

175964 - She suffers from perfectionism, which leads to procrastination

the question

I suffer from perfectionism, and I realized recently that perfectionists are the ones who procrastinate the most, because of this condition. I have also experienced that myself. I want to rid myself of procrastination because it comes from the Shaytan. Praise be to Allah, I do not procrastinate in matters having to do with religion, but I do that in other matters. I would like you to give me some advice that will enable me to rid myself of perfectionism and thus be able to resist procrastinating. I hope that you can help.

Detailed answer

Firstly:

The Muslim's striving for perfection in his attitude, worship and interactions with people is a good thing, and his efforts to attain that are efforts aimed at attaining sublime goals. But this perfectionism may conflict with the real-life situation in which the Muslim lives, and that may lead to frustration. Moreover, he may find himself weak in some aspects, so he gives up on goodness altogether. Therefore there is nothing better than moderation in all things and striving to do one's best. This is the advice that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) gave to his ummah when he said: "Do your best, but do not go to extremes; pray during the forenoon and the afternoon, and during a part of the night; always adopt a moderate course and you will reach your goal." Narrated by al-Bukhari (6098). See a commentary on this hadith in the answer the question no. [70314](#).

Hence one of the most important things that the Muslim should do in order to ward off perfectionism is being realistic. So he should not go to extremes in attempting to do that which he may not be able to do, or he may not be able to continue doing, which would cause him to become frustrated, and that in turn would lead to him giving up striving for what is best.

Among the things that are said by specialists who treat your condition of perfectionism are the following:

1. You should set realistic goals that are possible to achieve and give up perfectionism which may prevent you from reaching these goals.
2. You should not compare yourself to others, and you should convince yourself that each person has his own talents and abilities that suit him. This point may be very important, because there are errors that many people make in raising their children when they are small, as they raise them to be perfectionists with regard to their study grades, so the children try to please their parents for fear of failure. Thus perfectionism becomes deeply rooted, which causes anxiety when a person experiences reality and sees it with his own eyes.
3. You should not fear criticism from other people when you are striving to change, improve yourself and live your real life.
4. Finally, there is nothing wrong with going to see a trustworthy specialist psychologist. Perhaps if he listens to you and you talk to him, he may be able to treat your condition, by Allah's leave.

Secondly:

With regard to dealing with procrastination – which refers to delaying things and putting them off – it may be dealt with in several ways, including the following:

1. Deciding to be firm and have strong resolve, and deciding to work hard today so that you may rest tomorrow, is better than resting today and having to strive hard tomorrow.
2. Reminding yourself constantly that procrastination stems from helplessness and weakness, and helplessness and weakness are not characteristics of the Muslim. Rather if a person is proud of being human, he would not like to have these characteristics.
3. Constantly calling upon Allah in supplication and beseeching Him to free you from helplessness and laziness.

4. Keeping away from lazy people and procrastinators, and keeping company with people of resolve, determination and strength, for that will lead you to strive against your nafs and become a person of resolve, determination and strength.

5. Learning from the early generations and the way in which they viewed procrastination and had a strong aversion towards it, which led them to keep away from it in word and deed, and in their thoughts and behaviour.

The caliph ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) said: Part of strength is not to put off today’s work until tomorrow."(*Afat ‘ala at-Tariq* by Shaykh Sayyid Nuh).

We ask Allah, may He be exalted, to help and guide you to do that which pleases Him, and to make you among those who are serious and obedient to Him.

And Allah knows best.