

The results

Mostly blue

You're a PERFECTIONIST

If you're losing a tennis match, you'll start swearing at yourself, cursing your racket or shouting at your opponent. If you don't improve, you'll give up. If you're not going to win and you can't control the outcome, what's the point? Forget seeing things as learning or good for teamwork. Things have to be perfect or you'll have failed.

You have an idea of how things should be and if they fall short you'll berate yourself. Say, by a miracle, you do succeed – you manage to meet your own near-impossible standards – you'll move the goalposts: 'That jog should have been faster... That sex should have been better.' Living this way makes life a slog for everyone.

Self-saviour behaviour:

Recognise that things are rarely black or white, there's usually a grey area. Look for the good in what may happen – so you might not get the job, but you'll make some new contacts. Your new relationship may not last forever, but it might be fun while it does.

Also test yourself – try things that you know you'll be rubbish at: swing dancing, life drawing or singing. Laugh at how bad you are. Perfectionism is driven by a fear of what others think – but no one's perfect and people like those who aren't.

Perfection's boring, intimidating and alienating. It's our shared experiences and foibles that make us relatable and interesting.

Mostly red

You're a DRAMA LOVER

You feel at your most alive when you're at the centre of a crisis – for example, when your heart's thumping and your blood is pumping because you've procrastinated so long over your project that the deadline's now only a day away. Or when you know your partner's about to find those flirty messages you've been sending to your colleague.

You can self-sabotage due to a desire to feel the physical rush of stress. Otherwise, you may play the victim, and thereby take no responsibility for what happens. Yet neither the rush from the pressure or the cuddly vibes from the sympathy last long and then you're left dealing with the fall-out – the hurt feelings, the guilt, anger, confusion and shame.

Self-saviour behaviour:

Acknowledge that any 'high' you feel doesn't last and that you're setting yourself up for longer-term angst. While we are built to thrive on a certain amount of pressure, there is a tipping point – where good stress turns bad.

When stress turns to anxiety and the fight-or-flight reflex kicks in (racing heart, rapid breathing, sweating, clammy skin, cold feet or hands, nausea and the sense of threat), you are incapable of thinking rationally, so don't push it.

Mostly purple

You're a LOW SELF-ESTEEM BATTLER

There are a myriad of reasons why someone may suffer from low self-esteem (LSE) – it can be specific to certain situations or it can be a permanent fixture in your life, affecting everything. Long-term insecurity tends to come from deep-rooted beliefs established in childhood or from a traumatic experience that alters how you view yourself and how you cope.

LSE can lead to self-sabotage because your fear of failure, ridicule or vulnerability means you skip opportunities or fail on purpose. You, therefore, know why you failed and don't have to deal with any anticipatory anxiety at how things might work out.

Self-saviour behaviour:

Write down 'Thoughts are not facts' in a notebook and then read it every day. Indeed, they are just hypotheses from your biased brain – opinions that can be challenged.

The inner critic that lives in your head loves berating you. Don't let them get away with it. Ask yourself: 'Have I succeeded at something similar before?' 'What skills do I have that may help?' 'What's the worst that might happen? If that happened, could I cope with it?' We always indulge worst-case scenarios that bear little resemblance to reality.

Stepping back from these vile imaginings will prove them to be ridiculous, and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is helpful for this.

The worst is usually never that bad – and even if it did happen, you could cope with it. If LSE is affecting your life, see your GP.

