

READING SAMPLE

Hans-Joerg Gierke

# PERFECTIONISM



## Superpower of Handicap?

How your high standards can push you to peak performance  
without damaging your relationships and mental health

# TABLE OF CONTENT

“Imperfect and happy beats perfect and stressed.”

Hans-Joerg Gierke

## PART 1

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>UNDERSTANDING PERFECTIONISM</b>   | <b>7</b> |
| 1. ANNA AND THE INVISIBLE BURDEN OF PERFECTION.....                                  | 8        |
| 2. WELCOME TO THE TENSION BETWEEN PERFECTIONISM .....                                | 11       |
| 3. ENTRANCE TEST – HOW PERFECTIONISTIC ARE YOU?.....                                 | 16       |
| 4. THE FIVE FACES OF PERFECTIONISM – WHICH TYPE ARE YOU?.....                        | 23       |
| 5. EXERCISES FOR THE HAPPY PERFECTIONIST – SITUATIONAL SWITCHING FOR EVERY TYPE..... | 30       |
| 6. THE CAUSES – WHERE DOES YOUR PERFECTIONISM.....                                   | 46       |
| COME FROM?   |          |
| 7. PERFECTIONISM IS NOT ALWAYS PERFECTIONISM.....                                    | 50       |

## PART 2

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>A NEW PERSPECTIVE</b>   | <b>57</b> |
| 8. USING PERFECTIONISM AS A SUPERPOWER .....   | 58        |
| 9. THE DARK SIDE – WHEN PERFECTIONISM BECOMES A HANDICAP.....  | 66        |
| 10. HIGH PERFORMANCE DESPITE PERFECTIONISM – THE CRUCIAL DIFFERENCE .....                            | 72        |
| 11. THE 3-GOAL ZONE APPROACH – DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN PERFECT, GOOD AND ACCEPTABLE PERFORMANCE ..... | 78        |

## PART 3

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>CHANGE – CONTROLLING PERFECTIONISM IN A TARGETED MANNER</b>                                  | <b>85</b> |
| 12. SITUATIONAL PERFECTIONISM – WHEN PERFECTION HELPS AND WHEN IT HARMS.....                    | 86        |
| 13. MENTAL TECHNIQUES FOR PERFECTIONISTS – HOW TOP ATHLETES DEAL WITH PERFECTIONISM .....       | 109       |
| 14. SCENARIO TRAINING FOR PERFECTIONISTS – BECOMING AWARE OF MISTAKES & REDUCING PRESSURE ..... | 112       |

## TABLE OF CONTENT

### PART 4

#### PERFECTIONISM IN THE MODERN WORLD **125**

- 15. PERFECTIONISM & SOCIAL MEDIA – THE PRESSURE TO COMPARE IN THE DIGITAL WORLD..... 126
- 16. PERFECTIONISTS IN TEAMS & LEADERSHIP – WORKING TOGETHER EFFICIENTLY WITHOUT LOSING CONTROL..... 132
- 17. PERFECTIONISM IN YOUR PERSONAL LIFE – WHEN STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE MAKES LIFE DIFFICULT ..... 140

### PART 5

#### YOUR INDIVIDUAL PROGRAM – YOUR PERFECTIONISM, YOUR PATH **147**

- 18. THE 7-STEP PLAN: FROM PERFECTIONISM TO OPTIMAL PERFORMANCE..... 148
- 19. YOUR PERFECTIONISM LOG – MEASURING PROGRESS & STAYING ON TRACK ..... 152
- 20. WHY IMPERFECT IS THE NEW PERFECT ..... 206

Imprint ..... 212

“I use my perfectionism  
as a superpower.”

Hans-Joerg Gierke

# **PART 1**

**UNDERSTANDING PERFECTIONISM**

# 1 ANNA AND THE INVISIBLE BURDEN OF PERFECTION

Imagine it's the middle of the night. The city has long since fallen asleep, but Anna sits in a brightly lit office, her shoulders hunched, her eyes tired but alert. In front of her the laptop screen flickers with an almost finished presentation for tomorrow's meeting. She could go to bed now; the slides are excellent in terms of content, and the facts are spot on. But something is holding her captive, an inner voice that whispers relentlessly: "Not perfect yet ...". For the fifth time she moves graphics back and forth by millimetres, refining formulations that are already precise. Her heart is pounding, not with excitement about the meeting but with gnawing fear: what if a mistake happens? What if someone discovers a weakness? Every sentence must be perfect, every number must be correct down to the last detail. While the world outside is winding down Anna is fighting her own exhaustion – and that inner voice that whispers, "Try harder, otherwise you're not good enough."

Do you know moments like those? Situations in which "good enough" is simply not enough because an invisible force inside you urges you to perfect everything to the last detail? Perhaps like Anna you often stay up late to improve the smallest details that hardly anyone would notice. Or you put off projects out of a deep-seated fear that they might not be flawless yet. This inner pressure can feel like being driven and crushed by an invisible hand at the same time. It robs you of the lightness of everyday life, the joy of creation and well-deserved peace.



At the end of the night Anna sits exhausted in front of her slides. But the satisfaction she had hoped for fails to materialise. Despite all her efforts she still sees something that could be improved, a tiny flaw that only exists in her eyes. With this nagging feeling of inadequacy, she falls into bed – but she can hardly sleep. The merry-go-round of thoughts continues: Could I have done more? Was it really good enough? The irony is that Anna is perceived by others as extremely reliable, efficient and detail-oriented. But internally she pays a high price: constant pressure, paralysing self-doubt and the fear of not being good enough despite all her efforts.

If you recognise yourself in Anna's story you are not alone. This fictional narrative reflects the reality of many perfectionists. But this is precisely where the first great added value of this book lies for you: you realise that you are not alone with these feelings. Perfectionism is widespread and the challenges associated with it are real.

Understanding that this inner struggle is a common trait among many highly motivated and committed people can be an enormous relief. It is the first step towards breaking out of isolation and recognising that your perfectionism, although it sometimes feels like a burden is also an enormous source of strength and potential.

This book will not only help you understand the mechanisms of your perfectionism but also show you concrete ways to regain control over this inner driver. You will learn how to harness the positive aspects of your perfectionism – such as high standards, attention to detail and commitment – without being overwhelmed by the negative aspects – such as fear, procrastination and exhaustion. Anna's story is the starting point for your journey towards happy perfectionism where you can fully develop your strengths without losing yourself in the process. It's about consciously deciding when „perfect“ is necessary and when „good enough“ is the smarter choice in order to preserve your energy and zest for life. Join me on this journey to transform your perfectionism from a handicap into your greatest superpower.

“Anna's story is the starting point  
for your journey towards  
becoming a happy perfectionist.”

# 2 ■ WELCOME TO THE TENSION BETWEEN PERFECTIONISM

Perfectionism is a phenomenon that is omnipresent in our modern society. We encounter it in many different areas of life – whether at work, in sport, at school or even in our personal relationships. It is often seen as a desirable trait, the engine that drives us to peak performance and enables us to pursue our goals with extreme precision and care. But behind this shiny façade there is often a downside characterised by immense pressure, constant self-criticism and fear of failure. This book delves deeply into this area of tension and illuminates the multi-layered facets of perfectionism. It is an invitation to question your own relationship with this powerful inner driver and to discover ways to harness its positive forces without being overwhelmed by its dark side.

## WHY THIS BOOK? PERFECTIONISM – A CURSE OR A BLESSING?

There is no simple answer to the question of whether perfectionism is a blessing or a curse. As is so often the case in life the truth lies in the eye of the beholder and in the way we deal with this inner urge. For many people perfectionism is a tireless companion that spurs them on to extraordinary achievements. It is the voice that whispers “You can do even better!” and drives us to continuously improve ourselves. But this voice can also become

“For many, perfectionism is the tireless companion that spurs them on to extraordinary achievements.”

a relentless critic that never lets us be satisfied, traps us in a vicious circle of effort and dissatisfaction and robs us of the joy of our achievements. The audiobook manuscript on which this book is based begins with the same example of Anna who works late into the night on a presentation even though the content is already good. This scenario is all too familiar to many of us. It shows how the desire for perfection can turn into a paralysing compulsion that robs us of the ease of everyday life and leaves us dissatisfied despite all our efforts.

This book was written to shed light on precisely these questions. It aims to help you understand the mechanisms of perfectionism, explore its causes and above all provide practical strategies for consciously controlling this inner driver. My goal is to show you how you can use the superpower of perfectionism to your advantage without compromising your mental health or your relationships. It's about living a more relaxed and fulfilling life in which you can fully develop your strengths without constantly feeling driven by an unattainable ideal.

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\*Anna Perfect is the AI influencer for this project and can be found on social media platforms such as LinkedIn, TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram. Her videos have already been viewed more than 10.000 times on YouTube: [www.youtube.com/@AnnaPerfect](https://www.youtube.com/@AnnaPerfect)

## MY PERSONAL JOURNEY: FROM PERFECTIONIST TO HAPPY PERFECTIONIST

I can speak from my own experience when it comes to perfectionism. My personal history is closely linked to this phenomenon both in my role as an athlete and in my current work as a mental trainer. Early on in my life I became familiar with the relentless voice of perfectionism.

In archery, my passion and former sporting home, precision and flawlessness are essential components. Every shot must be on target, every movement must be identical in order to achieve the best possible result. This pursuit of the perfect shot drove me to peak performance, but it also allowed me to experience the dark side of perfectionism. The constant pursuit of flawlessness can lead to tension, excessive pressure and ultimately to a blockage that prevents actual success. I have experienced first-hand how the desire to do everything perfectly can turn into a paralysing compulsion that takes away the joy of sport and reduces performance.

However, these experiences were not in vain. They prompted me to take a close look at the psychological mechanisms behind perfectionism and to search for ways to consciously control this inner driver. This led me to become a mental trainer where I now help people recognise and use their own mental strengths to achieve their goals – without sabotaging themselves in the process. This book is the result of this personal journey and the insights I have gained along the way. My aim is to provide you with the tools that I myself have learned and applied on my journey to use perfectionism as a superpower rather than experiencing it as a handicap.

## THE PERFECT SHOT? WHAT WE CAN LEARN ABOUT PERFECTIONISM FROM ARCHERS

Archery is a fascinating example of how the pursuit of perfection can both inspire and paralyze. For an archer the “perfect shot” is the goal. Every single aspect of the shooting process – from posture to aiming to releasing the arrow – must be precise and repeatable. The slightest deviation can cause the arrow to miss its target. This pursuit of technical perfection is essential for success at the highest level. But this is also where the trap of perfectionism lies. If the archer is too fixated on every detail, if they take too long to aim at the centre, they may become tense. The muscle holding the draw weight tires, the posture becomes unstable, and the shot becomes inaccurate. Paradoxically in this case the excessive desire for perfection leads to a worse result.

What can we learn from this? Archery teaches us that there is a subtle difference between striving for excellence and the paralyzing compulsion for perfection. It is not about giving up perfection but about consciously controlling it. An experienced archer knows when to focus on technique and when to let go and trust the flow of movement. They learn to deal with mistakes and use them as feedback instead of letting them discourage them. These lessons are universal and can be applied to many areas of life.

They show us that perfectionism can be a superpower if we learn to use it as a tool and not as a relentless master that captivates us. It’s about focusing on the process, developing confidence in our own abilities and accepting that even in the pursuit of excellence there must be room for imperfection. Only then can we reach our full potential and deliver the “perfect shot” – in sport as in life – with ease and joy.



“The pursuit of the perfect shot has driven me to peak performance, but it has also allowed me to experience the dark side of perfectionism.”



**ALSO AVAILABLE AS AN  
AUDIOBOOK!**



I wish you every success and joy  
on your journey!

**Hans-Joerg Gierke**

Mental trainer for competitive sports and owner  
of HJG Mental Flow



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Hans-Joerg Gierke

**Perfectionism. Superpower or Handicap?**

How your high standards can push you to peak performance without  
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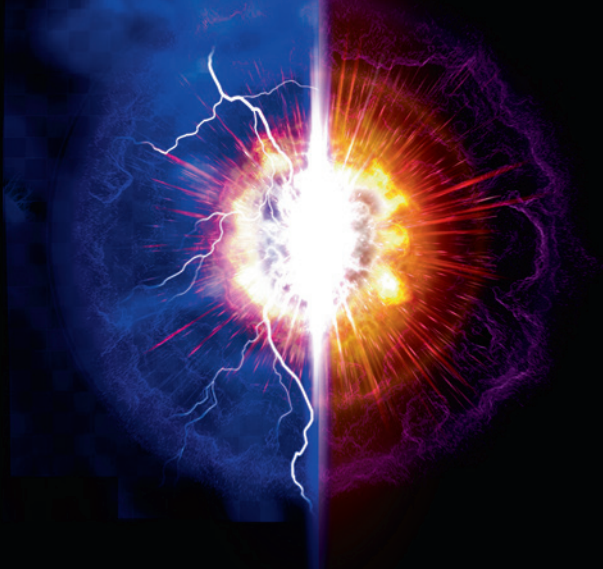
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## **PERFECTIONISM—YOUR GREATEST FRIEND OR YOUR WORST ENEMY?**

Do you feel like you're never good enough, even though others admire your achievements? Do your high standards rob you of sleep and strain your relationships? Then this book is your key to a new balance.

Hans-Joerg Gierke, an experienced mental trainer and perfectionist himself, shows you how to turn your perfectionism into a superpower. Instead of being paralyzed by self-doubt and overwhelm, you'll learn how to clearly define your standards, build your mental strength, and set healthy boundaries.

This book is not dry theory, but real help for anyone who wants to learn firsthand how to deal with perfectionism without letting it dominate their life. With motivating insights, honest stories, and practical tips, Hans-Joerg guides you step by step on your journey to peak performance – and a life that truly feels good.

**Recognize the power within you and let perfectionism  
work for you – not against you!**