THE PHENOMENON OF PRESSURE

WHAT IS PRESSURE?

The phenomenon of pressure is one that's often misunderstood. By the time humans are talking about the sensation of pressure, we are often already flooded. So when we use the word “pressure” we are actually talking about overwhelm, when our mammal organism, the human body, is already OVERHEATING!

Pressure exists on a continuum and is an internal and environmental phenomenon of energy in which human mammals lack fluency. Our world of thought and language gets in the way of consistently tuning into our senses and becoming experts at how to work with things like pressure so that we can better lead our lives, moment to moment, day to day, and relationship to relationship.

The topic at hand is not about “too much pressure” but is instead beginning to understand pressure as a primary source of information and to adopt practices, behaviors, and ways of living a more aware and present life.

When we are working and living with others (humans or other animals), fine tuning our awareness to pressure allows us to adjust and adapt as needed which reduces stress and conflict and builds trust.

THE CIRCLE UP EXPERIENCE

WAKE UP YOUR NATURAL LEADERSHIP

WHAT OVERWHELM LOOKS LIKE:
A Real Life Example

By the time you snap at a person, raise your voice, or use a harsh tone or words, you pressure systems has already been flooded. Your nervous system has been bombarded with too much stimuli. This has probably been happening since your eyeballs saw the light of day.

It might look a bit like this:

- Your day starts with a loud alarm clock and a barking dog.
- Your kids talk AT you while you're trying to get dressed.
- The emails and texts start and the smartphone chimes every minute or two.
- The toaster bell rings, the coffee maker beeps, kid voices get louder.
- The car horns honk outside while you try to load the kids in the car. Your coffee spills.
- The seat belt gets stuck while the car radio blasts and the kids argue.
- There's a traffic jam and the clock is ticking. The kids are going to be late. So are you.
- Your phone is still chiming and your morning workload is piling up.
- Your mother in law just sent a nasty text.

We allow things to move too quickly and we don't have enough space and time, a pause so our body and nervous system can catch up with what's happening around us. By the time you yell at your co-worker, there were probably 50 pressure cues telling you that you are flooded. Your body tries to tell you to adjust, to modulate before overwhelm sets in.

The Experience of Pressure as an Animal

Pressure allows mammals to feel their way through life and to adjust proximity, to negotiate sharing space, resources, and roles. Pressure is not a good or bad phenomenon. This process of feeling the environment is not about judgment. It's just an assessment of what is happening around us and what we need to do or not do to take care of ourselves.

Interpersonally, pressure is a phenomenon of influence, the feel or a sense of persuasion that can be subtle and barely detectable like noticing someone's mood change or can be as severe as brute force.

One illuminating thing about learning from other animals is that they have maintained their sensitivity to the phenomenon of pressure in their environments. This is especially true about prey animals who have to detect a whole range of pressures, including life-threatening danger, in order to stay safe. Predators enter a "zone of influence" as they begin the hunt, and the prey animal can feel or sense a shift in "energy," even before they can physically see it. Their survival depends on picking up invisible shifts and responding to them immediately.

Prey animals attack as a last resort. Their best defense is to sense pressure shifts or tension and flee to get out of harms' way as quickly as possible. They simply but expediently move away.

When things feel "off" or suspicious, they respond by creating space from the pressure. When things feel good and safe, peaceful and settled, they rest together. Regardless of status on the food chain, "together is better" for all mammals. The center of the herd--or pack--is the safest and most secure place to be.

Pressure for the Human Animal

Humans have the innate capacity to feel pressure. But here is where it gets sticky. Humans insert a layer of thought and judgment on top of the pressure. The judgment gets in the way of our instincts and signals. It creates static and noise, a story that distracts us so that we can't FEEL as clearly. Sometimes we cannot get a feel for things at all. The meaning-making machine that is the human MIND creates thoughts which dull and numb our sensing system, interfering with our ability to feel, assess, and attend to pressure. Our prolific thinking clouds our natural feel so that we don't notice pressures and therefore we can't take care of them. Simply put, we are slow to respond to changes in our environment and many times we don't attend to our needs at all. This is not to say that our miraculous world of thought is to be relegated. Rather, when we bring our bodies' natural sensory system into the equation

The human animal soul is a lot like #63 here who is checking us out from behind this tree.

We live with all of these pressures we don't even know exist. Pressure is a tricky concept. It's an ever-present flow of energy in our environment and we are leaning into our experiences or shutting down from them depending on how much pressure we are sensing and how much we can tolerate.

Animals and children are perfect teachers of this because their receptors to pressure are exquisitely alive and they aren't faking it through life. They feel pressure and they respond. Our pressure sensing instrument is our human animal body and we have to strip some layers of conditioning and numbing and thinking to get better acquainted to it.

THE SEQUENCE OF PRESSURE TO NUMBNESS

Shift in System

Pressure

Pressure Without Release

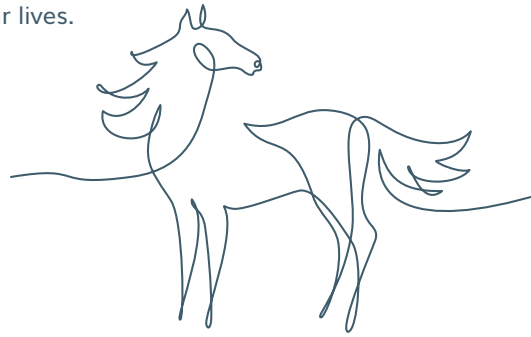
Pain

Pain Without Release

Numbness

The Consequences of Numbness

- We have less access to our mammalian signal system about safety and well being.
- We function on autopilot and miss cues from within, from others, and from our environment.
- We experience less joy and miss cues for resources that can help us or enrich our lives.



Other Factors that Lead to Numbness or Insensitivity to Pressure

- The Busy Disease: taking on too many tasks and flooding our nervous systems
- Self-involvement or self-centeredness
- Emotional overwhelm
- Preoccupation with what others are doing or saying
- Justification or analysis of situations
- Using substances or behaviors to dull senses
- Pattern of ignoring signs of pressure until exploding resulting in Emotional Hangover (shame, exhaustion, numbness)

Pressure in a System

As much as we humans would like to think that change can occur as we "skip through fields of wildflowers," pressure is a natural and necessary phenomenon, and it allows us to adapt, adjust, develop, evolve, move forward, and stay healthy.

Some examples:

- You might need to raise your voice so someone can hear you. Without enough sound waves, the vibrations won't make it to the eardrum or the vibrations won't be strong enough.
- You need to physically press your car's accelerator to increase your speed. When the throttle is opened, air is free to fill the intake manifold, increasing the pressure. A fuel injection system adds fuel to the airflow, providing energy to the engine.
- When it's time for a child to learn a new life skill, a parent will introduce it to the child and will need to pressure him/her to try something unfamiliar.

Pressure also exists in order to create balance. Homeostasis refers to the state of steady conditions maintained in living systems, or a state of equilibrium for optimal functioning. In order to maintain homeostasis, systems have to adapt and adjust to pressures.

Not enough pressure will result in no change. Not enough heat and the water won't boil. Too much pressure results in collapse or destruction. Think about a flooded engine, a fever that is too high and results in brain damage, or an over inflated balloon popping.

In a system, one element will experience pressure to shift in order to keep the rest of the system in balance. During infection, the immune system will cause the body to develop a fever and an increase in blood flow to bring oxygen and other immune cells to where the infection is.

In relational systems, we exert pressure on each other to move our relationships forward. We ask each other to grow. A teacher gives inspiring lectures, assigns homework, and schedules tests, all of which create pressure for students to study and learn. As a couple moves through the life cycle, one person may be inspired to seek something novel and ask his/her partner to join. This puts pressure on him/her to expand a capacity, overcome a fear, or confront an inhibition. In work settings, creativity inspires us to build and innovate, managers pressure us to work harder, the open market pressures companies to produce and improve.