Slide 1: A brief bit about me

Slide 2: When I submitted the proposal for this presentation several months ago, I have a very different idea in mind than what I’ve ended up with. When I started thinking it was all about making that one last brush stroke as an artist or holding on to things far too long. But I started thinking more and more about it, especially in recent weeks, that there’s even more to it....perfection isn’t just about holding onto things...it’s about making mistakes as well.

Slide 3: Holding on too things until it’s absolutely perfect
Fixing things that no one else will ever notice and that will need to be changed again soon
How many of you are artists who learned the rule of stopping when you think it’s good enough?
You know why we learn this rule? Because making that one last little brush stroke, that mark with pen and ink, or pencil line can’t be undone. Not easily at least. And it never looks as good as it did before. You have to let it go.

Slide 4: We all overthink on a daily basis. “It’s not good enough” or “it’s not perfect” or “it’s not right yet.” But reality is...perhaps otherwise. When did you last overthink a project?
When did you last overthink a paper?
When did you last overthink a response?

Slide 5: But...is perfect really all that it’s cracked up to be? To start off with...how do we even define perfection? One person’s idea of perfection may be just good enough. How often have you turned in a perfect report to a boss, who hands it back and says “It’s good, but not good enough.” How do you define perfection for library instruction? Or for reference?

Slide 6: Before we go any further though a disclaimer...this presentation does not apply to doctors, lawyers, or engineers where perfection is needed.
Slide 7: This is going to sound a bit like a motivational speech and that’s because in some ways...it is, but it really isn’t.

Slide 8: So why do we focus so much on perfection?  
Growing up how many times did we hear that we’re supposed to be perfect? Or that practice makes perfect?  
I think in large part because we confuse giving a 100% or 90% or 110% with perfection. And there’s a big difference between the two.

Slide 9: Go for the gold!  
Slide 10: be perfect!  
Slide 11: strive for perfection!  
Slide 12: never settle!  
Slide 13: Be the cat!

Slide 14: You get the idea...we’re constantly told that we have to be the best that we have to be perfect, and to strive for perfection. Which is great....to a point. But what happens when you don’t achieve it? Olympic athletes strive for perfection and are at the top of their game...but 5 years from now will you remember those that didn’t win the gold? Or even those that did? What happens when we aren’t perfect? Or we try too hard?

Slide 15: Michelangelo’s Pieta—one of the masterpieces of the world. There are two stories about this sculpture and Michelangelo’s quest for perfection.  
1) Even after it was put into place, Michelangelo didn’t think it was done. So he went back at night, in the dark, using nothing but candel light, to finish the sculpture.
2) He heard someone talking about how great the sculpture it was, but said another artist has done it. So he went back at night, in the dark, using nothing but candle light, to inscribe his name upon the sash around Mary’s chest. What would have happened if he slipped?

Slide 16: da Vinci’s Battle of Anghiari. Lost painting that was meant to be da Vinci’s master piece, but supposedly it was never completed. Because he tried a new technique and after getting part of it done, it failed. It wasn’t perfect and he stopped. But artists that saw what had been completed came from miles around to study it and declared that it changed the face of depicting battle scenes.

Slide 17: or we spend so long on a presentation...like mine, that we cross the point of it gets over burdened by images and thoughts as everything else

Slide 18: or we add one to many ingredients.

Slide 19: It feels like a dragon is watching over us, waiting to catch us when we fail.

Slide 20: the sole focus on perfection can often cause more pain and trouble than it’s worth

Slide 21: And some of y’all are saying now, well this is all well and good, but how does this apply to work life?

- Microsoft is a good example of putting out a product that isn’t ready yet
- Or video tutorials that you slave over to fix one tiny little thing that no one else will notice, but that you then have to go back and redo in two weeks.
- Or reports—an example from my place of work. We have to write a president’s report. Each librarian and department head, five of us, writes up two pages of information about the past year. That then goes to my boss who adds her own information and turns in two pages to my dean. My dean then takes that plus the other management librarians, about seven, adds her own, and turns in a page and a half to the president. Any mistake made...goes away. And 7 months from now, no one will remember anyway.
As a person with Asperger’s, sometimes I think too logically. “We’ve spent six months on this, no one will notice, or care, about a six second bit of imperfection.” Go live and launch.

Slide 22: So what happens if you aren’t perfect? Do you give up? Do you lie down in the grass?
Slide 23: Declare that you’ll watch your stories and do it later?
Slide 24: No! Of course not! You still give it your all. Give a 110%, give 90%, give it a 120% But if you don’t meet perfection...
Don’t give up.

Slide 25:

Don’t let someone dim your light, simply because it’s shining in their eyes. @ashuping
#cildc

Slide 26: make mistakes
Slide 27: shit happens, but life will go on
Slide 28: And it is safe to come out of hiding

Slide 29: Is it easy to stand here and say this? No! Of course it isn’t. We constantly want to improve and make ourselves better, which is great. But trying to live up to a standard, to a myth that doesn’t exist...it just isn’t the way to do it.

Slide 30: So what do we do?
**Slide 31:** Perpetual beta: Gmail was in beta for 8 years! 8!!!! It worked when it was launched, but they keep adding to it and perfecting it and making it better. Try things out. See what happens. You don’t *know* what’s going to happen. You don’t *know* what your users want until you ask and until you actually do something.

**Slide 32:** Fail and fail often. Be willing to make mistakes, to fall over, and to try again.

**Slide 33:** Learn from why you failed.

**Slide 34:** Give those mistakes back to the community, tell them what you learned. Build. Grow.

**Slide 35:** explore

**Slide 36:** face your fears

**Slide 37:** It didn’t work out? ok let’s talk it out with someone that you trust. And no…this person does not have to be who you report to. Find someone that you trust, find someone that will be there for you.

**Slide 38:** Find your Kirk to your Spock or vice versa. Find your counterpart. Someone that can help make you better.

**Slide 39:** Play and play often

**Slide 40:** Play some more

---

**Slide 41-42:** View the slides!

**Slide 43:** No one is perfect. Perfection is a myth. It doesn’t matter how long you look at something, how long you test something, it will always have flaws. Even if books have editors, they still get published with mistakes in them that have to be correct. I’ve had two or three people look at blog posts that I make before I put them out there….and they still have mistakes in them. We all miss things.
Slide 44: We use a program called Clio in Interlibrary loan on a daily basis to print off invoices and address labels and all kinds of things. And for 7 years we had it spelled as: Jack Tarver Libary

Slide 45: 7 years this was printed off. 7 years we looked at it. 7 years other people looked at it. Finally...someone that didn't borrow from us much said “Hey, ummm...you know you've got library spelled wrong in your address right?”

Slide 46: 7 years!!! But did the world end? No. Did it make for a slightly awkward update to my boss? Yes...but on the bright side UGA, Emory, Yale, and countless others missed at as well.

Slide 47: Allow yourself to make mistakes, let it happen, just make sure you’re learning and making new ones

Slide 48: Is it going to hurt? yes!
Slide 49: quote
Slide 50: Be willing to fail
Slide 51: Make u-turns
Slide 52: Make mistakes--they can be tasty
Slide 53: Be yourself, everyone is taken
Slide 54: questions slide
Slide 55: thank you slide