

It's possible to lead a balanced, fulfilling life AND to excel in what's important to you. It gets problematic when your self-worth depends on your achievements - on this path you always feel you need to do more, to be more. Successes are overshadowed by relentless pursuit of the next milestone. The toll is fatigue, burnout and bouts of procrastination, as relationships, hobbies, and self-care are relegated. These journal prompts are designed to help you to begin to see your worth as separate from your achievements, freeing you up to go for what you want without feeling like you risk losing yourself in the process.

How does an achievement focus show up for me?

What does some part of me see as the benefit of the people pleasing?

How do I actually feel when I focus on achievement and push myself?

This pattern is a result achievement being over-valued and rewarded by childhood attachment figures, reinforcing a belief that it is your achievements that make you lovable and worthy. The consequences are implicitly understood - if you were to stop achieving, experience a setback or failure, or even take some time to do something you really want to do, people would see you differently, or you would somehow lose your place in the world. This pattern puts people in a holding pattern of sorts, whereby they never feel truly safe to just be themselves, and constantly feel pressure to keep achieving.

1

- Notice how an achievement focus shows up for you. Some examples are:
- **Needing to be the best.** Feeling like being average at something is not enough - anything less than the best is experienced as a failure.
 - **Never enough.** When you review your actions you tend to hone in on the things that you could have done better, and discount what went well.
 - **Feeling like you shouldn't rest** or feeling that relaxation or downtime is only deserved if you've worked to a point of exhaustion.

Write down all the ways in which you notice an achievement focus showing up for you.

2

List what some part of you sees as the benefits of achievement: Does it make you feel worthy as a person? Does it make you feel good within yourself? Does it give you a sense of belonging, or being deserving of your place in the world?

People with this pattern sometimes interpret their strong drive for achievement as evidence that it is important to them. It's worth understanding why it is so important by examining what you get out of it.

3

Check the benefits. Ask yourself how you actually felt when an achievement focus showed up in your life. Look at specific examples of pushing yourself or achieving a goal, and reflect on how you felt. Was it a sense of pride and feeling good within yourself as a person? Or was it more like relief, followed by dread or another negative emotion associated with having to do it all again? Did you discount the success by picking out faults? Did the fulfillment that you expected to feel ever eventuate? How long did it last? Are the benefits enduring and reliable, or do they feel fleeting and unstable?

