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## **Be Patient, Not Perfect**

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At a recent dinner with my parents I was relating a story in which I had recently made a mistake. As usual I was browbeating myself for this tiny imperfection when I had an epiphany... I make mistakes—we all make mistakes—it's what we do with those mistakes that defines the person we are or will be. My mother reminded me that she had also made mistakes, many mistakes. She is a wonderful, hardworking, giving woman, but she is far from perfect. She enjoys life, she is fun to be around, and just watch out if she happens to see something shiny along the way. She never strives for perfection, just to be a good person and do right by others. I have many memories of stories about her imperfections, such as her accidentally leaving me at the church nursery. She took my brother and went home. My mother felt terrible, came back, apologized, and took me home with lots of affection. Or the time she drove past my father, who was waiting to be picked up, bought a window and replaced the one she had broken, then went back to get him. My husband related stories of his grandmother who could not cook or keep house, but the journey with her was always an adventure. In the end though, we grew up to be a productive adults, and looking back on our childhoods and we are reminded how wonderful it was to grow up in our families.

Webster defines perfectionism as "a disposition, which regards anything short of perfect as unacceptable". We believe that unless we are perfect success and love will elude us. The flaw in perfectionism is our neglect of our core within and our failure to have a life in line with our true selves. Because of our focus on achieving goals, we never enjoy the journey of getting there. As a result we lose the invaluable moments of being with people and doing things. Perfectionism is not about doing your best; it is about trying to reach an impossible goal. Not reaching a goal may lead to feeling frustrated. We feel our accomplishments are never good enough, do not achieve personal satisfaction, value people based on their achievements, and take mistakes personally.

To find peace, we should try to accept ourselves and nurture the best in us, we have to overcome perfectionism and use our mistakes as opportunities for growth. We should all try to enjoy the journey instead of just focusing on the goal. Understand that we get more done and feel better about ourselves if we do not push for perfection, and have compassion for ourselves and others. Nobody will love us any more just because we are more perfect. We are being loved for the passion and spirit we bring to life. Be patient, God isn't finished with us yet.