

Hi everyone. This is Wayne Rivers at FBI where *We Build Better Contractors*.

Boot Camp is coming up. Our last '23 session is in November in Raleigh, and our first '24 session is February 22 and 23 in Dallas. So, get your high potential folks signed up and contact Charlotte for more information.

This week I want to talk about pressure is a privilege. So, I'm watching the US Open Tennis Tournament over the Labor Day holiday and as the players walk out from the locker room to the playing court, in one of the stadiums there's a plaque, and on the plaque it says, "Pressure is a privilege, Billie Jean King." Billie Jean King said that ages ago, and I just thought it was such a stirring, inspiring comment. If you think of it, the world of construction is pressure filled every day practically, but that pressure is a privilege in the way you look at it.

So, this thought first came to her when she was standing on the grass of Wimbledon during her first final, and you think of a young tennis player she had dreamed of playing in the finals at Wimbledon her entire life. The pressure to play in front of the Queen of England and all of the royalty and all of the celebrities was tremendous. It's the biggest age in tennis. And even at that youthful age, she found herself appreciating how incredible it was to have that opportunity to win. I don't know if she won the match or not, but she had put herself in a position to have the opportunity to win on the very biggest stage. So, she thought to herself, then this thing formulated in her mind, pressure is a privilege. Construction is a pressure filled industry. So, what about this is important to you? Well, golly, if pressure is a privilege and you're feeling pressure, maybe that puts you on the top stage of construction.

Maybe that pressure is a privilege to you that you have a chance to make a difference for a customer or for your team or for a hospital or an educational institution. Pressure is a privilege. Now, how might that be? I think I have four ways identified here. The first thing is pressure tests your character. Do you embrace the pressure courageously? Do you retreat in the face of pressure? Do you cut corners when you're feeling pressure? Do you take shortcuts? Pressure will reveal yourself to yourself. Does that make sense? If you find yourself embracing it with courage as Billie Jean King did, or if you find yourself cutting corners to try to deal with the pressure, that's going to tell yourself about yourself, it'll be very revealing and potentially very impactful for you.

The second thing, I forget who said this quote, it wasn't Billy Jean King, but pressure is the mother of performance. Diamonds are formed under pressure. Pressure can uncover what you're capable of when the chips are down. Pressure gets you out of your comfort zones. We grow only when we're outside of our comfort zones. In fact, somebody said life begins at the edge of your comfort zone. So, keep that in mind if you're feeling pressure.

Number three, pressure conditions you to future challenges. I know this is a paraphrase, but the Scottish philosopher, Malcolm Muggeridge said, "We only learn when we're miserable." Pressure can make us feel miserable sometimes, but that's a learning opportunity, potentially a teachable moment. It's like weight training in a way. Pressure in weight training, you go in and you do a bunch of bench presses, and it tears apart the muscle fibers, and then when they rebuild themselves, then you build additional muscle and strength. So, I think pressure can be like that. It conditions you to be able to handle future challenges. And the fourth thing, pressure can allow you to engage in life more fully.

Emotions and pressure. Feeling pressure is an emotional response. I remember I went to Center for Creative Leadership class, and back in those days I was a young man, and I was foolish in many ways. And I thought that the way to be successful in business is to be very stoic and to hide your emotions and to pretend even that you don't feel emotion. But the leader of that retreat said, "Feeling emotion is how we experience being human." And I thought to myself, golly, Moses, at the age of 33 or whatever I was, how foolish was that, that I was married and getting ready to have children, how foolish was that that I was suppressing my emotions even emotions like feeling pressure because that's how we experience feeling human. So let that be a lesson to you. So, Truman Capote said that "Failure is the condiment that gives success its flavor."

So, in pressure situations, we don't always win. We end up making bad decisions. Perhaps we don't win the tennis tournament, we don't get that next job. We pass a deadline that could have been critical to a customer. We don't always win in pressure situations, but they do allow you to reveal many things about yourself, your character, your capabilities, et cetera, et cetera. Finally, this is what Billie Jean King said about pressure. "Give me the ball, give me the problem to solve. I'll figure this out." And that's the way I think contractors generally react to pressure.

So let me know what you think in the comments section. What do you see as a positive about pressure? What to you causes you to think that pressure is a privilege? This is Wayne Rivers at FBI where *We Build Better Contractors*.