



DR. NADINE MACALUSO
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Perfectionism Attacks

1. **Perfectionism.** My perfectionism arose as an attempt to gain safety and support in my dangerous family. Perfection is a self-persecutory myth. I do not have to be perfect to be safe or loved in the present. I am letting go of relationships that require perfection. I have a right to make mistakes. Mistakes do not make me a mistake. Every mistake or mishap is an opportunity to practice loving myself in the places I have never been loved.

2. **All-or-None & Black-and-White Thinking.** I reject extreme or over-generalized descriptions, judgments or criticisms. One negative happenstance does not mean I am stuck in a never-ending pattern of defeat. Statements that describe me as “always” or “never” this or that, are typically grossly inaccurate.

3. **Self-Hate, Self-Disgust & Toxic Shame.** I commit to myself. I am on my side. I am a good enough person. I refuse to trash myself. I turn shame back into blame and disgust, and externalize it to anyone who shames my normal feelings and foibles. As long as I am not hurting anyone, I refuse to be shamed for normal emotional responses like anger, sadness, fear and depression. I especially refuse to attack myself for how hard it is to completely eliminate the self-hate habit.

4. **Micromanagement/Worrying/Obsessing/Looping/Over-Futurizing.** I will not repetitively examine details over and over. I will not jump to negative conclusions. I will not endlessly second-guess myself. I cannot change the past. I forgive all my past mistakes. I cannot make the future perfectly safe. I will stop hunting for what could go wrong. I will not try to control the uncontrollable. I will not micromanage myself or others. I work in a way that is “good enough”, and I accept the existential fact that my efforts sometimes bring desired results and sometimes they do not.





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5. **Unfair/Devaluing Comparisons to others or to your most perfect moments.** I refuse to compare myself unfavorably to others. I will not compare “my insides to their outsides”. I will not judge myself for not being at peak performance all the time. In a society that pressures us into acting happy all the time, I will not get down on myself for feeling bad.

6. **Guilt.** Feeling guilty does not mean I am guilty. I refuse to make my decisions and choices from guilt. Sometimes I need to feel the guilt and do it anyway. In the inevitable instances when I inadvertently hurt someone, I will apologize, make amends, and let go of my guilt. I will not apologize over and over. I am no longer a victim. I will not accept unfair blame. Guilt is sometimes camouflaged fear: “I feel guilty and afraid, but I am not guilty or in danger.”

7. **“Shoulding”.** I will substitute the words “want to” for “should” and only follow this imperative if it feels like I want to, unless I am under legal, ethical or moral obligation.

8. **Over-productivity/Workaholism/Busyholism.** I am a human being not a human doing. I will not choose to be perpetually productive. I am more productive in the long run, when I balance work with play and relaxation. I will not try to perform at 100% all the time. I subscribe to the normalcy of vacillating along a continuum of efficiency.

9. **Harsh Judgments of Self & Others/ Name-Calling.** I will not let the bullies and critics of my early life win by joining and agreeing with them. I refuse to attack myself or abuse others. I will not displace the criticism and blame that rightfully belongs to my dysfunctional caretakers onto myself or current people in my life. “I care for myself.

