



THE PRINCESS AND THE PEA VS. GOLDBLOCKS

Helping gifted students manage perfectionism

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INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

- Cheerful hello!
- Recall (or learn) everything there is to know about giftedness
- Thoroughly define perfectionism with extremely positive attitudes
- Analyze why we and our children are perfectionists
- Feel very guilty about this
- Overthink our mistakes
- Feel very guilty again
- Fix EVERYTHING and cure perfectionism!
- Never make another mistake again
- Do everything well and on time
- Feel guilty if you didn't do something as well as you could have
- Never have another perfectionist thought again
- Feel guilty when a stray perfectionist thought pops into your head
- For real this time, never have a perfectionist thought and never make a mistake.
- Oh rats! I think that might be a perfectionist thought. Feel guilty.
- Remind ourselves that if we make mistakes or have perfectionist thoughts, we will inevitably pass this on to our children, so we MUSN'T do it.
- Feel guilty- always with the guilt





INTRODUCTIONS & OVERVIEW

- Giftedness refresher
- Defining Perfectionism
- Giftedness, Perfectionism, and Self-development: connections in research (and real life)
- Less healthy and healthier perfectionism
- Working through perfectionism with your gifted child at home

GIFTEDNESS REFRESHER

- Multiple definitions of giftedness
 - Single-factor models
 - 3-factor model





GIFTEDNESS REFRESHER

- Multiple definitions of giftedness
 - Single-factor models
 - 3-factor model
 - Multiple intelligences



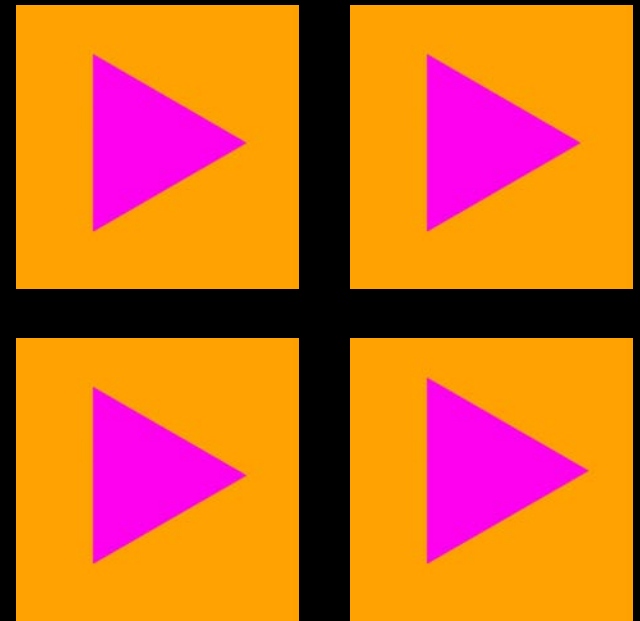
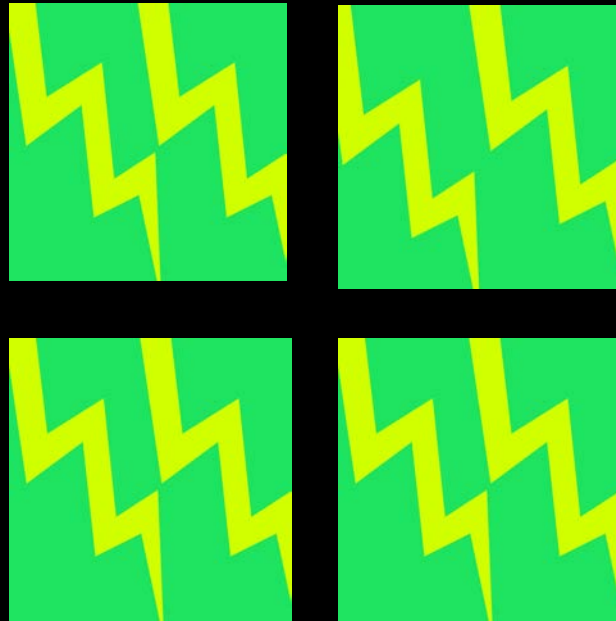
GIFTEDNESS REFRESHER

- Aspects of the gifted experience
 - Developmental Asynchrony
 - Overexcitabilities





WHAT IS PERFECTIONISM?



You might be a perfectionist if...



The Princess and the Pea Story for Children – Hans Christian Andersen Fairy T...



Watch later



Share





WHAT IS PERFECTIONISM?

- “Perfectionism is the setting of, and striving for, very demanding standards that are self-imposed and relentlessly pursued despite this causing problems. It involves basing one’s self-worth almost exclusively on how well these high standards are met.” (Shafran, Egan, & Wade- 2010)



WHAT IS PERFECTIONISM?

- A belief that one can and should be perfect in all situations and rejecting anything less
- A belief that perfection can protect us from pain, disappointment, etc. and that if we are “perfect enough” we can achieve a pain-free life
- A belief that hard work can overcome any challenge
- A belief that things “should be” easier than they actually are

WHAT IS PERFECTIONISM?

- An over-functioning of your false (or incomplete) self





“Perfectionism is a 20-ton shield that we lug around thinking it will protect us when, in fact, it’s the thing that’s really preventing us from being seen and taking flight.”

– Brené Brown



LiveWellwithSharonMartin.com



WHAT IS PERFECTIONISM?

- Perfectionism seems positive, even helpful. (And it can be!)
- (Less healthy) Perfectionism is actually about:
 - Fear
 - Control
 - Insecurity



WHAT IS PERFECTIONISM?

- In your relationship with yourself
 - Insecurity
 - Impossibly high standards
 - Incredible work ethic



WHAT IS PERFECTIONISM?

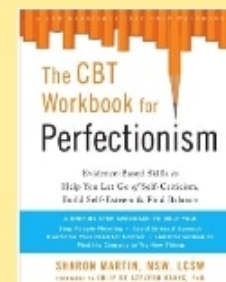
- In your relationships with others
 - Difficulty being vulnerable
 - Being extremely caring, helpful, etc.
 - Not sharing about your own feelings and needs
 - High standards for yourself
 - Impossibly high standards for others

What is Perfectionism?

"Perfectionism isn't just a desire to be the best. It means we set impossibly high standards for ourselves (and possibly for others) that we can never reach. It means we criticize ourselves relentlessly when we make mistakes and see them as fatal flaws rather than a natural part of the learning process. Perfectionism means we never feel good enough because we base our self-worth on what we do, what we achieve, and what others think of us."

-Sharon Martin, LCSW

blogs.psychcentral.com/imperfect





WHAT IS PERFECTIONISM?

- “Clinical perfectionism”
 - Excessive
 - Has the opposite effect (Feeling worse after working harder/achieving more; Doing a lot, but feeling worse)
 - Gets in the way of daily living and enjoyment of life



WHAT IS PERFECTIONISM?

- Increased risk of:
 - Anxiety
 - Depression
 - Eating disorders

- 
- “I’m not a perfectionist. If I were, I’d be doing things perfectly.”

PERFECTIONISM AND SELF-DEVELOPMENT





PERFECTIONISM AND SELF-DEVELOPMENT

- When a perfectionist is met with a task, they can:
 - Avoid the task
 - Perform the task in a “sub-standard” way
 - Perform the task in a way that temporarily meets the standard
- All of these lead to self-criticism for perfectionists



PERFECTIONISM AND SELF-DEVELOPMENT

- Identity can become fused with goals and achievements
- Perfectionism may become a facet of personality





“Perfectionism is an affliction of the gifted.”

- (Silverman, 1999, p. 47)



GIFTEDNESS & PERFECTIONISM

- Research suggests:
 - Some gifted children and adolescents may be more perfectionistic than non-gifted peers, which can lead to difficulties in adjustment
 - Other factors may combine with giftedness and lead to perfectionism (ex: SES, interactions with parents, etc.)
 - There is such a thing as healthy perfectionism



GIFTEDNESS & PERFECTIONISM

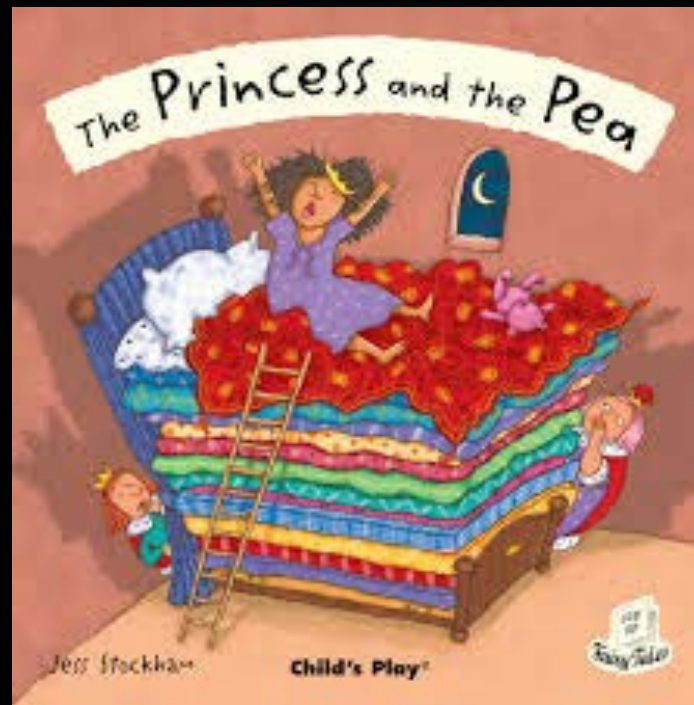
- Perfectionism and developmental asynchrony
 - Expectations to perform at mental age
 - Older playmates, classmates setting higher standards
 - All-or-nothing thinking
 - Strengths that over-function



GIFTEDNESS & PERFECTIONISM

- Connections with overexcitabilities
 - Psychomotor overexcitability
 - Imaginal overexcitability
 - Emotional overexcitability
 - Intellectual overexcitability
 - Sensual overexcitability

HEALTHIER & LESS HEALTHY PERFECTIONISM





HEALTHIER & LESS HEALTHY PERFECTIONISM

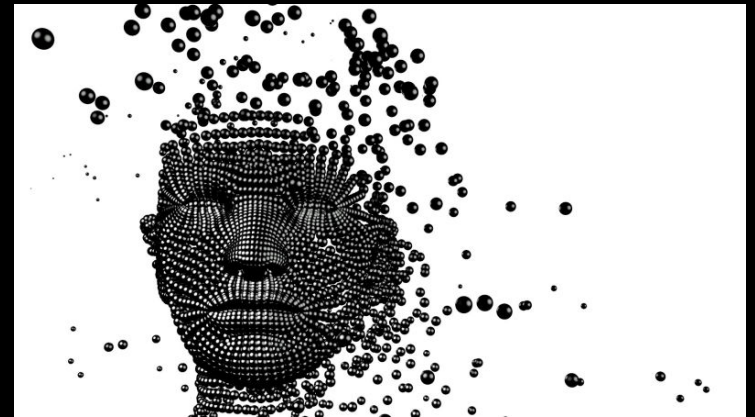
Less healthy perfectionism

- Motivated by a desire to prove oneself, please others, and avoid criticism
- “Perfect” defined as a lack of vulnerability, meeting expectations, and being free from inner conflict
- Focus on their own imperfections, avoid making or allowing others to discover mistakes
- Punishing attitude

HEALTHIER & LESS HEALTHY PERFECTIONISM

Less healthy perfectionism can lead to:

- Difficulties with identity development
- Reluctance to try new things
- Strong disliking of being wrong
- Negative self-evaluations



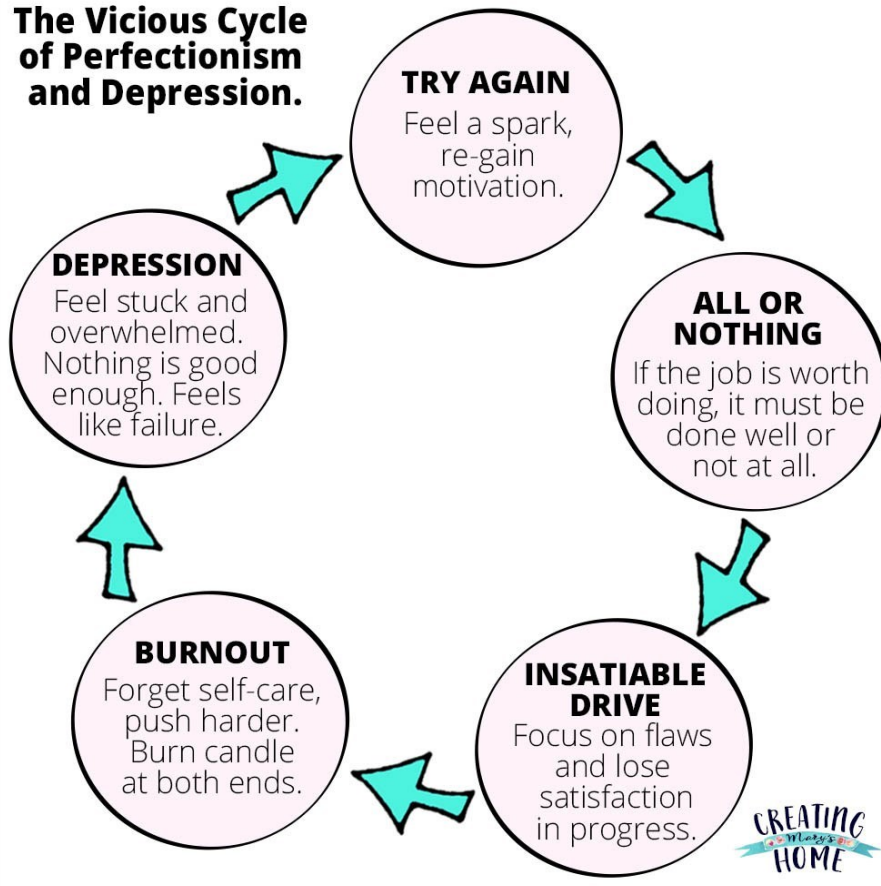


HEALTHIER & LESS HEALTHY PERFECTIONISM

Less healthy perfectionism can lead to:

- Unrealistic standards, work loads
- Fear of failure as motivating
- Preoccupation with others' opinions
- Never resting
- Mood and anxiety symptoms

The Vicious Cycle of Perfectionism and Depression.



HEALTHIER & LESS HEALTHY PERFECTIONISM

- Symptoms associated less healthy perfectionism
 - Worry
 - Low mood
 - Tiredness and/or Poor sleep
 - Ruminating (or even obsessing)
 - Muscle tension
 - Rigid thought patterns
 - Checking and re-checking behavior
 - Spending excessive time on tasks
 - Procrastination/avoidance
 - Less insight/self-awareness





Success

~~Good
enough~~
Failure

Failure

The Perfectionist's Guide to Results



HEALTHIER & LESS HEALTHY PERFECTIONISM

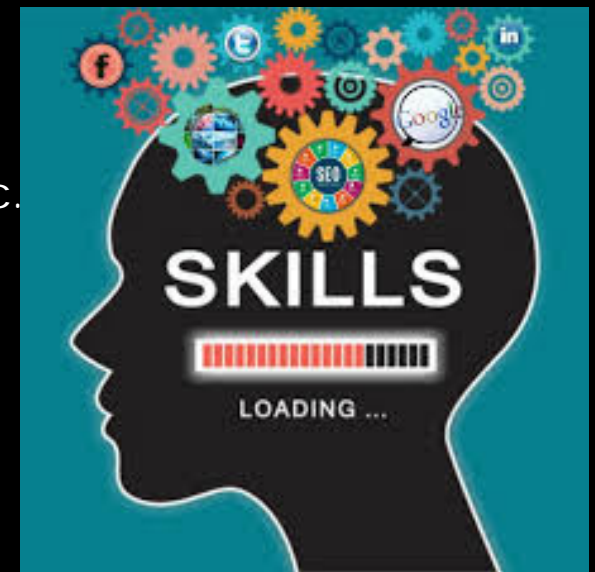
Healthier perfectionism

- Motivated by self-actualization and development
- Makes space for self-acceptance, compassion for one's own shortcomings
- Has an awareness of and is energized by one's potential
- May have the goals of order, organization, and trying one's hardest

HEALTHIER & LESS HEALTHY PERFECTIONISM

Healthier perfectionism can lead to

- Hard work aimed at building skills
- Looking for opportunities to improve quality of work
- Stellar performance (academic, athletic, musical, etc.)
- Creativity/thinking outside the box
- Positive self-esteem
- Being motivated by positive outcomes



HEALTHIER & LESS HEALTHY PERFECTIONISM

Healthier perfectionism includes the ability to:

- Admit being wrong
- Tolerate making mistakes
- Celebrate achievements
 - Their own and others'
- Take breaks

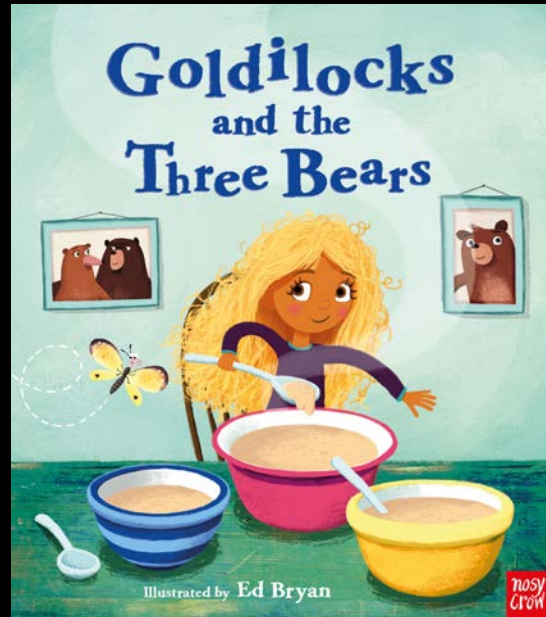


HEALTHIER & LESS HEALTHY PERFECTIONISM

- Reflection
 - When do I show signs of healthier and less healthy perfectionism?
 - When does my child show signs of healthier and less healthy perfectionism?
 - How do I understand this about myself and my child?



MOVING TOWARD HEALTHIER PERFECTIONISM



THE GOLDILOCKS PARADIGM





the Simpsons goldilocks and the three bears



Watch later

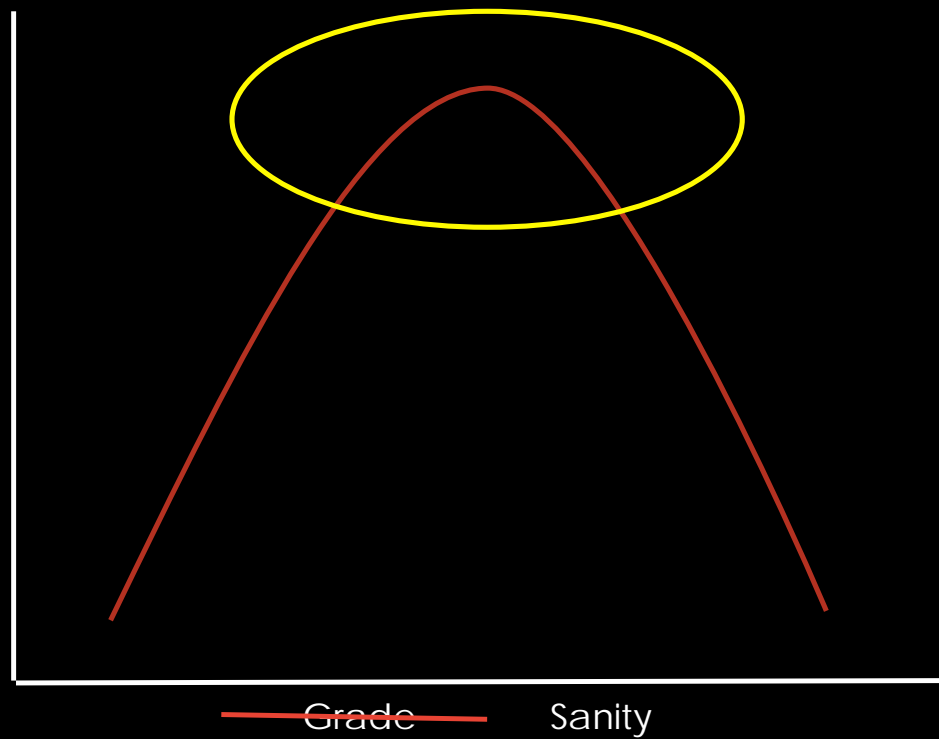


Share



THE GOLDBLOCKS ZONE

Hours
spent
studying





HELPING AT HOME

- Setting reasonable goals
- Defining identity (outside of achievements)
- Teaching boundaries and managing avoidance
- Growth mindset and managing self-criticism



HELPING AT HOME

- Setting reasonable goals
 - Healthy goals
 - Flexible and open...use ranges
 - In our control
 - Remember the statistics and Goldilocks

HELPING AT HOME

- SMART Goals
 - Specific
 - Measureable
 - Achievable
 - Relevant
 - Timely





HELPING AT HOME

- What to do when your child doesn't achieve a goal
 - Take a couple deep breaths
 - Remember and remind your child that it is normal for things to not work out sometimes
 - Together, tolerate the discomfort of things not working out
 - Process this and mourn/grieve
 - Define identity as separate from goals and achievements



HELPING AT HOME

- Defining identity
 - Remember the turtle!
 - Demonstrate understanding of strengths and weaknesses
 - Speak positively about likeness and difference
 - Embrace division of labor in the family
 - Adopt a growth mindset



HELPING AT HOME- DEFINING IDENTITY

- Allow for (and encourage) healthy self-exploration
 - Help kids explore from a secure base
 - Provide options, whenever possible
 - Ask about likes and dislikes
 - Foster your child's talents and interests (in addition to giftedness)



HELPING AT HOME- DEFINING IDENTITY

- Allow for (and encourage) healthy self-expression
 - Encourage appropriate self expression
 - Allow graceful, respectful disagreement
 - Make space for healthy rebellion



HELPING AT HOME

- What to do when your child doesn't achieve a goal
 - Take a couple deep breaths
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 - Together, tolerate the discomfort of things not working out
 - Process this and mourn/grieve
 - Define identity as separate from goals and achievements
 - Work together to find a way forward



HELPING AT HOME

- What to do when your child does achieve a goal:
 - Help them learn to take a compliment and enjoy praise
 - Acknowledge their hard work
 - Recognize and express that your child has value outside of meeting the goal
 - Take a break
 - Process the experience
 - Work together to find a way forward



HELPING AT HOME- REFLECTION

- How can you work on goal setting at home?
- What are you doing well in setting goals and responding to achievements or not achieving goals at home?
- How can/do you support self-development of your children?
- What might you do differently regarding goals at home?
- Make a plan for continuing to work on this at home.



HELPING AT HOME

- Teaching boundaries



HELPING AT HOME

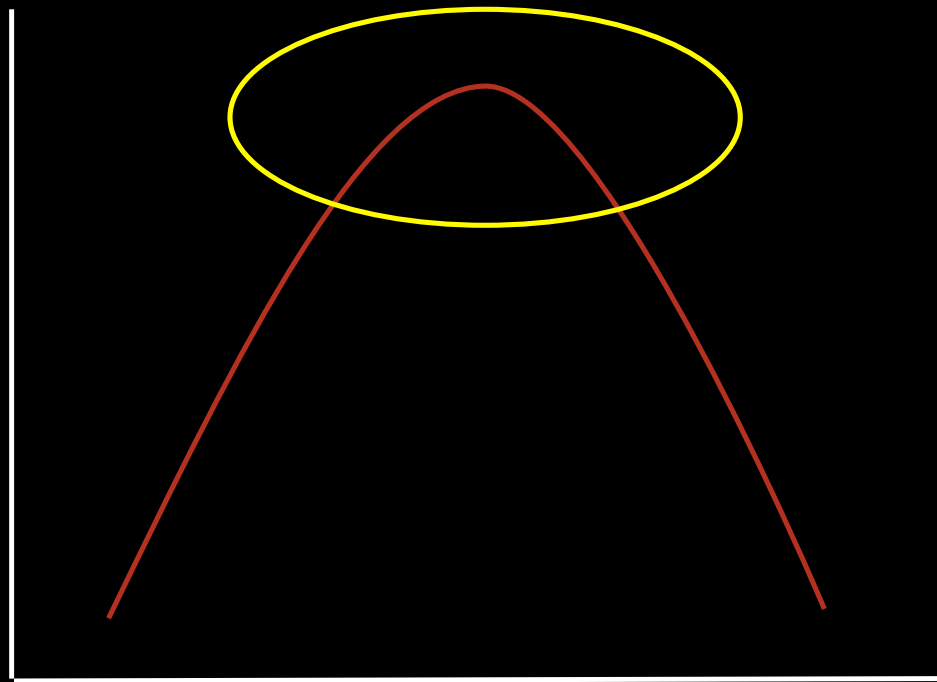
- Teaching boundaries: a mathematical approach
 - Point of diminished return
 - At what cost?

The image shows a chalkboard filled with various mathematical concepts and formulas. Key elements include:

- Algebra:** $a^2 = 2ab + b^2 = (a+2b)^2$, $x^2 - a^2 = (x+a)(x-a)$, $x^2 + 2ax + a^2 = (x+a)^2$, $(ab)^m = a^m b^m$, $(a+b)^2 = a^2 + 2ab + b^2$.
- Calculus:** $\frac{d}{dx} \ln(x) = \frac{1}{x}$, $\frac{d}{dx} \ln(x^2) = \frac{2x}{x^2} = \frac{2}{x}$, $\frac{d}{dx} \ln(x^2 + 1) = \frac{2x}{x^2 + 1}$, $\frac{d}{dx} \ln(x^2 - 1) = \frac{2x}{x^2 - 1}$, $\frac{d}{dx} \ln(x^2 + 2x + 1) = \frac{2x + 2}{x^2 + 2x + 1}$.
- Trigonometry:** $\sin(-x) = -\sin(x)$, $\cos(-x) = \cos(x)$, $\sinh(x) = \frac{e^x - e^{-x}}{2}$, $\cosh(x) = \frac{e^x + e^{-x}}{2}$, $\tanh(x) = \frac{\sinh(x)}{\cosh(x)}$, $\operatorname{sech}(x) = \frac{1}{\cosh(x)}$, $\operatorname{csch}(x) = \frac{1}{\sinh(x)}$.
- Geometry:** Diagrams of triangles, rectangles, and circles with labels for sides, angles, and areas. Includes the formula for the area of a triangle: $\text{Area} = \frac{1}{2} \times \text{base} \times \text{height}$.
- Complex Numbers:** $\operatorname{arccoth}(z) = \frac{1}{2} \ln \frac{z+1}{z-1}$, $\operatorname{arcsch}(z) = \ln \frac{1 + \sqrt{1+z^2}}{z}$.
- Other Formulas:** $\frac{1}{1-x} = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} x^n$, $\frac{1}{1-x^2} = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} x^{2n}$, $\frac{1}{1-x^3} = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} x^{3n}$.

THE GOLDBLOCKS ZONE

Return



Effort



HELPING AT HOME

- Teaching boundaries
 - Model this!!! Be careful about how much you expect yourself and your child to take on
 - Teach children to respectfully decline opportunities
 - “No, thank you.”
 - Define “capacity”
 - Consider sacrifices: “How could we make this work?”
 - Consider your values and needs
 - What about self-care?!?

HELPING AT HOME- REFLECTION

- How am I doing with boundaries?
- How do/can I support my child in setting boundaries?
- What does self-care look like in our home?
- How do our choices reflect our values?





HELPING AT HOME

- Managing avoidance
 - AKA: Procrastination
 - Caused by anxiety about being perfect
 - There is real risk of failure, but the fear of it is crippling
 - Avoidance perpetuates low mood, low self-esteem, self-shaming

**PROCASTINATOR? NO. I JUST WAIT
UNTIL THE LAST SECOND TO DO MY WORK**

**BECAUSE I WILL BE OLDER,
THEREFORE WISER.**

WeKnowMemes

stages of procrastination

chibird.tumblr.com

1. false security



This isn't due for a while!



I'll relax for now.

2. laziness



Maybe I should get a headstart...



Nah!

3. excuses



I'm busy right now.



Just taking a short break...

4. denial



I still have time...



I don't need sleep...

5. crisis

I'll never procrastinate again!



chibird @ tumblr

6. repeat

**IF GOOD THINGS COME
TO THOSE WHO WAIT**




**ISN'T PROCRASTINATION
A VIRTUE?**



HELPING AT HOME

- Managing avoidance/procrastination
 - Gently challenge the avoidance (because it makes anxiety worse)
 - Expect anxiety
 - Work to manage (not eliminate) anxiety
 - Break tasks down into smaller tasks and reward progress

- 
- How do we manage anxiety at home?
 - How can we reduce avoidance and procrastination at home?
 - Are there non-school areas where I'm seeing procrastination (ex: chores)?
How could we break down those tasks to be more manageable?



HELPING AT HOME

- Adopting a “Growth mindset”
 - Focus on the process
- Model and practice patience
- Model and make space for graceful failure
- Specifically and repeatedly say that it’s OK to be wrong, even though it might be uncomfortable
- Show self-compassion when you are wrong
- Try new things together

HELPING AT HOME


- Adopting a “Growth mindset” (continued)
 - Value learning and refining
 - Emphasize fun
 - Moral victories (I know, I know)
 - Set ranges and make space for (reasonable) inconsistency
 - Re-framing (perfection vs. excellence)
 - Acknowledge that it is normal to make mistakes and fail





HELPING AT HOME

- Managing self-criticism
 - Becomes relentless with perfectionism
 - Learn to manage feedback (or criticism) from others
 - Can contribute to depression
 - Possibility for greater parental pressure to “live up to” their abilities
 - Support the development of core confidence



✓ good enough
is the new perfection



HELPING AT HOME- REFLECTION

- When do I use a growth mindset? When is this hard for me?
- How are we using growth-oriented language at home and how could we improve this?
- How self-critical am I? How self-critical is my child? How can we work on self-criticism?



REFERENCES

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