

DANIEL STEWART'S
PRESSURE PROOF PROJECTS

from his book

PRESSURE PROOF YOUR RIDING

published by

Trafalgar Square Books

www.HorseandRiderBooks.com



PRESSURE PROOF PROJECT 1

Rate Your Mental Mindset

Answer the following questions using the key below to determine if *mental training* can help you improve your riding:

0 = Never 1 = Sometimes 2 = Almost Always

- _____ I'm driven by success rather than by fear (of not achieving success) or by outcomes.
- _____ I'm a *doer*, not a *feeler* (I do things when it's necessary, not only when I feel like it).
- _____ I know my strengths and weaknesses and use this knowledge to improve.
- _____ I embrace my imperfections and know that I must *feel* them in order to fix them.
- _____ I always plan my ride—and ride my plan; I have plans for delays and when I'm rushed.
- _____ I always respect and treat my horse as an equal partner.
- _____ I know that it's never too soon or too late to start a mental-training program.
- _____ I believe that mental weaknesses are not permanent; I can learn to improve them.
- _____ I believe that mental training can help me in my normal life—in addition to my riding.
- _____ I believe that mental training can take me from ordinary to extraordinary.

- _____ **Total** (add up your answers).

If your score added up to:

14 to 20

Great—you've learned the value of mental training and can use it effectively. There's always room for improvement so continue to think about what you've read in this chapter.

8 to 13

You're on the right track but need more to do more work to ensure mental training can help you. Make a list of your greatest mental challenges and start improving them using the tools in this book.

0 to 7

You struggle with your mental game and need a mental-training program to gain control of it. Read this chapter again very carefully and formulate your plan of action.

PRESSURE PROOF PROJECT 2

Rate Your Confidence

Answer the following questions to determine if *confidence training* can help you become more *Pressure Proof*.

0 = Never 1 = Sometimes 2 = Almost Always

- _____ I am always optimistic, never pessimistic.
- _____ I never blame my horse, the judge, or others for troubles, mistakes, or missed opportunities.
- _____ I never avoid things just because they're difficult or inconvenient.
- _____ I never procrastinate; I do things now instead of waiting for them to get easier.
- _____ I never make excuses.
- _____ Making decisions is easy for me.
- _____ I embrace change.
- _____ I have no preconceived notions about my limitations.
- _____ I always focus on what I have, not on what I don't have.
- _____ I'm not afraid to push myself outside my mental comfort zone.

- _____ **Total** (add up your answers).

If your score added up to:

14 to 20

Great—you've learned the value of confidence and can use it effectively. There's always room for improvement so continue to think about what you've read in this chapter.

8 to 13

You're on the right track but need more training to make you a more confident rider. Make a list of the challenges that bother you the most and start to improve them by using the tools outlined here.

0 to 7

You have low confidence and need a mental-training program to improve it. Read this chapter again very carefully and make a sensible plan forward.

PRESSURE PROOF PROJECT 3

Rate Your Positive Mental Traits

Answer the following questions to determine if *positive emotions* can help you improve your riding:

0 = Never 1 = Sometimes 2 = Almost Always

- _____ I'm always optimistic, have a positive self-image, and believe in myself.
- _____ I remain calm, cool, and composed in the face of adversity.
- _____ I'm resilient and bounce back after adversity, missed opportunities, or mistakes.
- _____ I embrace challenges rather than trying to avoid them.
- _____ I accept compliments and believe in them.
- _____ I have great concentration and remain focused on a task for as long as needed.
- _____ I'm motivated and know what drives me to give 100 percent.
- _____ I remain focused on the present, not the future (outcomes, standings, ribbons).
- _____ I remain focused on finding solutions rather than dwelling on problems.
- _____ I know the difference between my *schooling mindset* and my *showing mindset*.

- _____ **Total** (add up your answers).

If your score added up to:

14 to 20

Great—you've learned the value of positive emotions and can use them to ride effectively. There's always room for improvement, so continue to think about what you've read in this chapter.

8 to 13

You're on the right track but need more training to improve your riding emotions. Make a list of the challenges that bother you the most and start improving them using the tools in this chapter.

0 to 7

You tend to focus on negative emotions and need a mental-training program to improve. Read this chapter again, and the next one, and make a plan to help change your negative emotions to positive ones.

PRESSURE PROOF PROJECT 4

Rate Your Abilities

Answer the following questions to determine whether *overcoming challenges* can help you improve your riding:

0 = Never 1 = Sometimes 2 = Almost Always

- _____ I always cope and never mope.
- _____ I learn from failure rather than fearing it.
- _____ I ride for myself (no fear of letting others down or living up to their expectations).
- _____ I embrace my imperfections and have no desire to strive for perfectionism.
- _____ I accept disappointment without frustration or anger.
- _____ I always believe I can achieve; I never doubt myself.
- _____ I am motivated and know what drives me to give 100 percent.
- _____ I focus on myself and do not allow myself to be intimidated by others.
- _____ I always give 100 percent and don't play down to my competition or worry about slumps.
- _____ I stay focused and rise above any distractions (external and internal).

- _____ **Total** (add up your answers).

If your score added up to:

14 to 20

Great—you've learned the value of overcoming challenges. There's always room for improvement so continue to think about what you've read in this chapter.

8 to 13

You're on the right track but need more training to help you overcome challenges in the future. Make a list of the challenges that bother you the most and improve them by using the tools from this chapter.

0 to 7

You struggle with challenges and need to develop a mental-training program in order to improve. Read this chapter again very carefully, and make a plan to become more confident.

PRESSURE PROOF PROJECT 5

Rate Your Self-Talk

Answer the following questions to determine if *positive brain babble* can help you improve your riding:

0 = Never 1 = Sometimes 2 = Almost Always

- _____ I know what to say to myself to get over a mistake or missed opportunity.
- _____ I think positive words to myself when schooling and showing.
- _____ I recognize when I'm speaking negatively and can stop it and change it to positive.
- _____ I have specific things to say to myself to stay focused and motivated.
- _____ I ask myself leading questions and I'm prepared to answer them in a positive way.
- _____ My self-talk focuses on my strengths, not my weaknesses.
- _____ I'm able to focus my thoughts on the present moment instead of future outcomes.
- _____ I'm aware that negative trash talk is contagious so I avoid letting it happen.
- _____ I use tools like *motivating cue words*, *music*, and *mottos* to strengthen my self-talk.
- _____ I repeat positive self-image statements to myself.

- _____ **Total** (add up your answers).

If your score added up to:

14 to 20

Great—you've learned the value of positive thinking and can use it effectively. There's always room for improvement so continue to think about what you've read in this chapter.

8 to 13

You're on the right track but need more training to make you a more positive rider. Make a list of situations that cause you to think negatively and start improving them by using the tools in this chapter.

0 to 7

Your thinking is predominantly negative: You need a mental-training program to change it to positive. Read this chapter again very carefully, and make a plan to improve your self-talk.

PRESSURE PROOF PROJECT 6

Rate Your Mental Imagery Skills

Answer the following questions to determine if *mental imagery* can help you improve your riding:

0 = Never 1 = Sometimes 2 = Almost Always

- _____ I use mental images to learn new skills or improve old ones.
- _____ When using mental images I use as many of my senses as possible.
- _____ I make my images memorable by making them humorous and “touchable.”
- _____ I use mental images to rehearse my jumping course, dressage test, or reining pattern.
- _____ I use different perspectives when imaging my rides (*internal, external, partner, modeling, matching, mental rotation, motor imagery, perfect, and realistic*).
- _____ *My riding rehearsals* progress at the same pace as my actual ride.
- _____ I imagine *positive memories* as a way of motivating myself.
- _____ I use mental imagery in a lesson as well as in competition.
- _____ When I’m nervous or tense I visualize calm images to relax myself.
- _____ When I’m unmotivated I visualize exciting images to pump myself up.

- _____ **Total** (add up your answers).

If your score added up to:

14 to 20

Great—you’ve learned the value of mental imagery and can use it effectively. There’s always room for improvement so continue to think about what you read in this chapter.

8 to 13

You’re on the right track but need more training to make you a more visual rider. Make a list of ways to use mental imagery and begin today.

0 to 7

You are struggling and need a mental-training program to improve your mental imagery. Read this chapter again very carefully, and make a plan that will include plenty of vivid visualization.

PRESSURE PROOF PROJECT 7

Rate Your Goal-Setting Skills

Answer the following questions to determine if goal setting can help you improve your riding:

0 = Never 1 = Sometimes 2 = Almost Always

- _____ I use long-term *product* goals to stay focused.
- _____ I set short-term *process* goals to achieve my long-term goals.
- _____ My goals are challenging but achievable.
- _____ I use a goal-setting journal to document my goals.
- _____ I reward myself each time I achieve a goal.
- _____ My goals are specific, measurable, and timely.
- _____ I use tools like *goal reminders*.
- _____ I have the willpower to put off instant gratification instead of long-term success.
- _____ I set goals for schooling and showing.
- _____ I set legacy goals.

- _____ **Total** (add up your answers).

If your score added up to:

14 to 20

Great—you've learned the value of goal setting and can use it effectively. There's always room for improvement so continue to think about what you read in this chapter.

8 to 13

You're on the right track but need more training to make your goal setting more effective. Make a list of goals you'd love to achieve and start working toward them using the tools in this chapter.

0 to 7

You're not using goal setting to the best of your ability, so create a mental-training program that will help you improve. Read this chapter again very carefully and start your goal-setting plan today.

PRESSURE PROOF PROJECT 8

Rate Your Stress-Management Skills

Answer the following questions to determine if *stress management* can help you improve your riding:

0 = Never 1 = Sometimes 2 = Almost Always

- _____ I *control and manage stress* instead of trying to eliminate stressful situations.
- _____ When schooling and showing I always feel *aroused*, not anxious or apathetic.
- _____ I act as if I feel *confident* even when I'm not feeling confident (I fake it until I make it).
- _____ I *desensitize* myself to stressors by re-creating and practicing (not avoiding) them.
- _____ I use a *relaxation technique* to help me rest or stay calm when I'm feeling pressured.
- _____ I use an *energizing technique* to pump me up when I'm feeling unmotivated.
- _____ I use a *stress-stopper* (superstition, ritual) to maintain the perception of control.
- _____ I use *deep breathing* to control my level of anxiety.
- _____ I know who I must become to ride my best (*present vs. performer* self).
- _____ I use a *pre-competition routine* (checklist) to maintain the perception of control.

- _____ **Total** (add up your answers).

If your score added up to:

14 to 20

Great—you've learned the value of stress management and can use it effectively. There's always room for improvement so continue to think about what you read in this chapter.

8 to 13

You're on the right track but need more training to help you deal with stress. Make a list of the challenges that bother you the most and start improving them by using the tools in this chapter.

0 to 7

Stress has too much effect on you. You need a mental-training program to help you cope, not mope. Read this chapter again very carefully and create a stress-management plan that will help you.

PRESSURE PROOF PROJECT 9

Final Checklist

1 Recall one of your *best* rides as vividly as you can, remembering what you were thinking, feeling, and experiencing at the time. Then place an X over the number from 1 to 5 for each of the items below that best describes your experience at that time.

2 Recall one of your *worst* rides ever then similarly place an O over the numbers from 1 to 5 that describe your response.

Felt extremely confident	1	2	3	4	5	Had no confidence
Felt in complete control	1	2	3	4	5	Had no control at all
Brain babble was positive	1	2	3	4	5	Brain babble was negative
Felt extremely focused	1	2	3	4	5	Felt extremely unfocused
Felt effortless	1	2	3	4	5	Used a lot of effort
Focused on goals	1	2	3	4	5	Didn't focus on goals
Felt "in the zone"	1	2	3	4	5	Felt that nothing went right
Felt strong self-belief	1	2	3	4	5	Felt a lot of doubt
Stayed focused on self	1	2	3	4	5	Focused on others
Stayed focus on present	1	2	3	4	5	Focused on future outcome
Focused on mental image of ride	1	2	3	4	5	Forgot mental image of ride
Felt well prepared	1	2	3	4	5	Felt nervous with show jitters
Gave 100 percent	1	2	3	4	5	Gave less than 100 percent

Rate Your Response

Look at your responses above and find the two that have the greatest discrepancy between your best and worst rides. This will indicate the area of mental training that you probably need to focus on the most. Read the chapters in this book covering your two weakest areas, and begin there, using the exercises described in those chapters to become more *Pressure Proof*.