

How to Handle Pressure

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Before getting into how to handle pressure, let's first talk about what it is. What exactly is pressure and how does it play a part in whether or not you will achieve your goals? Pressure, in terms of accomplishing goals, is the feeling you get the moment you set a deadline on your goals. As you may already know, a goal is a dream with a deadline. A dream without a deadline is just that, a dream, it'll never happen. So why is putting pressure on yourself a good thing? It's good because it forces you to act now, rather than later.

Think about those situations where you had to perform under pressure. The only reason you felt that pressure was because you had to do something within a certain amount of time. The basketball player who is under pressure because the time is running down and he has to make the final basket in order to win the game feels the pressure because he has to act right now, not later. If he had all day to take the shot, there wouldn't be any pressure. Pressure causes us to move.

Of course, pressure could also cause people to freeze up. Some people are not able to deal with pressure. When it comes down to it, they just don't have what it takes. Or do they? Pressure is something that you can handle if you know what to do. If you think about it, when you freeze up under pressure, it usually means that you don't have confidence in performing the task at hand in the amount of time that you're given to perform it. In order to deal with pressure, there is one thing you need to do. You need to get confident.

The way you have confidence is simply by being prepared. When you have done something over and over again, your level of belief in yourself rises. As your confidence rises, your ability to deal with pressure will also rise. Now, this doesn't mean you won't feel any pressure. It just means you'll be able to act despite of the pressure. Once you get use to working under pressure, you may start to actually like it because it helps you take immediate action.

I put myself under pressure every time I set a goal because I know if I don't, I will tend to delay taking the necessary actions in order to accomplish the goal. Usually setting a deadline is enough to put enough pressure on me to make it work. Sometimes though, I find that I need to "up the ante", meaning put more at risk in order to increase the pressure, which causes me to take immediate action. The reason I am able to do this is because I am used to working under these conditions, and the reason for that is because I've done this so many times.

So dealing with pressure comes down to building confidence in yourself and your abilities through lots of practice performing under pressure. Put pressure on yourself to perform at a high level because when the time comes to perform on the public stage, you'll be able to feed from it instead of freeze from it.