

GoZen's Healthy Perfectionist Activity Book



There's nothing wrong with wanting to get things perfect now and then. Most people have some degree of perfectionist behavior, no matter how little. Some people, including some children, have very high degrees of perfectionism in them. And that's not always a bad thing!

Perfectionism can take two forms: healthy and unhealthy. Behaviors associated with healthy perfectionism involve setting lofty, but still realistic goals, being adaptive, relaxing standards depending on conditions, and having a sense of pride in their work. A healthy perfectionist can try their best, but still go with the flow and release things that aren't quite right.

Unhealthy perfectionism, as you might imagine, is quite the opposite. It might describe dichotomous thinking, where a person only sees things as completely right or completely wrong. It might mean setting unrealistic standards and not coping well when they are not achieved. It might mean being afraid to fail. It might mean performing a task over and over until it matches the picture in their minds. Unhealthy perfectionism can be crippling, especially for kids.

The following activities are designed to exercise the mind and discourage unhealthy perfectionist behaviors. They are about process more than results. They encourage seeing things from multiple perspectives, and promote the idea that sometimes there's more than one right answer, more than one way to solve a problem, or more than one way to see things. They're designed to let mistakes happen if the situation calls for it, or if it's part of the learning process. If a child exhibits some unhealthy perfectionist behaviors, we hope these activities will help them let go of perfect.

More resources on the topic of perfectionism:

Perfectionism: 8 Tools for Parents with Kids Afraid to Fail

<https://www.gozen.com/perfectionism-8-tools-for-parents-with-kids-afraid-to-fail/>

Adelson, J. L., Wilson H. E. (2009) *Letting Go of Perfect: Overcoming Perfectionism in Kids*. Waco, Prufrock Press Inc.

Dweck, C. S. (2006) *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. New York, Random House

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MISTAKES



make my brain

STRONGER!

To-Do List / To-Flub List

We all have days when our list of tasks is so long and intimidating, it's hard to get a start on anything. We stand frozen, unsure of where to begin, afraid of not achieving our goals. Luckily, **prioritization** is a superpower we can all practice! Go ahead, give it a shot.

Start by making a list of everything you have to do today. Next, scan the list and see if you can find the **most important** task. Put it at the top of the to-do list. Now find the **least important** task: maybe it's something you can do tomorrow, or something that just doesn't need to be perfect. Put that at the top of the to-flub list. Continue dividing your tasks evenly. Give yourself permission to focus on the to-dos, and fail at the to-flubs.

All My Tasks

A cartoon character with green skin, large yellow eyes, and a pink collar, peeking from the bottom left corner of a lined paper background. The character has a small, round nose and a wide, open-mouthed smile. The background consists of horizontal lines on a white background, resembling a sheet of paper.

To-Do List

To-Flub List



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The Fail-Safe Project

Do you have a hard time letting go of mistakes? Wish you could remove failures from your mind and just move on? Let's build a **FAIL SAFE** to lock them away forever!

With an adult's help, find a shoebox and cut a small slot in the lid. Then, tape down the lid **securely** (we don't want any mistakes escaping). This box is your fail safe. Color and cut out the label below and attach it to the side of the box. Then, have an adult print and cut out the slips on page 2 (*adults, please only cut horizontally so the child can tear vertically, and print as many as your child might need*).

Every time you make a mistake you can't let go of, take a slip and write it down on the "my failure" side. Then, think about what you learned from the mistake. Write that down on the "new wisdom" side. Now tear the slip in two and place the failure side in the safe. No need to think about it anymore; the safe has it secured. Finally, tape the new wisdom side to the outside of the box, decorating your fail safe with the things you've learned.

Don't be afraid if the wisdom slips begin to overlap. You can expect to learn a lot from those failures!



My Mistake	My New Wisdom
My Mistake	My New Wisdom
My Mistake	My New Wisdom
My Mistake	My New Wisdom

Project Simplifier

Have you been avoiding a project because it seems too large to complete? Are you intimidated by a big school assignment, or not sure where to start cleaning your room? Let's **simplify** the project by breaking it into smaller chunks. Then, every time you complete a small piece, cross it off to show you've made progress! Think about the big project, then fill in the blanks below. If you don't need all of the blanks, just cross them out, but try to use as many as possible. We want small tasks!

Example: My big project is a World War II essay. To complete it, first I'll go to the library. I'll finish that before tonight. Then I'll move on to reading, which will be done by Tuesday. Then I can outline my ideas ...

My big project is _____.
To complete it, first I'll _____. I'll finish that before
(date/time) _____. Then, I'll move on to _____
_____, which will be done by (date/time) _____. Then I can _____
_____, and after that, I can _____
_____, both before (date/time) _____.

My big project is _____.
To complete it, first I'll _____. I'll finish that before
(date/time) _____. Then, I'll move on to _____
_____, which will be done by (date/time) _____. Then I can _____
_____, and after that, I can _____
_____, both before (date/time) _____.



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... Yet ...

How do you talk to yourself? What kind of language do you use? Do you ever catch yourself using sentences that sound like these?

*"I'm terrible at math."
"I'll never be a great baseball player."
"I'm just not brave enough to do that."*

The words we use when we talk to ourselves have an impact on how we behave and how we grow. Simple adjustments in our internal language, like using the word **"yet,"** can have a positive impact and open a world of possibilities. See for yourself:

*"I'm not good at math **yet.**"
"I'm not a great baseball player **yet.**"
"I'm just not brave enough to do that **yet.**"*

Are there things about yourself that you tend to view negatively? Use those thoughts to complete the sentences below, then read them back to yourself. Do you feel the power of **yet**?

I'm not very good at _____
_____ **yet.**

I just don't understand _____
_____ **yet.**

I'm not strong enough to _____
_____ **yet.**

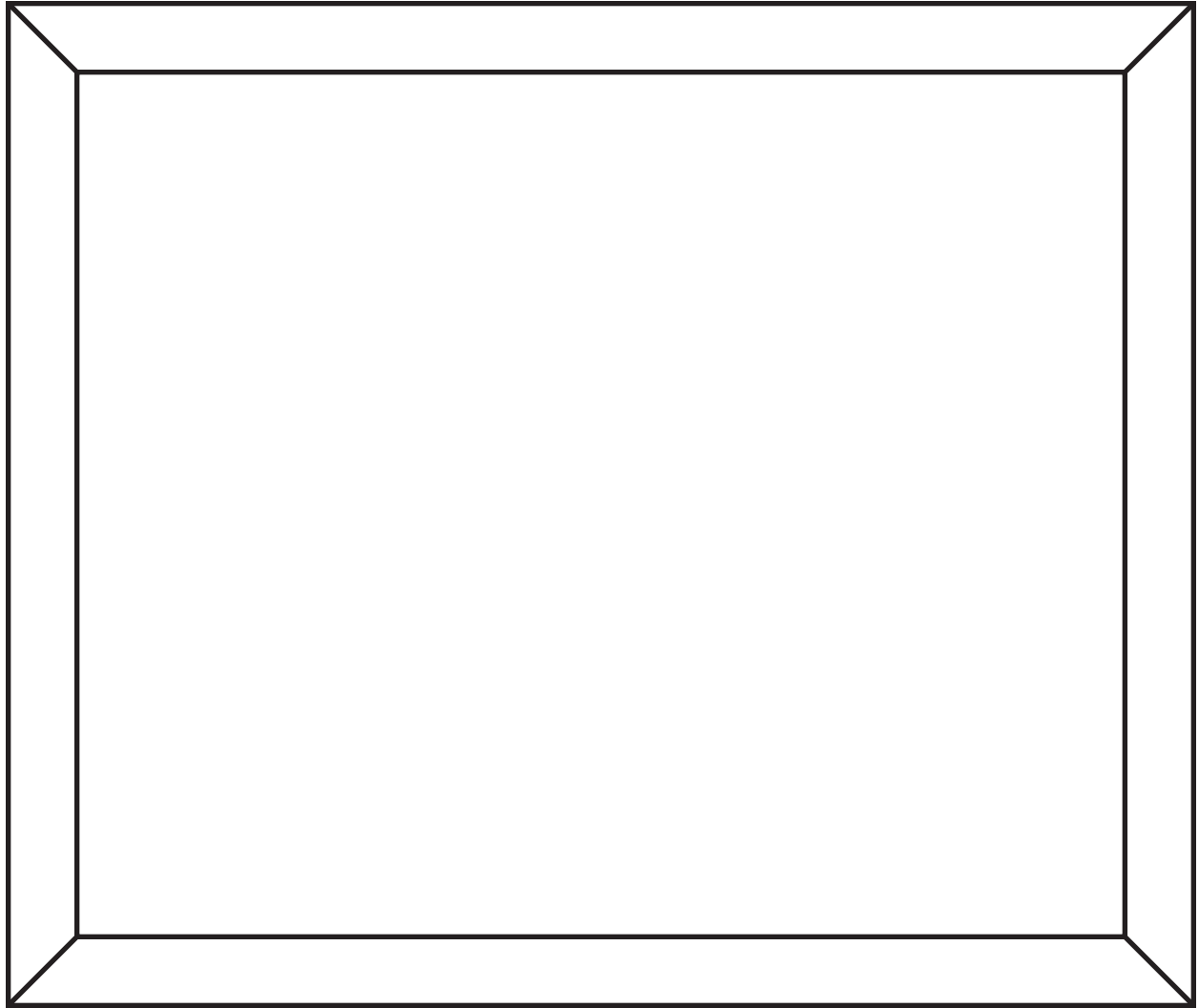


Self-Destructing Art

Greetings, Artist! You have trapped inside your mind dozens of explosively good pictures that are just waiting to be released. All you need to do is free them. We have just the tools you need! This specially designed picture frame will **self-destruct in 15 minutes**, so you can leave this work behind and move on to the next explosively good idea. Just remember to do your best and have fun.

Parents: Set a timer, and please remove this piece of paper to the safety of the garbage can, whether the picture is complete or not.

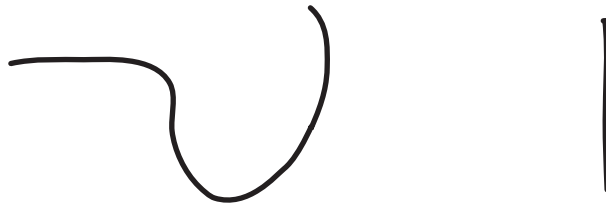
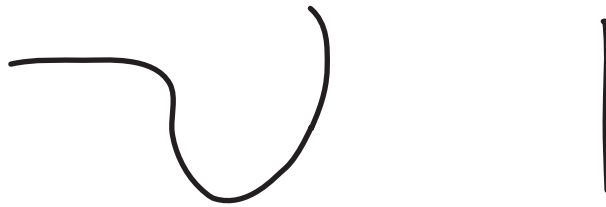
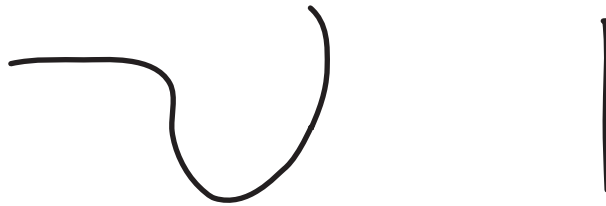
Kids: Once you're free of one picture, ask for a new frame and keep freeing that art!



Finish the Picture


Someone started drawing a picture but didn't finish! What do you think it was supposed to be?

Can you finish it for them? Try at least three different ways.



Wurd Kutastrafee

It's game time! Find as many friends or family members to play with as you'd like. Each person must use the space below to tell a short story. Here's the trick: **evry wurd haz tu bee mizspeld!** When your story is complete, pass it to your right. Each person takes turns reading a story. If your story can be read and understood, you pass the round. If you don't pass, have a good laugh at the mispronunciations and try again. **Gest hav phun!**

A cartoon character with blonde hair and green eyes, wearing a green shirt, is pointing upwards with their right hand. The character is positioned in the bottom left corner of the page.

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Intro to Yoga

The practice of yoga has no end. The only goal is to perform each pose to the best of your ability at that moment. Get warmed up, then try each pose. Hold it only as long as you're comfortable. When you're ready for more of a challenge, take it to the next level. Just stay within yourself. Stay in the now.

Warm Up



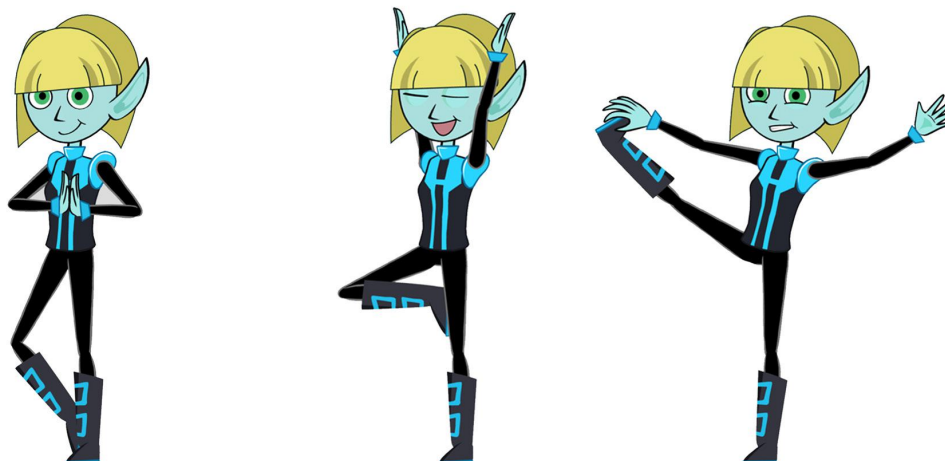
Plank



Warrior



Tree



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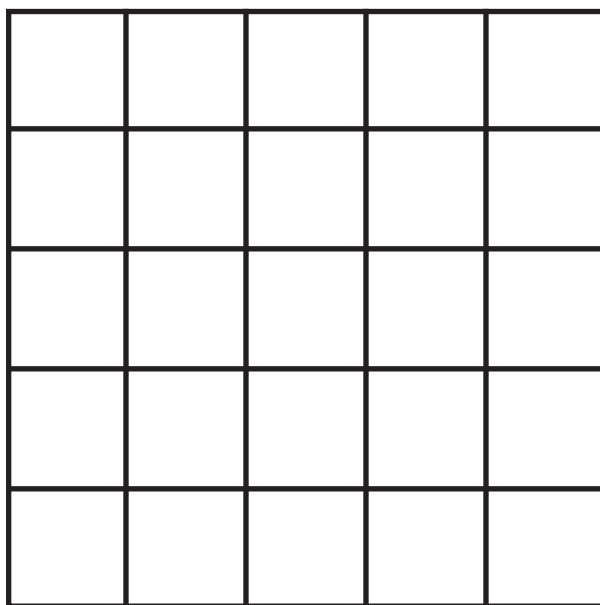
Un-Math (Part 1)

Exercising your math powers **doesn't always mean finding the right answer**. Sometimes it's about pushing the limits of your logic, making your brain stronger every time you try. Play with these un-math problems and see how much heavy lifting you can do!

ONE: Jerome is handed a deck of forty cards. Each card has a number on it, 1 through 10. There are four 1's, four 2's, four 3's, etc. If Jerome is asked to draw cards until he holds cards totalling 20, how many options do you think he has?

Example: 2, 8, and 10; or 1, 1, 1, 1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 3, and 5.

TWO: How many squares can you find in this box? *Hint: there are way more than 25.*



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Un-Math (Part 2)

THREE: Mrs. Wyatt wants to teach a lesson about order of operations. To prove the importance, she gives the students a math problem. Jigna thinks the answer is 10. John thinks the answer is 18. Jude thinks it's 19. Jasper thinks it's 21. Jillian thinks it's 27. Show the work that each of them did to get their answer.

$$3 \times 6 + 8 \div 2 - 3$$

FOUR: Mrs. Wyatt needs to give her kids a math test. She wants to give them a story problem for the equation $(3 \times 3) + (4 \times 3) + (5 \times 3) = 36$, but she's a mathematician, and doesn't think she's a good writer. Show her how fun writing can be by coming up with a story that matches that equation. Make sure you leave room for Mrs. Wyatt's students to solve.

Constellation Revelation

Thousands of years ago, people stared at the stars and found shapes by drawing imaginary lines between them. Constellations like The Big Dipper and Orion weren't "discovered," they were created! Look at the night sky below, connect the stars, and find your own constellations. What did you name them? What did your friends create?

