



As I write, it is Mental Health Awareness week in the UK which prompted this topic. Over the years I and many I know have benefitted and suffered from a 'Be Perfect' Behavioural Driver (Kahler, 1975). This leads to a desire to execute everything we do to a flawless standard.

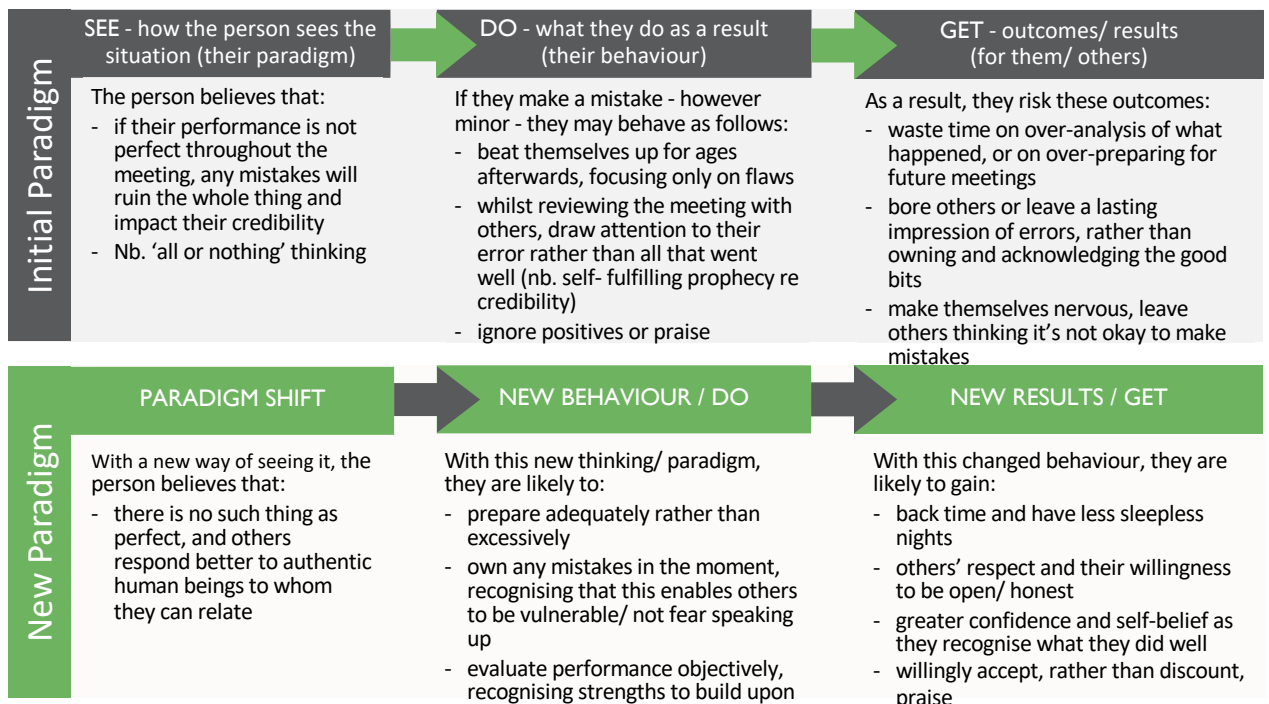
Striving for perfection has some 'plus sides':

- we perpetually seek high standards and look for continuous improvement
- high motivation as we strive for ever better results
- conscientiousness
- attention to detail, in a bid to never 'fall short'

The downside, of course, is that we chase the impossible. There is no such thing as perfection, perfection is subjective! The cons include:

- over preparation, or not getting started at all, to avoid failure
- being overly self-critical
- subjective evaluation of own performance, with positives disregarded
- deep focus on flaws, however minor
- as a manager, it can lead to impossibly high standards, inflexibility around results expected, a reluctance to delegate/ trust others.

**Ditch the downsides** - Ultimately, perfectionism can have a negative impact on the mental health of us and others, causing stress, inordinate pressure, and a lack of contentment. If we are to achieve balance, retaining the positives of 'perfectionism' and ditching the cons, we need to shift our thinking. In 'The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People' Stephen R. Covey talks about 'paradigm shifts' and uses a 'See > Do > Get' model to achieve it. Here's an example of an initial paradigm, or way of seeing things, and how to shift it:



## TOP TIPS FOR KEEPING THE PLUS SIDES

If you have a 'Be Perfect' Behavioural Driver:

- use the SEE > DO > GET model to shift your paradigm or way of seeing things
- set yourself realistic standards of performance and accuracy
- become realistic about making mistakes – imagine the best/ worst possible outcomes
- identify which tasks really warrant a high degree of accuracy
- make a point of telling others their mistakes are not serious, which can help shift your own paradigm
- work out in advance how much detail others need, share the key info and stop there, to avoid burying them in facts and figures

If you are working with someone who has a 'Be Perfect' Behavioural Driver:

- praise them for their achievements
- be punctual and keep appointments
- don't discount their worries!