

Pressure Points

For those who perform under pressure

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Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Pressure Points*, a quarterly publication to provide pointers for performing under pressure.

Let me know what you think of *Pressure Points*, topics you'd like to see addressed, and how we can serve as a resource for you in your quest for peak performance and quality of life...

Charlie Brown PhD

*FPS Performance wishes
the best of luck to all the
athletes of the 2006
Winter Olympic games*

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When Facing Fears, Remember to "P"

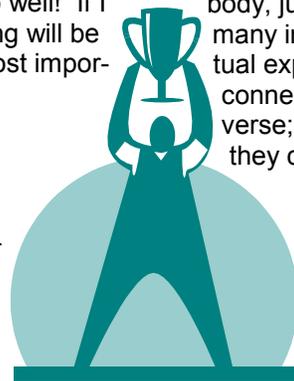
Every serious performer— whether a swimmer, gymnast, skier, musician or business person— will experience times that a sense of pressure creeps on the scene... "I *have* to do well! If I don't win/succeed, everything will be for nothing!! ...This is the most important event of my life!!!"

These little mental ghoulies invite you to panic, flee or stumble through the upcoming event in a half-dazed state of fear. The top performers are not immune to these feelings and thoughts; they are simply better at handling them and able to refocus on what is essential. They remember to "**P**."

PAUSE. As soon as you become aware of pressure or fear, pause. Recognize that fear is attempting to take over. Don't get mad at yourself for the experience; simply acknowledge it and know that you are going to gently push it aside and get back to focusing on what is important.

PULSE. Get your pulse down. When fear has triggered adrenaline, you don't think as well. Use the slow deep breaths of centered breathing to counter the effects of adrenaline.

PARK. Park your mind and let the "chattering monkeys" of thought simply fall to the wayside as you focus all your attention on the center of your body, just below the belly button. For many individuals, centering is a spiritual experience when they most feel connected with God and the Universe; many incorporate prayer as they center.



PERSPECTIVE. Put it in perspective. Remember how you got to your level of success. What got you started swim-

ming/skiing/tumbling/negotiating in the first place? I'll guarantee you that it was not fear, but *excitement*. There was something about your performing that brought a joyous energy. For a gymnast it may be the sense of "flying;" for a business person it might be the sense of engaging with others and the Eureka! experience of finding a solution; for a swimmer, it may be that sense of "easy speed." Spend a few moments thinking about the joy of these early experiences, and plant that image in you mind where you can return to it often. It is your anchor for keeping things in perspective.

Remember that *you are not required to do the event*. You could walk away from it and still be a terrific person, be loved and have a great life. You have already accomplished an incredible

When Facing Fears, Remember to "P" (continued)

feat simply to have the opportunity at hand. In the big scheme of life, the event is *optional*. The most legitimate reason for engaging in the event is to experience the joy that initially drew you to the activity. It is an opportunity to see what you are capable of doing. Free yourself of the fear; focus on the joy and excitement of testing your limits. The Phil Collins song tells it well: "You've been waiting for this moment all of your life."

PRESENT. Be fully present. As the saying goes: "Yesterday is history and

tomorrow is a mystery; today is a gift. That is why it is called the present." Make the most of this gift. Put aside any issues that might detract from making the most of the moment. You can deal with all those other issues after you perform. Focus on making the most of what is *here* and *now*.

PLAN. Work your plan. You know how to do it; you've been preparing yourself for years. You don't have to do anything new; simply do what

you know. Trust your training and preparation.

PERFORM. Perform at your best effort. If you are fully present and give best effort, you can hold your head up high regardless of outcome.

'PPRECIATE. Finally, 'ppreciate the experience. Okay, I know it doesn't technically start with a "P," but it is important nonetheless. You are wonderful, marvelous and amazing simply to have been in the position to test yourself. Never forget it.

Let FPS Performance be part of your next business, community or athletic organization event. We welcome the opportunity to share our message with others.

Call 704-333-2988

"Being successful is not a matter of being perfect; it is a matter of how well you handle your mistakes."

Quick tips...

- **Energy management** is more important than time management.
- Training does not make you stronger; it actually tears down your muscles and body. **Recovery** after the break down is when you get stronger.
- Balance in your life— having friends, loved ones and an identity other than the area in which you perform—actually **enhances** performance.
- Coaches and trainers can provide instruction and motivation to a child athlete but only a **parent** can let their child know that he or she is loved and accepted regardless of performance.
- The key to success is: a) knowing what is critical for success, b) keeping your attention on what is critical and c) ignoring distractions.
- The main thing is to make certain that the main thing stays the main thing. (Stephen Covey)
- Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare. (compliments of Terry Fritch)

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