



Whose approval are you really trying to gain?

I've been thinking about perfectionism lately.

We often think it's about having high standards, wanting to do things well or simply being someone who likes to get things right.

But what if perfectionism isn't always about high standards?

What if it's a shield against judgement?

Brené Brown makes a beautiful distinction:

Healthy striving:

"How can I improve?"

Perfectionism:

"What will they think?"

And I wonder how many of us carry the second one, **dressed up as the first.**

We call it being responsible.

Having standards.

Doing what needs to be done.

But underneath may be a subconscious insecurity:

What if I'm not good enough?

What if I disappoint someone?

What will they think of me?

Look at your behaviour.

Are you constantly pushing yourself?

Working longer than you need to?

Replying to emails late at night?

Doing the chores when you're exhausted?

Saying yes to every obligation?
Taking care of everyone else before yourself?

Pause.

Ask yourself:

Whose approval am I really trying to gain?

Who comes to mind?

An old boss?

A parent?

A teacher?

A relationship?

A workplace culture?

An expectation you learnt somewhere along the way?

You might even say it out loud.

Sometimes hearing it helps us recognise the pattern.

Then ask:

Do their standards have to be mine?

And perhaps the bigger question

What am I missing out on while I'm busy trying

to live up to expectations I've placed on myself?

Because sometimes what looks like motivation or high achievement...

is actually an old strategy for protecting ourselves from judgement.

Maybe you don't need to push harder.

Maybe your body is asking you to feel safe enough to stop proving yourself.

You are enough — even when you're not doing, achieving or getting everything right.

With love,
Marni

