


**Perfection**  
**...the Illusion...**

are you sacrificing  
health, well-being, family, joy  
chasing the unattainable?

**Is it worth it?**

 **TRANSITION HOUSE**  
Changing Lives by Creating Pathways for Mental Wellness  
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*TH Wellness Project's Vision:  
to empower personal well-being, improve mental wellness and increase life joy.  
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# WHEN FAILURE IS NOT AN OPTION

STAYING WELL IN A WORLD OF UNREALISTIC, UNHEALTHY EXPECTATIONS

*“When failure is not an option, we can forget about creativity, learning, and innovation. Dr. Brene Brown  
“Expectations feeds frustration. It is an unhealthy attachment to people, things and outcomes we wish we could  
control; but don’t.” – Dr. Steve Maraboli*

## What are Unrealistic Expectations?

- Perfection is not a realistic or healthy expectation... yet we live in a world that often wants and expects it.
- When more is expected than is healthy, ‘humanly possible,’ – the outcomes can include:
  - Increased stress levels
  - Unhealthy eating habits
  - Sleep issues
  - Substance use/abuse/addiction – including but not limited to alcohol, prescription drugs, illegal drugs, caffeine, energy drinks...
  - Health issues
  - Strained and/or damaged relationships

## Compromised Support Systems

- The above mentioned outcomes tend to lead to loss of healthy support systems.
- The loss of support increases the unhealthy coping skills to deal with the unrealistic expectations.
- Individual’s sense of worthiness can continue to decline therefore creating a ‘reverse tornado effect.’
- So what is the ‘Reverse Tornado Effect’:
  - start with an unrealistic expectation
  - use of unhealthy coping skills to manage the expectation
  - the result being damage to healthy support systems
  - then reliance on unhealthy coping skills to an even greater degree as the support systems are lost
  - meanwhile the expectations remain while physical and emotional health is compromised
  - the problem still exists, however the person trying to resolve the challenge is dealing with sleep deprivation, perhaps substance use/abuse, increased stress levels, compromised well-being, increase in unhealthy relationships, increased financial challenges because of overspending, etc.



- This can take someone from unrealistic expectation to reverse tornado to complete self-destruction



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## Perfectionism

- Perfectionism and unrealistic expectations go hand in hand.
- The disappointment associated with failure for a perfectionist is far greater than to others without this expectation.
- Doing a good job is perceived as insufficient – anything less than perfect is considered failure.
- The thinking – anything other than 1<sup>st</sup> place is considered failure – 2<sup>nd</sup> place is the 1<sup>st</sup> loser.

## Stopping the Reverse Tornado

- Wellness Planning and acceptance of imperfection can stop or at least slow down the downward spiral.
- Acceptance that the triggers for these challenges will always exist sets the stage for healthier planning and creation of new ways to cope.

## Wellness Plans

- We often hold Wellness Plans in our heads but they may not make it to paper.
- Let's take the time today to see where everyone is at in developing your Wellness Plan.
- The Steps:
  - Identify Trigger Situations
  - Identify Healthy Support Systems
  - Begin Creation of Healthy Alternative Behaviors
  - Create a List of Personal Strengths
  - Have a list of Healthy Behaviors and Strengths written
  - If you want, you can create a decorative "Wellness Plan" – include:
    - Photos of people who are part of healthy support
    - Images of serene environments
    - Reminders of worthiness
    - \_\_\_\_\_(fill in the blank)

## Wrap Up

*"Manage your expectations and you'll manage your disappointments." - Todd Lohentry*  
*"Perfection means not perfect actions in a perfect world, but appropriate actions in an imperfect one." – R.H.*

