going. Like I felt even more pressure after my first year, instead of being like, oh man, I'm doing awesome, I can relax, I was like, oh no, people will think I'm an idiot if I can't maintain this. If I can't keep my GPA up, and if I can't keep this going.

It was a lot of that imposter syndrome that I've talked about before. I was like, people are going to find out that it's all a ruse if I don't keep my grades up and stay number one in my class. So to a brain that has been battered by perfectionism, to fall from number one to number three, felt like it just wasn't good enough. Like all I could think was, goddammit, if I had just gotten a better grade in that stupid professional responsibility class two years ago, then I could have been valedictorian.

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And that, of course, is one of the main sadnesses of perfectionism. That if you fall short, even by the tiniest amount of the impossibly high bar that you've set for yourself, that you cannot celebrate your accomplishments, and they are worthless.

Many people mistakenly believe that perfectionism is defined by specific behaviors. And while certainly there are behaviors that most perfectionists use, those are really just symptoms of the disease. And of course, the disease is that inner critic that is constantly speaking to you in your head. Perfectionism will try to undermine even your best moments by whispering in your ear, "It's still not enough, you could have done better if you had only worked harder," or, "Why did you do that? You're hard to love and you're a horrible partner."

It's so self-defeating, and the worst part is that the game is rigged. Perfectionism is designed so that you cannot win, though you may die trying, because perfect is impossible. And this is the part where those of you who are not perfectionists are probably saying to yourself, well, why don't you just lower the bar? Why can't you stop trying to be perfect all the time? And that would be wonderful, but unfortunately it doesn't work that way.

And one of the reasons is because perfectionists gain something from being that way. It's a security blanket. It's a sense of control. It's us believing that when we do things perfectly, that defines our worth. The truth is, an obsession with perfectionism is often a way of avoiding difficult feelings that are hard to deal with, such as shame, and guilt, and the disappointments of those we love and look up to.

That alone is unhealthy. But perfectionism can negatively impact every single area of a person's life, including their actual physical health, and mental health. Perfectionism is linked to many disorders, including depression, anxiety, self-harm, obsessive compulsive disorder, literally every kind of eating disorder, burn-out, and more. And it can negatively affect your social health by making it more difficult to be in relationships and friendships. Either believing you're not good enough, or that they're not good enough, or both.

Even though perfectionism may feel like it is helping us, and it is keeping us safe, the reality is, it is hurting us so badly. And it would be awesome if we could go back and change our circumstances, and change our childhood so that we never felt like we needed perfectionism to thrive. Unfortunately, we can't do that, so the only thing we can do is learn how perfectionism shows up in our lives, and figure out what to do about it now.

So let's go ahead and go through five particular ways perfectionism is stealing your joy, and figure out how you can take it back.

So, number one on our list is that perfectionism causes you to internalize and moralize the perfectionist world view. And this isn't something that is unique to perfectionism. Any time we moralize anything this can come up, whether it's food, or sex, or work. In fact, this is something that I talk to my intuitive eating coaching clients about all the time. Because when we categorize foods as good or bad, for instance, it doesn't stop with the

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food. The way we view foods, colors how we ultimately view ourselves, and other people. So let's say that you have been taught, and that you believe that chocolate cake is bad. And let's say that you have been taught and you believe that carrots are good. The problem is that it doesn't stop with the food.

So if you have internalized that chocolate cake is bad, then that means that you will also think that *you* are bad when you eat chocolate cake, and you may extrapolate out to say that other people are bad when they eat chocolate cake. Same thing with the carrots. If the carrots are good, then when you eat the carrots you are good and pure, and when other people eat the carrots, they are good and pure. And all the sudden we are in a moral hierarchy that has nothing to do with food.

I actually think my perfectionist tendencies are one of the reasons I fell so hard into clean eating back in the day, because in clean eating foods are very neatly categorized. So, if I just ate the clean foods and I avoided the dirty ones, then that meant that I was good and pure and others would see me as such. But it also meant that when I wasn't eating clean, which happened because of course, it's impossible to keep up with such a strict diet all the time, I was berating myself. And I thought that I was bad and unworthy, and unhealthy.

And when I saw other people not eating clean, I was judging them. How dare they not put their health first and care about their bodies? And that shit is fucked up!

A very common perfectionist trait is being obsessive about grammar and spelling errors. And when you are in that space it's really easy to think, oh, good smart people care about their spelling and grammar, and it has to be 'right.' And only lazy idiots don't care about this thing that I have deemed important.

I used to take pride in being one of those people. I had a sense of glee when I could correct someone's spelling or grammar or when I found a spelling or grammar mistake, because I thought that made me better and smarter than that person. And I didn't have a good internal sense of self-worth, so I had to get my self-worth from other people being lower than me in the moral hierarchy.

And when you take a second to stop and think, it's obvious that whether or not a person uses proper spelling and grammar all the time or even some of the time, has literally nothing to do with whether they are a good and moral person, but the perfectionist mindset doesn't stop and think about that.

The other thing is that judging people for spelling and grammar in particular is super classist and ableist. Because, oh hey, there are more important things in the world than whether someone used the right 'your' or put an apostrophe in the wrong place, and not everyone has the same education and background, and there are tons of systemic reasons for that, as well as disabilities and other things that keep people from being able to have that be their main focus.

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And while perfectionism absolutely leads us to being hard on ourselves, it also leads us to being hard on other people, whether friends, family, or strangers.

And that leads us to joy stealer number two, which is that you can convince yourself that the only person your perfectionism is harming or hindering is yourself, but you would be wrong. I'm sure that there is the rare perfectionist out there who only applies their perfectionist leanings to themselves. But that is not the vast majority of perfectionists.

As I just mentioned in the previous examples, when we view the world through a perfectionist lens, we tend to filter everybody and everything through that filter, not just ourselves. Yes, we may be especially hard on ourselves and have the highest standards for ourselves, but it's unusual that other people are immune to our standards. Which means we can be especially judgmental and hard on other people, both strangers and the ones that we love.

To give an example that I'm sure many of us have experienced, if you are chasing the 'perfect body,' which is something that I desperately chased for years, and your own body never measures up to that impossible standard, you will also judge other people's bodies more harshly. You will learn to play the comparison game and every time you walk into a room you will look everybody else in it up and down to figure out where people sit on the hierarchy.

If you see bodies that look better than yours, you will be upset and jealous and when you see bodies that you judge as looking worse than yours, you will be pleased, and you will judge yourselves as being more attractive and better than that person. And of course, attractiveness in this case means more socially acceptable and fitting into societal beauty standards and norms.

And here's where that gets really insidious. Our perfection in certain areas can actually play into socialized prejudices and stereotypes. Stick with me here because this is really important. If you've been socialized to believe that the perfect body is thin, white, able-bodied, blonde, whatever, then your perfectionist viewpoint creates a hierarchy of bodies that plays into existing stereotypes and beauty standards. And where do our current societal beauty standards come from? White supremacy.

And unfortunately when people hear the phrase, 'white supremacy,' what automatically comes to mind is the Ku Klux Klan. What should come to mind is that white supremacist ideology is the undercurrent of pretty much all of the systems, and beliefs, and structures in the United States of America. And white supremacy is the root of systemic discrimination everywhere, from the education system to the legal system to yes, standards of beauty.

If you're specifically interested in learning more about how white supremacy has colored current day beauty standards, I highly recommend the book, *Fearing the Black Body* by Sabrina Strings. And I believe Christy Harrison's new book, *Anti-Diet* also goes into that history, which I will link to in the show notes.

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I'm also going to link to an excerpt about white supremacy culture, which comes from the book, *Dismantling Racism, a Workbook for Social Change Groups*. And that workbook was written by Kenneth Jones and Tema Okun, I'm not sure if I'm pronouncing that right, I couldn't find a pronunciation online.

This workbook excerpt includes a list of different characteristics of a culture that supports white supremacy, and in particular, they're speaking about how white supremacy culture shows up in organizations and workplaces. And this is relevant because the very first characteristic on their list is perfectionism. And I'm not going to try to explain their exact ideas. I think that you should read this excerpt and that it's really important. But one of the things the authors write about is the need to create environments where people know that everyone makes mistakes, and mistakes are an opportunity to learn, instead of environments where mistakes are seen as a proxy for the person, where people are viewed as their mistakes.

So, in thinking about how we can take back our joy from number one and number two on this list, it comes down to believing in the inherent worthiness of ourselves and other people. We have to work to believe that we are not our mistakes and other people are not their mistakes. Most mistakes and missteps aren't actually questions of morality; they're a part of being human. And not only that, but they're valuable because we can learn from them to do better in the future.

For many perfectionists, this is a huge shift in world view. So the question then becomes, how do you get there? How do you make this shift in your mind? And the two things that I would recommend are some concepts from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, also known as CBT, can really help with this, as well as self-compassion work. And look, you can certainly do CBT with a therapist, I have, but there are also plenty of great articles and books out there if you want to start applying CBT concepts to your life on your own.

So just do a little bit of Google searching on that to see what you come up with. The main idea there is that we are not our thoughts and our thoughts are not necessarily true. So, we have to use different tactics and tools to push back against the initial ingrained and socialized thoughts that tend to come up for us.

And then there's the practice of self-compassion, which helps us quiet that critical voice in our head and learn to be more kind and understanding to ourselves when we make mistakes and when we don't measure up. Kristin Neff, who is a self-compassion researcher has written a wonderful and accessible book on self-compassion. I will link it in the show notes. I will also link to her website, because even if you don't want to commit to reading the book, she has a lot of wonderful exercises on her website that you can do without necessarily reading the book itself.

So, number three on our list of joy stealers is that perfectionism creates an all or nothing, black and white mentality that doesn't reflect the real world. I tend to attract a lot of clients who are type A, high achieving, and one of the biggest problems that they have when they come to me is struggling

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with an 'all or nothing' mentality around their wellness. We've all seen how this plays out when it comes to food and exercise.

So, maybe you have decided that you really need to eat 'healthy,' which usually means restricting. And you try to do that for a week or two and you're doin' it and it's going great, and then you can't do it anymore because it was unsustainable. And so you stop for a while. And then eventually there's a reason that you decide to try again, and it fails, and so you stop for a while. And this is what leads to yo-yo dieting, of course.

And the same thing happens with exercise. Someone will decide, well, I really want to be more consistent with exercise, and instead of trying to realistically fit exercise into their lives, they decide that they're gonna go work out for an hour and a half seven days a week, which cannot last because it's not what our bodies are designed for. And then they give it up.

So, they'll go really hard for a little while, and then they will do nothing for a long time, which isn't helping them either. And as I mentioned at the beginning of this episode, when you have an all or nothing, perfectionist mentality like that, your actual accomplishments get downplayed. If you make a single mistake, you won't celebrate anything that you've done and you won't feel that you're worthy.

Hello! Me getting third in my law school class, but still not being able to stop thinking about the worst grade I got. It just makes it so that you can never be satisfied, and you're forever striving, and that can very easily lead to burnout. Oh, and if you now also have the lyrics of the Hamilton song, Satisfied, running through your head, we are on the same wavelength, thank you very much!

So look, this whole all or nothing, good or bad mentality is also what leads perfectionists to be big time procrastinators, and even worse for me with ADHD. Fear gets in the driver seat, and that fear of failure takes over and makes it really hard to even get started. And when you procrastinate the hell out of everything, that creates increased anxiety and stress levels. It can lead to lack of sleep or poor sleep; it can piss other people off in your life. So it's just all around not so healthy.

To take back our joy from number three, we're gonna have to change our mindset yet again. We have to eliminate this black and white thinking and learn to lean into the grey. So here's an easy way to visualize this:

Instead of thinking of everything in your goddam life as an off and on switch, like a light switch, a better way to think of it might be as a dial. So, envision a dial that you can turn up and down that has different number settings. Let's say zero through 10. Having options zero through 10 where the intensity increases as the numbers go up gives you a lot more options than an on and off switch where the off switch is no intensity and the on switch is all the motherfucking intensity aaahhhh!

So let's imagine that everything in your life has its own dial. You have a work dial, and you have a partner dial, and you have a hobby dial, and you have a food dial, and an exercise dial, and a mental health dial. Everything is on a dial that goes from zero to 10. When you consider your various

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commitments, and responsibilities, and preferences, chances are that you're only gonna be able to have maybe one or two of your life dials on a 10 at a time. Remembering that 10 is the highest level of intensity and perfection that is possible.

There's no way that you can have all of them at a 10, or even a nine. Let's assume that maybe the 10 isn't even really achievable for most people. So, when that's the case, you have to really think and prioritize and decide where do you want to put your energy? What's just not that important and can be a two, or a three, or a four right now? Even if it's not forever. What is, meh, it's kind of okay, you can keep it at a five or a six and it won't go to shambles. And what is gonna need to be at an eight or a nine or a 10 for you to feel like you're doing it justice?

Do you know that meme that was really popular a couple of years ago? It's a cartoon dog sitting at a table with a cup of coffee in front of him and there is fire all around him and there's smoke above him, and there is a little speech bubble that says, 'This is fine.' I feel like having perfectionism is a little bit like that.

Everything in your life feels like a fire, all the time, because you cannot tell the difference between what's a fire, what is smoke, and what is just nothing at all. Everything feels so urgent and it becomes hard to remember that it's about the aggregate of your choices over time. It's not about one mistake here or there. Like god forbid that two typos should take away from the meaning of an entire email or a book, right? Just because there is a mistake doesn't mean that there is no value there.

Alright, so number four is that while perfectionism can feel like it's mostly about how you view yourself, it's actually fueled by a fear of how other people view you. Brené Brown has really done some incredible research in this area and she has written a book called *The Gifts of Imperfection*. And this is a quote that comes from that book: "Perfectionism is not the same thing as striving to be your best. Perfectionism is the belief that if we live perfect, look perfect, and act perfect, we can minimize or avoid the pain of blame, judgment, and shame. It's a shield." And holy shit, did that resonate with me.

So many of us believe that through perfectionism we can find love and happiness, and that we will never disappoint people, and that bad things won't happen to us, and unfortunately, that is just not true. Because we can't be perfect, and even if we could, perfect isn't objective. So one person's idea of perfect is gonna be different from another's. Your partner's is different from your boss's, and so you're constantly bending yourself to the will of what other people expect you to be and want you to be, instead of just getting to be your authentic self.

And that's terrible, because what we all truly want is to be loved for the person that we are inside. To be respected for that person, to be seen as worthy for that person without having to hide behind other things, like being the smart one, or being the organized one, or being the beautiful one, or whatever.

So one of the things that we can do to take back our joy in this particular instance is to face our fear and see how much of it is truly valid. Will our

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partners and our bosses and our clients and our friends actually abandon us if we're a little bit less than perfect? The only way to find out is to allow yourself to practice being imperfect. So maybe if you're someone who will read an email over 10 times before you send it, try to read it over only eight or nine times next time and see if the chaos that you've imagined in your mind actually comes to fruition.

If when your partner folds the laundry or does the dishes you always have to run in and take over and do it yourself because they're not doing it 'right,' what does it feel like to step back? To not insist that you have to be the one to do it? Does your entire household fall into shambles? Wherever you're finding that perfectionism is most sucking up your time and energy, is there any wiggle room for you to come down just a little bit at a time and see what will happen if you don't exert quite as much effort as you have been?

This will help you to have more realistic standards. It will help you to stop seeing everything as a fire or smoke. And hopefully it will let you be a little bit more you as well, to lean into who you really are and not the perfectionist persona that you've painted yourself to be to please other people.

Okay, we've come to our fifth and final joy stealer, which is that perfectionism will lead you to believe that you have to do it all and that the entire burden is always on you, but you don't, and it's not.

If you're a perfectionist, there is a good chance that you were always the Type A, take-charge person in school growing up. Which means that when you were assigned to a group project, you wanted it to be perfect, and so you were the person who did the most work.

In fact, you may have redone other people's work because you didn't want their crappy work to affect your grade. You took charge of the situation, and if you were a little girl, people probably called you 'bossy.' I know that is what people called me! And you put in a bunch of time and energy, and it really pissed you off that you had to do it, but you couldn't trust the other kids to do the project well and your grade depended on it, so you did it. And that slacker kid in your group, he loved you because he knew that there would always be one of you in a group project.

Unfortunately, this mentality rarely gets left behind in grade school. Most people take it with them into adulthood and convince themselves that they are the only person who can be trusted. They are the only person who can do it right. And asking for help becomes excruciating.

Remember, a big part of perfectionism is maintaining control. So if you let people help you, that means you are relinquishing control, and you no longer feel safe. I still have trouble asking for help. It is not a skill that comes easily to me because I was raised to be an independent person, and I believed that that meant that I had to do everything on my own.

And it does not help that we live in this capitalist, bootstrapping society in the United States, that essentially tells us the same thing. Americans see self-reliance as a virtue. We fantasize about people who can create their own success and who don't need any help, but spoiler alert... Nobody can

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do it all on their own. Not me and not you. There are so many possible barriers to being able to do everything yourself, from your schedule to your cash flow, to your mental health, or your ability level. Sometimes it is simply more economical to not do everything on your own because doing so would waste your valuable time, energy, money, or other resources.

The only way to take back your joy from this situation is to stop putting the burden of the entire world and your entire life on your own shoulders, and instead, get comfortable asking for help when you need it and setting boundaries. Help can look like a lot of different things. Maybe it's asking a partner or a friend to take something off your plate because they have more capacity to handle it right now than you do. Maybe it's hiring a therapist, coach, tutor, cleaning crew for your house, a virtual assistant.

Maybe it's reaching out to a trusted friend for encouragement when you're having a rough day or week. Maybe it's delegating all or part of a work project to a team member who is better equipped to handle it.

Last year I finally hired my sister as my virtual assistant for my business because I knew that I needed help with some simple business tasks that were taking up too much of my time, but I was afraid to trust a stranger because I don't like to give up that control. I like to have complete control and direction of my whole business. So the way that I was able to get around that was kind of this midpoint of hiring my sister, because I trust her and I know that I can be candid with her about what I need. So sometimes when we need help but we're afraid to ask, we just need to think about a solution that might be a little less scary.

I mean my entire business exists because my clients were willing to reach out to me to ask for help. They all came to me at one point saying, "Hey, I could really use someone to guide me when it comes to having a better relationship with food, and my body, and with exercise. I need some assistance; can you help me?" And it's not because they are weak-willed or lacking in some way. My job exists because it can be really difficult to figure out all this stuff on your own.

And even if you could do it alone, you might have other things that you want to prioritize in your life. Like I said, maybe you're gonna put your work dial up to 10 and your personal life dial up to 10, in which case you don't have the capacity to put your wellness dial up to 10. So, hiring a coach is a way to have some assistance and have someone else to support you while you're going through that process.

I know it can be scary to trust other people, but we are social creatures and we are stronger when we give support to others and when we get support from others. Going it alone is not the answer.

If you're a perfectionist or like I now say, a recovering perfectionist, I hope that learning about these five ways that perfectionism can steal your joy helped you to see the ways that perfectionism is harming you and that some of those solutions I provided will prove helpful to you as you work to get out from under the rock that is the crushing pressure of perfectionism.

And if you're not a perfectionist, I can pretty much guarantee that you know at least one, whether it's somebody that you love or somebody that

# Redefining Health & Wellness

## #31

**Featured this episode:** Shohreh Davoodi

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you work with, so hopefully this episode has helped you to be able to understand them a little bit better.

When my perfectionism starts to rear its ugly head, I try to just remind myself that perfect doesn't exist. Life is complex. People and situations are a million shades of grey, not black and white, and we have to learn to give the benefit of the doubt to both ourselves and others. We have to trust that everything won't completely implode if we give up some control, even though it can feel that way. Making mistakes is how we learn and grow, and it's an integral part of being human. So, perfectionism really is trying to eradicate that necessary part of our humanity.

I have spent a lot of time getting in touch with my authentic self, shedding the layers of who I thought I was supposed to be and who other people wanted me to be, so that I could come out into the light. And to do that, I had to learn that good enough can be great and perfect isn't real, and I hope that through this episode, I have encouraged you to do the same.

[Music plays]

And that's our show for today. I appreciate you listening to and supporting the Redefining Health & Wellness podcast. If you enjoyed this episode, it would mean so much to me if you would subscribe and leave a review with your podcast provider of choice. It will really help other people who might benefit from the podcast to find it more easily.

I also love chatting with listeners, so feel free to screenshot from your podcast player, post on social media, and tag me. And if you're looking for more information on what I'm all about and how to work with me, head on over to [shohrehdavoodi.com](http://shohrehdavoodi.com). I hope to see you for the next episode.