

Is Perfection Holding You Back In Your Career?

Tina Neve

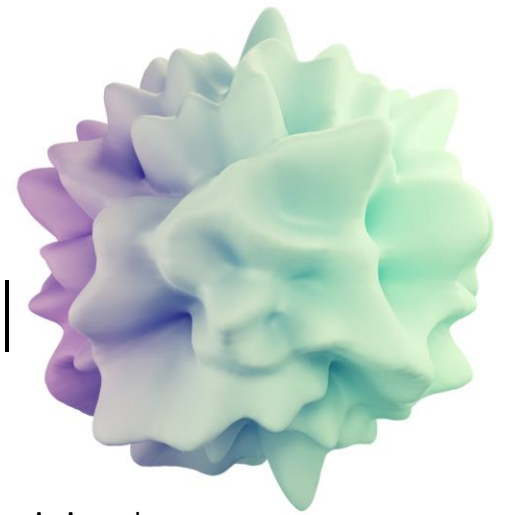
Midlife Career Coach and Therapist

Human
DECISIONS

“Striving for perfection is considered a valuable asset or a desirable flaw, sometimes perceived to lead to increased efficiency”

Ozbilar et al (2015)

Perfectionism is multidimensional



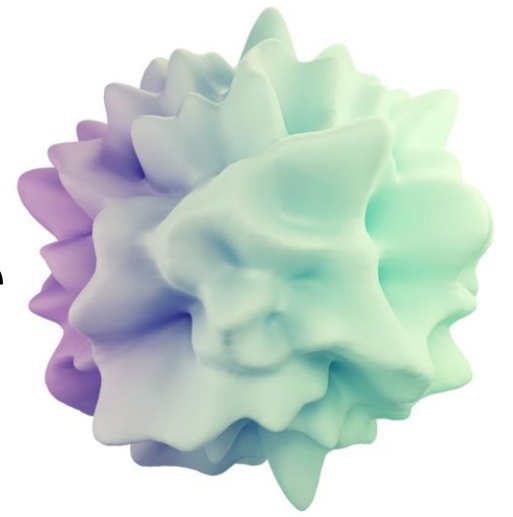
Self Orientated Perfectionism – Setting of high personal standards, critical self evaluation and avoidance of failure.

Other Orientated Perfectionism – Beliefs and unrealistic expectations of the capabilities of others. This can lead to blame, lack of trust and feelings of hostility towards others.

Social Prescribed Perfectionism – Internal perception that others are exerting the pressure to be perfect, experienced as excessive, uncontrollable and unfair.

Perfectionist Self Presentation – Perfectionist self promotion and avoiding any public disclosure of mistakes.

Perfectionism in the workplace



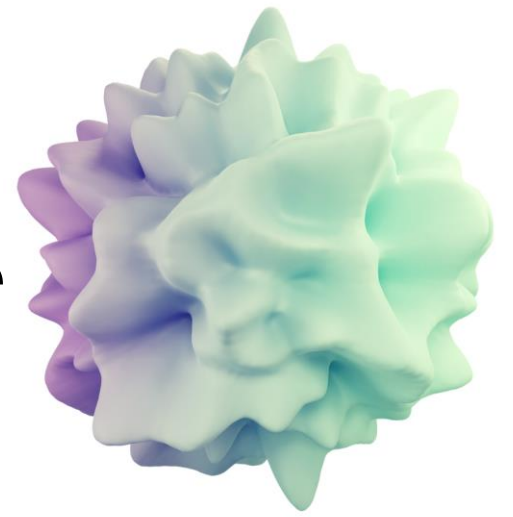
High Standards

- Unrealistic goals
- Control

No Errors

- Fear of failure
- Unable to take criticism or feedback
- Inability to learn from mistakes
- Fixed Mindset

Perfectionism in the workplace



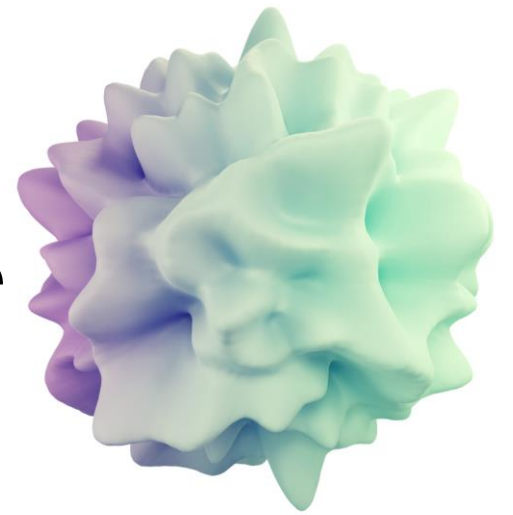
Critical of Self and Others

- Self doubt
- Lack of Confidence
- Unable to accept praise
- Rarely satisfied
- Intolerant of imperfection in others

Delay and Procrastination

- Missed deadlines and goals
- Focus on details vs pragmatism
- Working longer hours
- Inability to be flexible

Perfectionism in the workplace



Mental Health and Wellbeing

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Stress
- Burnout
- Lonely
- Poor work life balance

Research clearly shows a link between perfectionism, burnout and workaholism

Where does perfectionism come from?

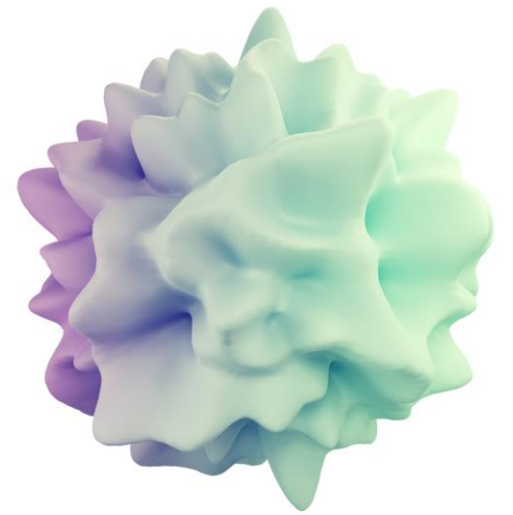
The brain develops during our early years so is impacted by

Parents - demanding, perfectionist, distracted or overwhelmed

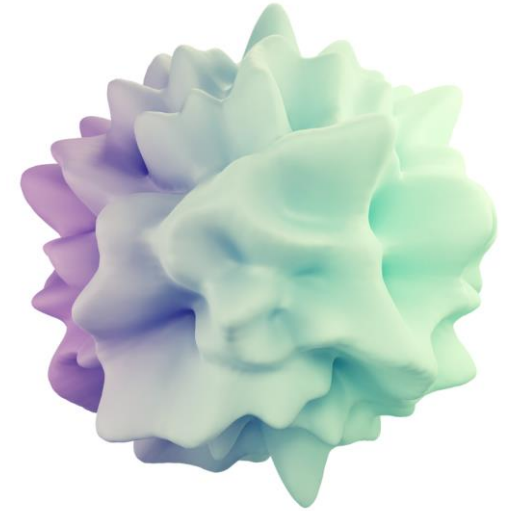
Culture and Media – the need to live up to images on screen

Education - success is only for the best and brightest

Naturally highly sensitive to and aware of the world around them



Perfectionism is driven by FEAR



But the underlying belief is
I am not good enough

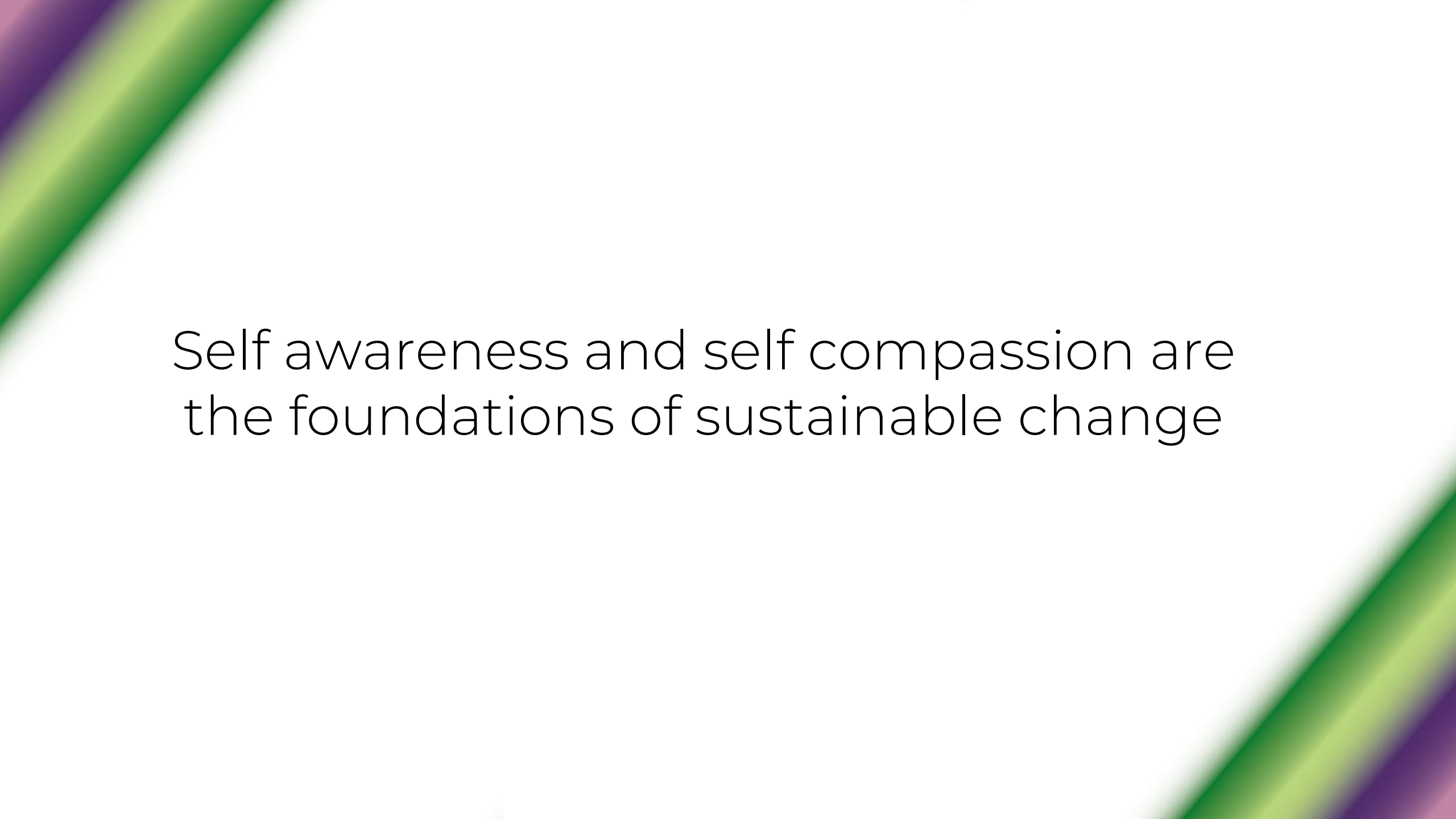
Perfectionism is a coping or survival strategy

The Neuroscience Perspective



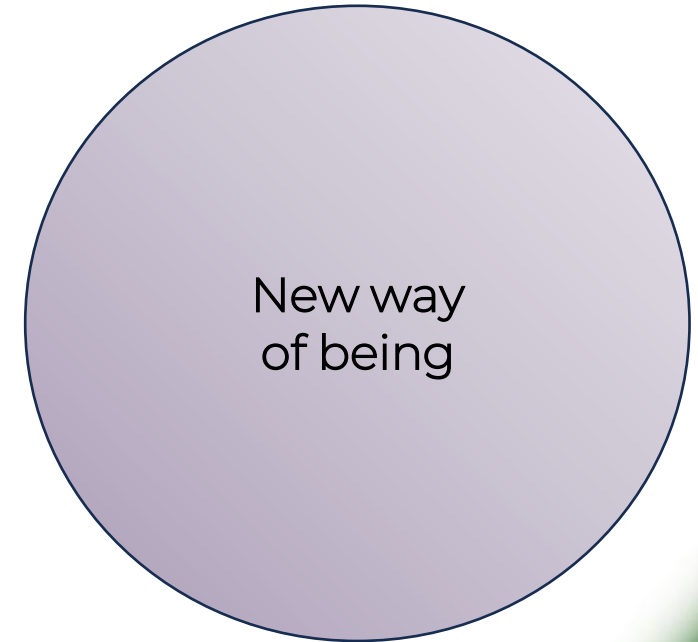
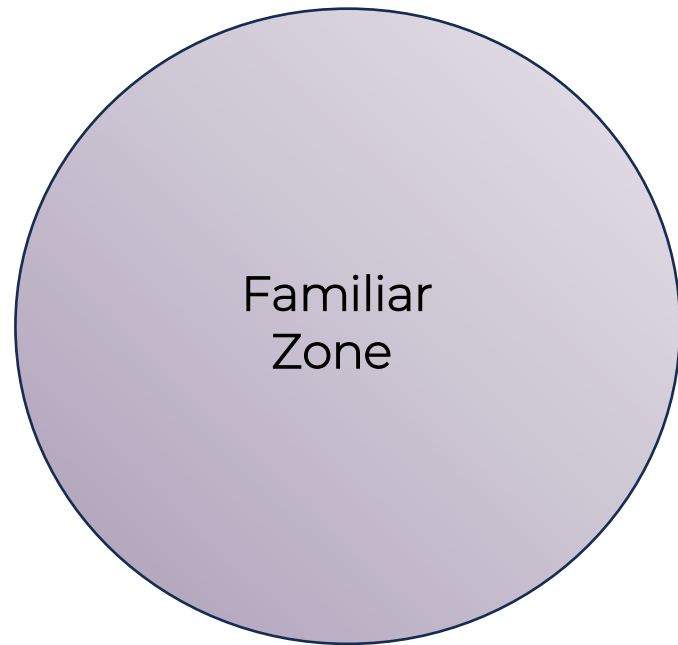
As the brain develops it creates pathways and patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaviour, that become familiar and automatic.

The brain likes familiarity more than comfort.



Self awareness and self compassion are
the foundations of sustainable change

The hardest place to leave is your familiar zone



Challenging Your Fears

All or nothing thinking: You see things in absolutes – no grey areas.

Mind reading: You assume others are thinking the same as you.

Double standard: You hold yourself to a higher standard than everyone else.

Catastrophizing: You expect the worst.

Labelling : You label yourself negatively.

Magical Thinking : You think everything will be better when.....

Should statements : You judge yourself and criticize yourself for what you should be doing?

Challenging Your Fears

1. Be aware of your negative thoughts – This takes time and effort
2. Check for any distorted thinking. You don't have to be perfect about which one you select.
3. Challenge the distortion. Look for evidence for or against your thought. Be compassionate (this is often the hardest part)

What would you say to a friend in this situation?
How do you know if this is accurate?
Is this thought helpful?
Are there other ways I can think about this situation?
Is it really in my control?
Am I assuming the worst?
Am I making this personal when it isn't?
Am I blaming myself unnecessarily?

4. Replace with more realistic thoughts.



As the brain develops it creates pathways of thinking, feeling and behaviour, that become familiar and automatic.

But – we have neuroplasticity throughout our lives

Focus on your strengths



Strengths

Magnifying your weaknesses

Downplaying your strengths

What are strengths?

- Something that you are naturally good at, love doing and find **ENERGISING!**
- A strength is something that you **can't NOT** do!
- They feel like a **natural** part of you.

Aware

Apply

Amplify

Amend

Does this work?

“I think it can take its toll on mental health. As someone who has these tendencies, I find that I overthink things, which is mentally taxing.

However, on the plus side, I do know that I have these tendencies and as result, I have consistently sought out ways to relieve this for myself. For years I've been doing things like exercise, yoga, and mindfulness which does bring balance to the overthinking I do. I've also had to learn how to do different, more positive self-talk.

I find that as I reflect on my work and interactions, I can be harsh on myself but concentrating on my thoughts and inner voice has improved how I feel about myself.”

An alternative perspective

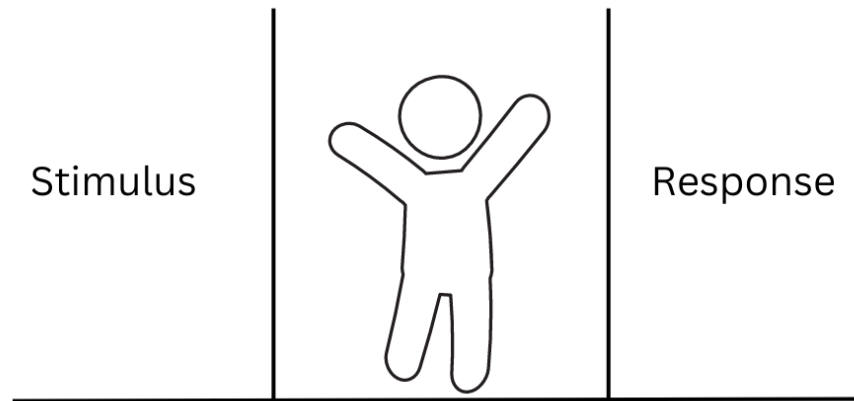
Positive Striving

- Driven by desire to excel
- Setting stretch goals
- Actively seeking feedback
- Flexible approach
- Sees the bigger picture
- Self-aware
- Collaboration

Perfectionism

- Driven by fear
- Setting unattainable goals
- Avoiding feedback
- Seeks control
- Focus on detail
- Self-critical
- Isolation

“Between the stimulus and response, there is a space. And in that space lies our freedom and power to choose our responses. In our response lies our growth and our freedom” Viktor Frankl



FREE 30 Minute Call

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