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# The Beacon

## *Guiding You Through the Process of Change*

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### **Success under Pressure**

Sooner or later we all are confronted with a situation where you must make a critical decision. Whether it is in a relationship, business venture or social situation, your ability to perform at a high level of success is paramount. We have heard of important or famous people who crack under pressure and fail. We also hear of the average athlete or mediocre business person who under extreme pressure makes the right choices and becomes highly successful. This article will offer suggestions as to why some people are successful under pressure and others are not. I will focus on the behavioral/emotional viewpoint and not the biomedical aspects.

There are many views as to what factors we can argue most contribute to success. Here are three: 1) Focus, 2) Discipline, and 3) Adaptability. It is important to understand that, depending on the issue, it takes a blending of these qualities to produce an individual who is successful in stressful situations.

When we speak of focus, several points are paramount. The first is focus in the present to bring all your energy to cope with the immediate challenge. In addition, one must have a commitment to the task and be prepared to act favorably to produce the desired result. (Example: The ball player who comes up in last of the 9<sup>th</sup> inning and makes a hit scoring the winning run).

The second area is discipline. One needs to have discipline to respond to any situation. To remain calm under pressure, expectations, and the fear of a past failure is paramount. Discipline builds on focus. Discipline relies on consistent behavior and

emotional stability to focus on the message you are attempting to convey. At most times, discipline is a battle within yourself. It is the fight of will. The fear of failure will spur one person on to succeed, while another will simply fold under pressure because they expected to fail.

Third is adaptation. Webster defines adaptation as “the ability to adjust oneself to new or changing circumstances.” People who have this quality have a goal in mind. Their ability to remain focused on the goal even if it does not follow the original plan shows their ability to adapt. When plans change immediately adapting to a new choice will more likely yield successful results. One who is prepared for a plan to change also demonstrates adaptation. Successful people understand failure is not an option. The pressure of making the “right” decision but doing so under adverse conditions leads to long-term success.

Individuals who are best at performing under pressure regardless of the situation is a philosophy of lifestyle, a cognitive choice, a behavioral change, and surely takes a strong dedication to a successful outcome.

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