


Positive Schools 2018
Nobody's perfect!
helping students manage faults,
failings & stuff-ups

Dr Toni Noble

www.bounceback.com.au



Institute for Positive Psychology & Wellbeing Helping students manage failings, faults and stuff-ups. Positive Schools Conference 2018. toni@bounceback.com.au



Overview

- What is perfectionism?
- How can we help?



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3 types of perfectionism

- Self oriented
 - placing irrational desire on self to be perfect
- Socially prescribed
 - thinking others judge them harshly & expect them to be perfect
- Other-oriented
 - Expecting others to be perfect

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Significant increases in perfectionism in young people since 1980s

- self oriented perfectionism by 10%
- socially prescribed perfectionism by 33%
- other-oriented perfectionism by 16%

• Curran & Hill, Psychological Bulletin 2017

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|--|---|
| Fear of failing, making mistakes | Striving for impossible goals Perfect self Perfect life |
| Critical, irrational self talk Repetitive catastrophic thinking | Hopelessness Anxiety Depression Eating disorders |

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Why increase?

Role of social media

- Perfect body, perfect life


Instagram:

- 800 million monthly active users
- Registers 4.2 billion likes every 24 hours


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What about perfectionism at school?

- 42% of NSW Year 12 students with high levels of anxiety (clinical concern)
- Where does pressure come from?
 - Self-oriented: 44%
 - Socially prescribed: parents: 35%; teachers 21%
- North, Gross & Smith 2015- NSW Higher School Certificate – 722 students



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We're living in an age of perfectionism, and perfectionism is an idea that kills.

People are suffering and dying under the torture of the fantasy self they're failing to become

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Strategies to counter perfectionism

- Communicate it's ok to fail and make mistakes



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Don't fear failing

1 major accident
prior to solo sail

Jessica Watson

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manage failure. Study and Staffing. Positive Schools
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Don't fear failing

12 times

J.K. Rowling was rejected by
12 publishers before *Harry
Potter and The Philosopher's
Stone* was accepted

Don't fear failing

27 times

Dr Seuss's first book *To
think I saw it on
Mulberry Street* was
rejected by 27
different publishers

Don't fear failing

9000 times

Michael Jordan missed more than 9000 shots in his career. Lost almost 300 games. 26 times, he missed the winning shot that he has been trusted to take

I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.

Don't fear failing

10,000 ways

"I haven't failed

I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work"

- Thomas Edison

Mistakes can help you learn

Penicillin

- Alexander Fleming

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Mistakes can help you learn

Post-its

- Spencer Silver

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Talk about the power of YET

it takes time to learn new things



Point out the things they have learned that they could not do when they were younger

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Strategies to counter perfectionism

- Teach self compassion



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Teach self-compassion




- Self Kindness vs self judgement
- Common humanity vs isolation
- Mindfulness vs over-identification

• Dr Kristen Neff

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Self compassion linked to wellbeing and motivation


- Increase in wellbeing
- Decrease in perfectionism, anxiety, depression, negative body image
- Increase in motivation
 - More likely to try again when fail
 - Maintain high personal standard but not be as upset when don't meet it



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Strategies to counter perfectionism

- Challenge critical (irrational) thinking



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BOUNCE BACK Coping Statements

Bad times don't last. Things always get better. Stay optimistic.

Other people can help if you talk to them. Get a reality check.

Unhelpful thinking makes you feel more upset. Think again

NOBODY IS PERFECT-NOT YOU AND NOT OTHERS

Concentrate on the positives, no matter how small, and use laughter

Everybody experiences sadness, hurt, failure, rejection, and setbacks sometimes, **not just you.**

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Blame fairly –how much was due to you, to others, and to bad luck?

Accept the things you can't change, but try to change what you can first

Catastrophising exaggerates your worries. Don't believe the worst possible picture.

Keep things in perspective. It's only one part of your life

BOUNCE BACK!
A positive education approach to wellbeing, resilience & social-emotional learning
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Help students identify their strengths & limitations

• Ability strengths

Character Strengths



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Create hope & realistic goals

- **Hope**- expecting things to work out in the future & working to achieve it
- Make progress, not perfection-prepare for obstacles + use positive self-talk
 - *it is much more important to do your best than to be the best.*

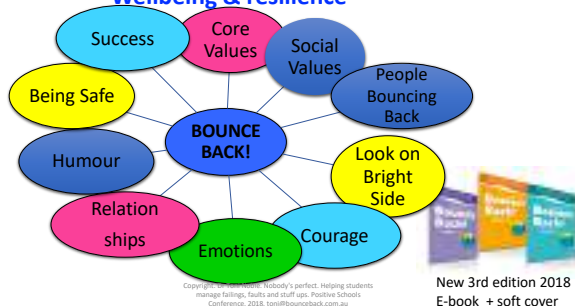
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Use children's literature



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Wellbeing & resilience



Remind your students

Nobody's perfect

It's ok to fail, find
faults and stuff up!

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**THANK
YOU!**

•toni@bounceback.com.au

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