



# PROFESSORIAL INAUGURAL LECTURE

## Perfectionism: A double-edged sword Professor Joachim Stoeber

Thursday 19 March 2015, 18.00

Keynes Lecture Theatre 4  
University of Kent, Canterbury campus

Perfectionism is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, perfectionism motivates people to give their best. On the other, perfectionism makes people despair and doubt themselves. Moreover, perfectionism is associated with various psychological problems such as stress, anxiety and depression. Perfectionism, however, is a complex characteristic. There are various forms of perfectionism, and some are more harmful than others. In particular, it is important to differentiate perfectionistic strivings (striving for perfection) from perfectionistic concerns (concern over mistakes). The lecture will present findings from research on personality and individual differences and sport psychology demonstrating that only perfectionistic concerns are always maladaptive. In contrast, perfectionistic strivings – while putting people under pressure – contain aspects that can be adaptive. Unfortunately, however, people who strive for perfection are usually also concerned about making mistakes. This makes it difficult to disentangle the positive and negative effects of perfectionism, not only for researchers, but also for people who have perfectionistic tendencies.

[www.kent.ac.uk/psychology](http://www.kent.ac.uk/psychology)

University of  
**Kent**

School of  
Psychology