

Perfectionism and Pressure

by R.F.

I don't have to be perfect.

I won't expect that of myself any longer.

Nobody can be perfect, and besides, there is no "perfect" way of doing anything. I just do things and no longer try to do them perfectly.

If I'm not doing something as good as I'd like, or I'm having problems because of anxiety, I will coolly and calmly accept it. By trying harder and pressuring myself more to do things in a precise and perfect way, I only make myself miserable, and I will actually hurt my performance. I just do what I need to do, and realize there is no perfect way to do them, or no perfect way to feel. I accept it coolly and calmly if I have anxiety or if I don't understand something. I don't have to be perfect. I won't expect that of myself any longer.

There is only pressure in a situation if I put it on myself. Nothing is that important. It's all small stuff. If others disapprove -- who cares? There is no pressure because there is no exact right way to do things. I repeat, there is no exact right way to do things. There is no pressure because there is nothing I have to do in a given situation.

I can do whatever I want. I can always do whatever I want. Whatever the consequences, they won't be that bad. There is no pressure because I can accept it if someone judges me to be nervous. There is no precise way to do things. I repeat, there is no exact right way to do things. Since there is not a precise way to do things, there is no pressure.

However, whenever I do something or however I act is OK. If I don't do something a certain way, the consequences will always be something I can deal with. There is no pressure because I can do whatever I want. There is nothing I have to do. There is no exact right thing to do. There is no pressure because whatever I do, nothing bad is going to happen.

There is no pressure because other people's opinions do not determine how I feel about myself or whether I am a worthy human being. If I

want, I can just accept things peacefully and stare blankly into space and say nothing. There is no pressure because I don't have to be perfect. I won't expect that of myself any longer.

I am putting a great deal of pressure on myself by analyzing every situation for the perfect way to do it. Remember, analysis = paralysis. When I feel pressured, I'm going to stop thinking and just do it. There is no universal perfect way of doing it, so whatever I do will be acceptable. If after doing something, I think I could have done a better job, I'm just going to say to myself, "Well, I learned something here, and this knowledge will help me do a better job next time. It's OK. I don't have to be perfect. I am satisfied with my efforts.

My self esteem is not determined by how I perform at a certain task or whether others judge me as being intelligent, competent, fun to be around, or good-looking. There is no pressure because I can accept it if someone judges me to be nervous. If someone judges me as a failure in a certain regard, I will be able to accept it, because I don't need their approval to sustain my self esteem. My opinion of whether or not my work is good is more important than theirs. My opinion about whether my attitude is good is more important than anyone else's. My comfort with how I carry myself and what I do is more important than anyone else's. And there is no pressure because as a human being I have the right not to have to justify what I do.

I can accept the fact that sometimes I am nervous and anxious. Just because I don't feel perfect, and sometimes experience more anxiety feelings than other people, doesn't mean that I am less valuable as a person or that I should feel ashamed. I have some tough feelings to deal with but I will keep using the techniques I am learning with cool, calm, confident, peaceful determination. I will do things for my own enjoyment and growth and not for other people.

Thus there is no pressure, because if other people look down on my performance, looks, or the way I conduct myself, I can still be happy because I am doing things for my own personal satisfaction, not for other people's. I have the rights as a human being to say "I don't know," "I'm not good at this task," "no", or "I don't care". I'm going to avoid using words like "should", "must", "can't", and "have to," because they make situations very rigid and pressuring. I will avoid worrying thoughts like "what if ____?" I will do whatever makes me happy. The more I try to pressure myself into doing a perfect job, the more problems I cause for myself and paradoxically the more my performance suffers.

Pressuring thoughts are ANTs thoughts. Pressure is a lying ANT because no matter how I perform, things will be OK. I don't have to be perfect. I won't expect that of myself anymore. I won't pressure myself anymore. I have nothing to prove to anyone else or to myself. Thus, I won't pressure myself anymore. There is nothing I have to do. Anything I do is OK.