



# Spectrum Podcasts

Dr. Jane Bluestein

Instructional Support Services, Inc. • Father Sky Media

## **Perfectionism: What's Bad About Being Too Good?**

**Guest:** Dr. Miriam Adderholdt

**Recorded:** February 4, 2013

**Background and Bio:** Dr. Miriam Adderholdt has been involved in the field of gifted education since January 1980. She has a Master's degree in Special Education of the Gifted and Talented and a doctorate in educational psychology with a concentration in gifted education, research methods, and creativity. She has worked as a resource teacher, grades K-9, and has also taught at various universities, community colleges, and public school systems. She is the award-winning author of *Perfectionism: What's Bad About Being Too Good?* (Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing, 1999) and has presented papers at conferences throughout the country since the mid-1980s.

**Summary of Podcast:** In a culture that praises and rewards excellence and accomplishment, how can we avoid crossing the line to a dangerous desire for perfection? Dr. Jane Bluestein talks with Dr. Miriam Adderholdt about what perfectionism is, how it can negatively affect our social and emotional health, and the difference between perfectionism and what Dr. Adderholdt calls "the healthy pursuit of excellence." They examine ways in which high-achieving students may be at risk, even when they seem to be doing fine. Topics include the importance of learning from our mistakes, the value of trial and error, the pressure to perform, the power of bibliotherapy, and the potential impact of encouragement.

### **Additional Resources:**

***Perfectionism: What's Bad About Being Too Good?*** by Dr. Miriam Adderholdt (Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing, 1999)

**"Perfectionism vs. The Healthy Pursuit of Excellence,"** by Dr. Miriam Adderholdt. Available: <http://janebluestein.com/2013/perfectionism-vs-healthy-pursuit-of-excellence/>

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**"Picking up the Pieces: Reclaiming our Essence,"** by Dr. Jane Bluestein. Available at <http://janebluestein.com/2012/picking-up-the-pieces/>

**"The Power of Discouragement: A Fable."** Available at <http://janebluestein.com/2012/the-power-of-discouragement/>

**Articles from Great Potential Press** for parents, educators, and other professionals guiding gifted learners. Available at <http://www.greatpotentialpress.com/authors/author-articles>

**"Perfectionism,"** article on the Student Affairs Counseling Center University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Web site. Available at [http://www.counselingcenter.illinois.edu/?page\\_id=113](http://www.counselingcenter.illinois.edu/?page_id=113)

**"Psych Basics: Perfectionism."** List of articles available on the Psychology Today Web site at <http://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/perfectionism>

**"Inside the Minds of Perfectionists."** Interview with Melinda Beck, health columnist. Article and video available at <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204840504578085802751238578.html>

**"10 Steps to Conquer Perfectionism,"** by Therese J. Borchard, Associate Editor. Available on the PsychCentral Web site at <http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2011/05/31/10-steps-to-conquer-perfectionism-2/all/1/>

**"The Power of Vulnerability,"** by Dr. Brené Brown. Video available at <http://www.brenebrown.com/videos/>

**The Gift of Imperfection: Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are.** Book by Dr. Brené Brown.

**"Killing us Softly: Jean Kilbourne on Women in Media and Advertising."** Video available at <http://karen-culturalcritique.blogspot.com/2009/01/amazing-analysis-of-women-in-media-and.html>

**Bibliotherapy resources for Gifted and Talented Perfectionists.** Dr. Adderholdt provided this list of resources for the gifted student and

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professional to select together. In each instance, the main character is a perfectionist. Adderholdt recommends a process by which the student reads the book and identifies with the main character after which the student and professional coach (teacher, counselor) work through the information they have read and work on a cleansing of the emotions (or catharsis.) "In this way," Adderholdt writes, "the students and the professional gain insight." The final step involves the application process where the students and professional apply new-found insight to their own lives. "Perfectionism can be a serious problem, especially to the gifted and talented student. The following books can be used as bibliotherapy to help... [these] students learn more about this often self-defeating mindset and hopefully develop their own coping strategies."

Adderholdt, M and J. Goldberg. *Perfectionism: What's Bad About Being Too Good?* Revised and updated edition. Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, 1999.

Blume, J. *Here's to You, Rachel Robinson*. New York: Yearling, 1994.

Bottner, B. *The World's Greatest Expert on Absolutely Everything is Crying*. New York: Dell Publishing Company, Inc., 1986.

Chesswell, H. *Ordinary Jack*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1977.

Deuker, C. *On the Devil's Court*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1988.

Fritz, J. *Where Do You Think You're Going Christopher Columbus?* New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1980.

Fritz, J. *What's the Big Idea Ben Franklin?* New York: Penguin Group, U.S.A., 2000.

Graves, K. *Loretta: Ace Pinky Scout*. New York: Scholastic Press, 2002.

Hoffius, S. *Winners and Losers*. New York: Simon Schuster, 1993.

Jones, C. *Mistakes That Worked*. New York: A Doubleday Book for Young Readers, 1991.

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Jones, C. *Accidents May Happen: Fifty New Inventions Discovered*. New York: Delacorte Books for Young Readers, 1998.

Lobel, A. *Fables*. New York: Harper and Row, 1980.

Ludwig, J. *Too Perfect*. Illustrated by L. Fields. Berkeley, CA: Tricycle Press, 2009.

Manes, S. *Be a Perfect Person in Just Three Days!* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982.

Matlin, M. and D. Cooney. *Nobody's Perfect*. New York: Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2006.

McDermott, G. *Sun Flight*. New York: Four Winds Press, 1980.

Provinsen, A & M. *Leonardo Da Vinci*. New York: The Viking Press, 1984.

Ryan, M. *The Trouble with Perfect*. New York: Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1995.

Seamands, D. *Healing for Damaged Emotions*. Colorado Springs, CO: Victor Publishing Company, 2002.

Smith, D. *Dreams and Drummers*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Publishing Company, 1978.

Stein, R. *The Story of the Flight at Kitty Hawk*. Chicago: Children's Press, 1981.

Tchudi, S. *The Valedictorian*. Unionville, NY: Royal Fireworks Press, 2001.

Yee, L. *Millicent Min, Girl Genius*. New York: Arthur A. Levine, 2003.

Zadra, D. *Mistakes are Great*. Mankato, MN: Creative Education, Inc., 1986.

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