



Imperfection can be a gift

Learn to see messiness and mistakes differently.

ERROR MESSAGE

A study has shown making mistakes can feel good when people are given the chance to learn from them.



Learning from mistakes helps build resilience.

We all want to do things well and for things to turn out right. However, growing up also involves accepting when things go wrong. In fact, messing up can lead to some of the most interesting and meaningful outcomes.

What does imperfection mean?

Aiming for results, whether that's getting good school grades, sparkling in sport or acing an art project, can help you focus on your goals. However, it's just as important to focus on enjoying the process. Getting too hung up on things turning out exactly as you think they should can put a lot of pressure on you and lead to anxiety. That's why it's good to leave some room for errors and imperfections. Then if things don't go as planned, it's not a big deal and you may learn something new.

Mistakes can help you grow

Dr Rekha Vara is a psychologist who helps people take care of their mental health. She says getting things wrong is part of growing up. "We also have to experience the uncomfortable feeling when we get things wrong. This helps us to

become stronger (adults call this 'resilience')," says Dr Vara. "Otherwise, we'll be too scared to make mistakes. This fear can lead to us putting off doing difficult things or avoiding trying new things." It's important to realise that making mistakes is common, which shows that it is impossible to be perfect and failure is normal.

Bounce back

Learning from your mistakes is an essential part of growing up. The most important thing is how you respond and what you choose to do next. Try not to take it too seriously, blame yourself or feel too disappointed or upset. Dr Vara explains, "Remember that you're not a bad person for getting things wrong – you're human. It might feel uncomfortable for a bit, then these feelings will pass and then you'll bounce back."

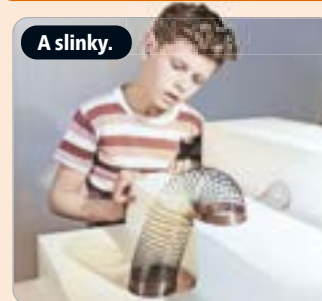
Instead, think about what you might do differently next time. This has been proven to work. In one study, students who were reminded to forgive and be kind to themselves when they failed a test felt more motivated to try again.



Be kind to yourself.

Brilliant mistakes

A slinky.



Many scientific discoveries and inventions were accidents.

- **The slinky:** In 1943, engineer Richard James knocked a spring off his shelf and saw it "walk" across the floor.
- **Velcro:** In 1941, George de Mestral took his dog for a walk and noticed sticky seeds stuck to his dog's coat. This gave him an idea that eventually became Velcro.

Making it right when things go wrong

Try to see the bigger picture and look at things positively:

- **Focus on the good**
When things go wrong, there are still good things to take away. Ask what went well and what worked out?
- **Turn things around**
Think what you could do differently next time around and how this might change what happens.
- **Be kind to yourself**
If a friend made a mistake, you would probably be kind and offer them support. Do the same for yourself.

