

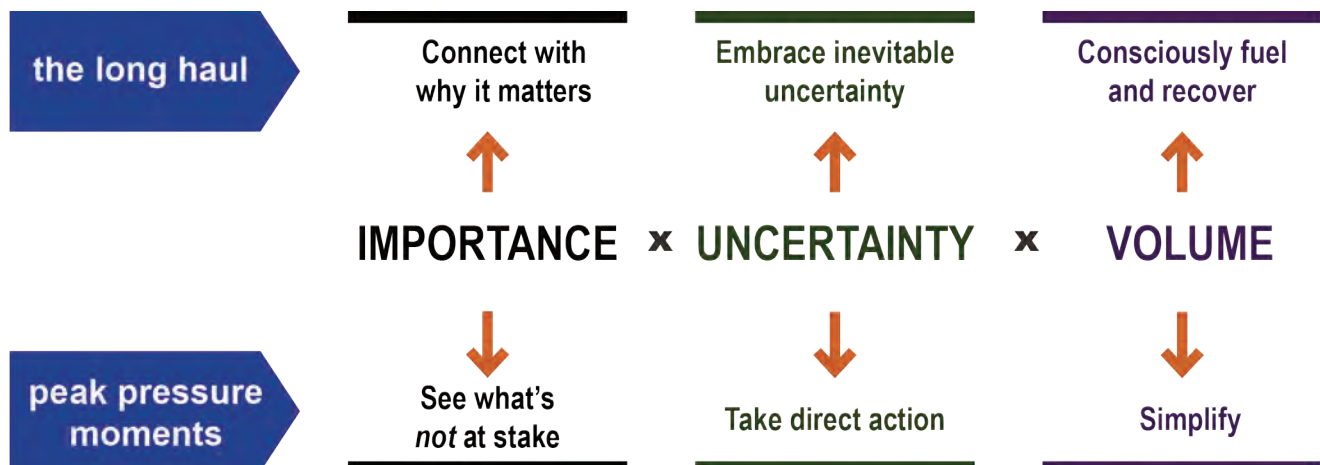
The Power of Pressure: Why Pressure Isn't The Problem, It's The Solution by Dane Jensen

Reviewed by
Dave Conroy SD 73

What's the most pressure you've ever been under?

For me, the answer is two-fold. Providing emotional and technical support to 35 staff members as we transitioned from in-class instruction to distance learning in March 2020 was a peak pressure moment for me. The ongoing, ever-shifting strain of COVID-19 since that point has been a long-haul pressure experience for all of us in educational leadership.

In his book, *The Power of Pressure*, Canadian author Dane Jensen provides a conceptual model and accompanying strategies to approach both peak pressure moments and long haul pressure experiences. A heady combination of high importance, high uncertainty, and high volume punctuates the times when we tend to feel pressure the most. These three factors form the backbone around which Jensen weaves stories and strategic responses that guide us to reframe situations of pressure into opportunities to impact outcomes.



Jensen researched and interviewed a broad range of athletes – including Hayley Wickenheiser and Rick Hansen – and business leaders – including Luc Mongeau and Ben Cowan-Dewar – in his quest to glean ideas from those who have not just endured pressure, but have found ways to thrive within it.

"The ongoing, ever-shifting strain of COVID-19 ... has been a long haul pressure experience for all of us in educational leadership."

Without naming them, Jensen's suggestions parallel current educational ideas regarding metacognition, emotional intelligence, and self-awareness. I strongly connected to Jensen's suggestions around managing uncertainty through focusing on what I have control over, building routines to redirect my focus from outcomes to behaviours, focusing on breathing, and shifting my perspective to choose how I view what I am going through.

In Chapter 9, entitled "Sleep And Other Inconvenient Necessities", Jensen outlines some potential hazards of not handling long haul pressure with a plan. He quotes his colleague, Kara Stelfox, who says, "Your body is a persistent messenger. First it knocks, then it rings the doorbell – and then it kicks down the door." Jensen moved on to presenting clear suggestions like setting the standard within your organization of not sending email after 5:30 pm, getting seven to eight hours of sleep each night, eating food that fuels your bodies in a healthy way, and ensuring that time is put aside for movement and exercise. He expands on each of these suggestions with practical applications and the encouragement to be gracious with ourselves when we stumble in our attempts.

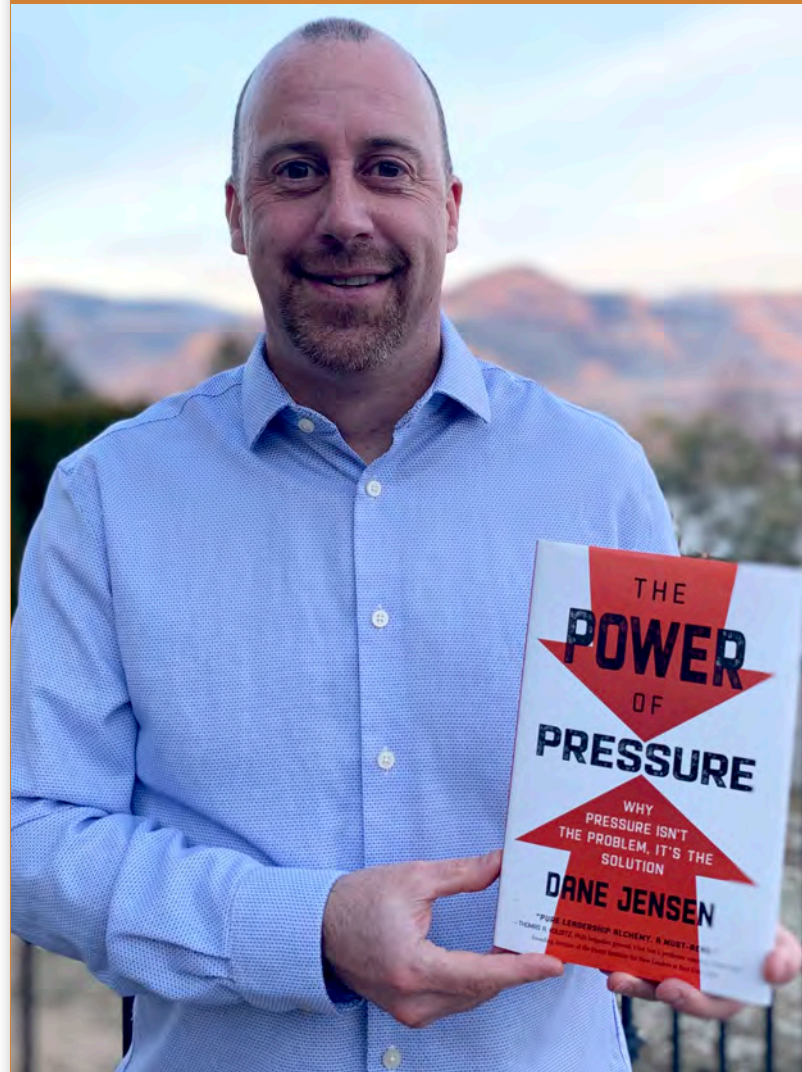
The Power of Pressure provides a much needed toolbox of strategies for any educational leader as we navigate through the everyday pressures of our roles and the ongoing pandemic drain that many of us are experiencing.

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