

The Psychology of Performance

By Pamela Enders, Performance Psychology Coach

There you are. Center stage, the spotlight is on YOU! All eyes are focused on YOU! All ears are tuned in to YOU! There is a hush, an anticipation in the air. This is your big moment. You take a slow deep breath and you: (Choose one)

- A. Perform brilliantly, just as you imagined you would.
- B. Feel your heart racing, your mouth is as dry as the Sahara desert, your hands shake, and your voice emerges as a weak little squeak.
- C. Recall how you flubbed the lines in rehearsal and you do it again.
- D. Become a bit distracted at the thought of the critics in the audience and although you perform adequately, you know it isn't your best.

So, which response did you choose? If you answered "A" you don't need to read any further. But if you identified with any of the other responses, you might want to read on! Welcome to the world of Performance Psychology where the ideal performing state is a function of a basic tenet - what you think is reflected in what you do or, put another way, the body does what the mind thinks. Actually, the achievement of a peak performance or an ideal performing state is dependent on the balanced control of physical, technical and mental functions but for the purpose of this article, I will be focusing on the latter - the mental factors that make or break a performance.

My interest in this aspect of psychology emerged as part of a personal quest. As a young woman I had dreams of being a singer but, for various reasons, my life took a detour and I ended up with a Ph.D. in psychology. Although being a psychologist is rewarding in many ways, I never relinquished my dream of singing. Finally, a few years ago, I took the plunge, went to an open mike, sang, discovered a wonderful community called the Boston Association of Cabaret Artists, found a voice teacher and a coach and haven't stopped since! In addition to analyzing my own rehearsing and performing skills, I attend many performances of all kinds in order to determine what ingredients contribute to the best performances. Much of what psychology knows about performance comes from the sports psychology field. But performance is performance is performance and it doesn't really matter whether you are swinging a golf club or singing an aria; superb performance requires a strong mind-body link exhibited in the way you think followed by what you do.

In high level sports, it is estimated that 50 to 90% of success is attributed to mental factors. Of course, it is expected that these athletes are in top physical shape and that they have achieved a mastery of the technical skills required to perform their sport of choice. Similarly, it is expected that

you take care of yourself physically (you are well-rested, eat well, and stay in shape) and that you work to refine the technical aspects of your art. But what about the mental or psychological dimension?

Research shows that certain personal characteristics contribute to excellence in performance. These are known collectively as Mental Toughness (a term originated in sports psychology). If you want, you can evaluate your own Mental Toughness.

Rate each of the following factors as they apply to you (in performance) on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being poor and 5 being average and 10 being excellent:

1. Highly Motivated;
2. Realistic/optimistic about self;
3. In control of emotions;
4. Calm and relaxed;
5. Focused and concentrated;
6. Self-confident;
7. In control of own actions;
8. Determined;
9. Able to control mental energy.

This is a quick checklist designed to provide you with a general idea of your strengths and vulnerabilities. When I work with people, I offer a more detailed and thorough evaluation. But for now, let's look at each of these dimensions:

The mentally tough performer must be highly motivated and self directed toward success and that motivation must come from within. If you have experienced few audition call-backs or a string of other disappointments, it can be a challenge to maintain a high level of motivation. Still, this attitude affects everything and so it might be helpful to remember what drew you to your art in the first place. How can you reconnect with the passion you had? How can you find pleasure in the process and not rely so much on the outcome?

Can you achieve a healthy balance between being realistic about your talents and skills and yet maintain an optimistic attitude? Build on the positive things that happen and look for small successes. You may not be Martha Graham (realistic) but you continue to improve in grace, stamina, and execution (optimistic). Celebrate what is positive and note what needs to be improved.

Do you use your emotions to communicate your art or do your emotions control you? Harnessing your emotions to make them work for you can enhance your performance and this skill can be learned.

Can you remain calm under pressure? It can be helpful to re-frame your experience and view the pressure of performing as an exciting challenge and not as a threat.

How easy is it for you to stay focused and concentrated while performing or rehearsing? Peak performers can concentrate quite intensively while remaining aware of what is going on around them. They have the ability to zero in on the most important things and disregard the distractions. Meditation and imagery exercises can improve concentration and focus.

In performance, your confidence in yourself should be unshakable. You, yes you, are the greatest star! If you don't believe it, the audience won't either. They want to love you....let them! (And love them back.)

When you're out there on stage, it is you who is responsible for what you do. Sure, the director or choreographer might have suggested you move or speak in a certain way, but it is you who is executing the action. Imagery and mental rehearsal can assist you in achieving a flawless performance.

How resolute and determined are you to succeed? Keep an open mind and a spirit of curiosity that encourages you to be eager to learn something new. Set small achievable goals and work towards them. Tell yourself that you are in control only of what you do NOW.

Okay, you've had a rotten day, your car died and you have a cold but you still have to get on stage and perform. Can you muster up the mental energy to do so? (And I don't mean just going through the motions.) Maintaining and controlling the right level of mental energy means that you are able to switch into performance mode no matter how you feel or what has happened.

As you can see from the above, the real challenge is dealing with yourself! It's up to you to master who you are and what you think and feel. The good news is that all this is possible by learning a few techniques and making a commitment to practice them. The first step in changing any behavior or attitude is to become aware of what it is that needs changing.

Let's look at cognitive interference first. You know, those negative thoughts or critical comments that creep into your head while you are practicing your art. "I'll never remember those lyrics." "I'm not as talented as he is." "I'll never get that part." Are these familiar to you? This kind of thinking interferes with concentration, focus, and of course, with performance. The following equation appears in the book *The Inner Game of Music*.

$$P = p - i,$$

P= Performance, the result you achieve; p = potential or your innate ability; and i = interference or your capacity to get in your own way! The way to enhance your performance is to reduce interference (i) at the same time that potential (p) is being trained. In this way, your actual performance comes closer to your own true potential. We are constantly engaged in an inner dialogue with ourselves. Too often, this conversation is damaging. A way to think of this is that we have two

selves, Self 1 is our Interference and Self 2 is our Potential. Self 1 contains concepts about how things should be or what could have been, our judgments, our shoulds and shouldn'ts. Self 2 contains our natural talents and abilities. In other words, if it interferes with your potential, it's Self 1. If it expresses your potential, it's Self 2. So, the next time you're at an audition and you hear yourself thinking, "I 'm wasting my time, they'll never hire me," remember that this is Self 1 rearing its ugly head and it's time to engage in some positive self-talk and re-framing: "I know what my strengths are; I have worked hard. I am well prepared. My heart pounding is a sign that I am gearing up."

The way you think affects the way you feel and, with effort, you can change the way you think from a negative pessimistic stance to a positive optimistic perspective.

Psychologist Martin Seligman states that optimists and pessimists make different attributions for their success and failure. (See box below.) An optimist attributes success to factors that are permanent, pervasive and personal. For example, if you win the leading role in an important production, you think, "I've worked hard and the countless hours I've spent practicing have paid off plus my coach and teachers have been supportive and helpful." When optimists experience set-backs, they attribute them to temporary, specific, and external factors. So, if you don't get any part, you might think, "Well, I guess I chose the wrong kind of song for the audition and the competition was tough today; I'll just have to work harder next time." Conversely, pessimists attribute success to factors that are temporary, specific, and external ("just lucky" "They were just being nice" "the competition was weak") and they attribute failure to factors that are permanent, pervasive, and personal. ("I never do well in auditions; I'm just not good enough") The effect of these attributions on self-confidence and performance is cumulative. Artists who believe that success is the result of personal efforts and permanent, pervasive good aspects of the environment will have these views reinforced by success. But an artist who thinks success is due to luck or to other people will not be reinforced by a victory. Failure is more discouraging to pessimists because it is attributed to some personal deficiency and to permanent pervasive environmental factors. An optimistic artist will not be as distressed by a failure because it can be dismissed as caused by something temporary, specific, and beyond control.

ATTRIBUTIONS

	For Success	For Failure
OPTIMIST	Permanent, pervasive, personal	Temporary, specific, external
PESSIMIST	Temporary, specific, external	Permanent, pervasive, personal

The goal here isn't to become a total optimist. It is important to have a realistic assessment of your skills and talents so that you know what to improve and how to improve it. You still need to take responsibility for your performance. But If you find that you spend too much time in that dark, negative space, listen closely to your internal dialog and challenge your negative beliefs by asking yourself: What is the evidence that this is true? What are some alternative explanations? What are the implications for this? How useful is it for me to hold onto this belief?

Let me illustrate how this works. A young man who was studying opera was discouraged at not getting parts in a few productions. His teachers praised his talent and he had won some awards so his failures in auditions seemed mysterious. It soon became clear that he was overflowing with negativity and that his Self 1 was in total control. His internal dialogue sounded like this: "I should be farther along than I am. My breath always sags at the end of those phrases. I'm not attractive enough.. I'll never get where I want to." He was under attack by himself! The first step was to ask him to systematically keep track of his negative thoughts and the impact they had on his self-confidence and mood. Because this negativity had become so automatic, he was surprised at how pervasive it was. These thoughts affected his very demeanor in performance. He literally frowned and hunched over with worry in his auditions. The next step was to help him challenge his negative beliefs while realistically assessing the validity of his thoughts. We discovered that he had some unrealistic expectations for himself. He was talented, but he was young and his voice, though thrillingly promising, was still developing. He was still a work process and needed to embrace the process as exciting and positive. while recognizing his hard work would pay dividends later. And yes, his breath did sometimes sag at the end of those phrases so he put extra effort into improving that with great success. In addition to challenging his negative beliefs, we worked on positive imagery through hypnosis which dramatically improved his self-confidence and ultimately, his performance. He secured the part he wanted at his most recent audition. And he's enjoying himself again.

It's astounding how mean we can be to ourselves. How many times have you stopped rehearsing a new number because it was "too hard" and you were convinced you would never learn it? In his book, *Effortless Mastery*, pianist Kenny Werner admonishes us to be kind to ourselves. A true master is not just a master of technique, but of him/herself. For something to be mastered, it must "feel as simple as playing one note." It all starts with one note or one step or one breath. We didn't leap out of the womb knowing how to walk! We learned how to sit, then crawl, then stand, and after a number of tumbles, we walked. We don't think about it now, we merely walk. It may be helpful to view things as familiar or unfamiliar rather than difficult or easy. If something seems hard to

you, tell yourself, "I haven't discovered the simplicity in it yet." If your life depends on doing something right, as in the case of a tight-rope walker who practices assiduously, you will practice on a much deeper level. Technical mastery creates freedom and this is a life long pursuit . If you combine masterful technique with the "channeling" of inspiration, directly from within, the result can be truly awesome. A proponent of meditation, Werner says that the quiet mind allows the artist to tap into the wellspring of the music/movement/poetry within that facilitates a harmony of mind, heart, and body.

So, let's talk about meditation. There are many kinds of meditation practices and although most are based in a particular religious tradition, you do not need to ascribe to a particular belief system or spiritual philosophy in order to meditate. There are numerous benefits for the performing artist who meditates: these include improved concentration, focus, emotional control, greater integration of body-mind-heart; enhanced openness to creativity, and a general sense of well-being. I will describe three different (but similar) meditation techniques for you to try.

Most meditation practices require a particular way of sitting. Sit in a chair or on a ottoman or cushion with your back upright, not leaning against the back of the chair. One writer suggested that you sit as if you are revealing your personal dignity. Place both feet on the floor and put your hands on your legs. If you wish, you can hold the left hand against your abdomen, palm up, with your right hand (palm up) placed on top of it. You should feel comfortable but aware of the tension necessitating maintaining this posture. You should not be so comfortable that you fall asleep! Close your eyes. (Allow about 15 - 20 minutes for each meditation.)

Concentration Meditation: After assuming the correct posture to stay alert, focus on your breath. Just notice the rising and falling of the breath. If you notice your thoughts straying (and you will!), steer them back to the breath. The goal is to stay on one thing. You can focus on an object you see with the mind's eye or your breath. The metaphor is that of steering a car on a road...if you feel the car veer off, you steer it back. This meditation can be helpful for improving concentration and focus and for precision work.

Awareness Meditation: Assume the correct posture. First, notice the breath to slow yourself down. As you become aware of thoughts, notice them but don't go with the thought or deepen it. Note distractions without judgment or reaction. Practice not reacting to new thoughts, just acknowledge the existence of the thought, notice that you are noticing your thoughts but then go on to breathing or the next independent thought without dwelling on any one thing. This meditation can be useful to open up what is inside you and to help you become aware of what is inside; it can also be helpful in generating creative new ideas and assists in minimizing judgmental reactivity.

Breath Watching Meditation: Assume correct posture. Inhale slowly through your nostrils and watch with your mind's eye a white cloud of pure oxygen filling the lungs completely. Suspend the breath for a few seconds (three to five) and watch the clean air travel to all extremities of your body. Exhale and watch the "smoky de-oxygenated cloud" exit the nostrils as carbon dioxide. See it dissolve and disappear. Suspend breath for a few seconds (three to five) and imagine the emptiness

of your lungs. Repeat this breath-watching process ten or more times and notice the calm relaxation take over. As this process develops, you will become more able to stay unperturbed and totally focused in your centered awareness, in spite of external distractions. Once you become comfortable with this technique sitting down, you can begin to practice it in a standing position and eventually carry this state over to your practice routine and performance.

Feel free to try all three of the above methods to determine which one you prefer. Remember however, that although these techniques sound simple, it may take a while before you feel comfortable meditating. This is especially true if you are constantly running on high. If you stick with it, you will reap the rewards.

You will have noticed that all the meditation techniques begin with a focus on breathing. Similarly, all anxiety management techniques use breath control. Since anxiety in some form often accompanies performance problems, I will introduce you to a few quick and easy anxiety control methods that you can employ in many different situations. Even though all performing artists rely on adequate breath control in order to perform, we often forget to breathe properly! If we are anxious, we are likely to engage in shallow breathing that deprives us of necessary oxygen.

So, the first thing I tell people is notice your breath. Just notice it and marvel at the wisdom of the body...the body knows when to breathe even though we are oblivious to this. Now gently move the breath down from the chest to the abdomen. Think low and slow. Breathe slowly through your nostrils. This alone will help you to slow down and calm down. If you are feeling distressed, place a hand on your chest and allow yourself to experience the gentle warmth emanating from your hand, soothing you, comforting you, calming you down. This strategy can be used almost anywhere (if you're driving, keep the eyes open, please!). I encourage people to connect this with everyday routines such as brushing their teeth or going to the bathroom. It can also be helpful in preparation for a practice or rehearsal and of course, the performance itself.

Another breathing technique is called the 4-4-8. Sit comfortably with eyes closed. First just notice the breath and after a moment, inhale slowly to a silent count of 4, hold the breath to a count of 4, and exhale slowly to a count of 8. Repeat for 10 to 20 minutes. If you need structure, this may be for you. If you get dizzy, you are moving it too fast.

A final strategy is to simply count very slowly to ten and take a deep breath with each number. If you don't have time to count to ten, count to five, or three or even one! The point is to breathe profoundly.

Now with all this talk of anxiety control, you might think that I believe that all anxiety should be banished. Not true! Although it certainly is useful to know you can control extreme bodily anxiety instead of it controlling you, we all have what is called a Zone of Optimal Functioning that varies from person to person. Some of you may perform better when relaxed (Perry Como, anyone?), others of you may need to be pumped up, It also depends on what you do. A dancer may need to

experience more arousal than a flautist. You will need to determine what your optimal zone is and work to achieve it. Whatever it is however, successful performers tend to interpret high arousal and nervousness in a positive way., e.g., "I'm getting geared up; I'm excited and energized."

There are two kinds of anxiety, cognitive and somatic. The above techniques are helpful to combat excessive somatic or bodily anxiety (dry mouth, racing pulse, shaking hands and legs, churning stomach), but what about cognitive anxiety? This type includes self doubt, worry, and those negative, self-critical thoughts that we talked about earlier. Choking, a term used in sports to refer to a terrible performance, is more likely to occur when you allow your negative thoughts to distract you from the task at hand. Here is a visualization technique you might find helpful if you are being overwhelmed with negative distracting thoughts:

Begin with the Breath-Watching Meditation and as you experience yourself relaxing, use your mind's eye to see yourself sitting at a desk. In front of you is some paper and a pen. You take the pen and write down the things you are worried about, anything that is distracting you. Really see the words you are writing down and feel the pen in your hand. Once you have written down all of your concerns, put the pen down, and fold the paper. Now you notice a box on the desk. Look closely to see how big it is and what color it is. You can open the lid and put the paper with your worries inside it. Now close the lid and pat the box, telling yourself that you will deal with your worries later. Continue with the breathing and notice how free you feel, how ready you are to begin practice/rehearsal/the performance.. (Note: it is important to actively deal with whatever you put in the box at some point or else the box will become overloaded and the technique will not work well!)

Here are two other visualization techniques that focus on achieving an "ideal state" of performance, They rely on the development of a cue or trigger that you can use to re-connect you to the positive feeling you want.

Inside-Out Visualization - Begin by sitting comfortably, eyes closed, focusing on the breath. Use your out-breath to relax, to let go. Use your in-breath to bring in your best qualities, your most exceptional talents. Fill yourself up with it and relax into it. When your ideal state is achieved, develop a cue word or phrase (e.g., "confident and strong") that you can associate with this ideal state. Practice this connection several times. Now distract yourself with other thoughts to take you away from this ideal state. And now, using your cue word or phrase, try to re-establish the ideal state. Practice this several times.

Outside-In Visualization - Sit comfortably , eyes closed, focusing on the breath. Use the out-breath for letting go. Imagine a large movie screen where you see someone you admire and respect (the ideal person) in performance. Imagine what he or she is feeling...what it is like to be in that ideal state. Now imagine you are having similar feelings and how you would feel like that person. Once you are able to experience these feelings (ideal state), develop a cue word or phrase that you

can associate with this ideal state. Practice this connection several times. Now distract yourself to take yourself away from this ideal state. And now, use your cue word or phrase to re-establish the ideal state. Practice several times.

You can also develop a physical cue instead of or in addition to the cue word or phrase. For example, you might put your index finger and thumb together. If you practice these techniques, they can be used in performance in order to connect with a positive performing state. Research shows that peak performers visualize more frequently than others do. One interesting tidbit of research verifies the power of imagery in sports. Two groups of basketball players were trying to improve their free-throw percentage. One group shot one hundred free throws everyday for three weeks and the other group simply visualized doing the same. The visualizing group showed significant improvement over those who actually shot the ball!

So, how does this stuff work? First of all, some psychologists make a distinction between visualization and imagery. The former is seeing something with the mind's eye. The latter includes that plus actually feeling yourself engaging in the activity you are visualizing. It includes the kinesthetic element. Imagery is the more powerful because the brain actually sends signals to the muscles used in the activity, even though you aren't aware of moving. Researchers hooked up electrodes to a skier to monitor the muscle movements as he made his way down a hill. They then repeated this with him in the laboratory just imaging himself going down that same hill. The results showed that the very same muscles were activated in the same sequence in both situations. Hence, he could practice his ski routine without ever having to go outside! Imaging creates an internal blueprint for the ideal motor performance. And, because when you image yourself performing, you can image yourself doing it perfectly, you are essentially training your mind and body to perform flawlessly. What a marvelous way to supplement your practice and rehearsal routines! The stronger the memory of the mental image, the more likely it will be activated in the actual performance situation and guide the ideal performance during the event.

A famous Chinese pianist was imprisoned for 7 years and upon her release was asked to perform. She readily agreed and performed brilliantly. People were amazed and asked her how this was possible, after all she had been in prison and unable to even touch a piano for 7 years. She responded that she had, in fact, rehearsed her music constantly by imaging herself at the piano, seeing and feeling her fingers touch the keys as she refined her performance over and over again.

Another way to use imagery is to identify with something that has the attributes you want to acquire. If you are a dancer and you want to improve the height and distance of your leaps, you could image yourself as a cougar leaping across a ravine. When I go jogging, if I find that I'm plodding along, I image myself moving from one trampoline to another. Suddenly, I feel lighter, I'm moving faster, and having more fun.

As powerful as imaging is in itself, it can be enhanced when done in a hypnotic state. It is fairly easy to learn how to hypnotize yourself although some people prefer to be hypnotized by someone else. I encourage people to learn this valuable tool to facilitate learning and to improve

technique. Hypnosis has been around for a long time and despite what you may think, there is nothing that mysterious about it.. The hypnotic state is a state of concentration and focused attention. It produces a calm, comfortable experience that allows you to focus intently. You are aware of external noises and distractions but they will not bother you since your focus moves increasingly inward. Trances occur naturally. Perhaps you recall being so involved with a TV show that you didn't hear your partner calling you to dinner. Or you were driving on the expressway and missed your exit because you were "somewhere else." Well, these states can be induced to help you in your performance. How does it work? It is very much like using a magnifying glass in the sunlight to focus and concentrate the rays of the sun into a pinpoint of light, allowing the sun's rays to become more powerful. Similarly, when you focus and concentrate your mind's attention, it allows you to use your own mind in a much more powerful way. Hypnosis is a method of focusing your mind and then using your imagination and thoughts to stir feelings and to alter your behavior and attitudes. You alter your internal world and by doing so, can change your feelings and behavior.

To prepare myself for a cabaret show, I put myself into a trance and imaged myself going through my entire show, from being introduced to the final curtain call. I developed a cue word to re-connect with the positive state. When I performed, it seemed fairly effortless. The lyrics seemed to flow out of my mouth on their own accord yet I was very connected to what I was singing. I was in the zone and I loved it.

A young woman who worked very hard in her practices and rehearsals tended to "choke" during actual performance. She would find herself saying, "I don't know this, I can't do it." A combination of simple anxiety management techniques coupled with hypnosis (including the post-hypnotic suggestion that she would be able to perform wonderfully) helped to eliminate the negative self-talk. She was finally able to perform with great joy and skill.

Well, so far I've talked with you about using hypnosis, imagery, visualization, meditation, and anxiety management strategies plus cognitive reframing techniques to eliminate problems and to enhance performance. Next, I'd like to say something about setting goals and developing performance plans.

Too often, performers will create vague, grand goals for themselves such as, "I want to make it on Broadway." Okay, so what steps are you going to take to get there? Establishing a realistic plan is essential.

The basic principles in goal-setting can be summarized with the acronym SMARTER, i.e., S=Specific; M=Measurable; A=Acceptable and adjustable; R=Realistic; T=Time-phased; E=Exciting; R=Recorded. .

Being vague in establishing a goal is a waste of time. For example, if you were to say that you want to sing better, it means nothing. But if you say you want to extend your vocal range from 1 to 3 octaves, then you have a Specific place to go plus the goal is Measurable in an objective way. Further since you have designed your goal, it should be Acceptable to you and it can be Adjusted as

needed. Reaching a three-octave range is Realistic given hard work and persistence and you can set up intermediate goals over TIME.

And yes, it is Exciting to think of the freedom that three octaves will provide. And you can and will Record the goal and chart the progress. Writing things down is critical; it keeps you on track and keeps you honest with yourself. Go ahead, try it out for yourself right now. Think of a specific goal you wish to achieve and follow the SMARTER paradigm. It will make it a lot easier for you if you do.

If you have a show coming up, do you create a Performance Plan for yourself? A Performance Plan is really subdivided into a Pre-Performance Plan, a Performance Plan and a Post-Performance Plan. The Pre-Performance Plan incorporates all the details you need to attend to in order to ensure a successful performance. It includes time scheduled for practice, rehearsal, mental warm-up and physical warm-up. You can organize your feelings, actions, and thoughts under three headings: Physical, Technical, and Mental. Include in your plan a list of the "what ifs" so that you can feel prepared for most any kind of disaster that might occur! The Performance Plan itself focuses on the day of the actual performance and also includes the "what ifs" but also emphasizes positive affirmations, mental reminders, and a detailed outline of the performance. The Post-Performance Plan outlines what you need to do after the performance. Do you need time alone? Do you fare better being with a large crowd? This plan also includes an evaluation of your performance. Write down what you liked and what needs improvement. Don't dwell on the negatives, note them, tell yourself that mistakes are an opportunity to learn something new. Then move on.

The most important thing to remember about performing is that you chose this career because it means something to you; because you wish to communicate something to the world that is vitally important to you. If you are totally involved in your art, you will not be painfully nervous. The ultimate goal is to unleash and express the extraordinary power of your true artistic self .

10 Peak Performance Tips

1. What you think is reflected in what you do; The body does what the mind thinks.
2. In high level performers, 50% to 95% of success is due to mental factors.
3. The real challenge is dealing with yourself; Master who you are and what you think.
4. Winning is the science of being totally prepared.
5. Difficult tasks respond best to simple solutions (break it down into manageable chunks).

6. Giving yourself permission to fail releases you from fear of failure.
7. View mistakes as opportunities for learning and growing.
8. Observe yourself with detached, nonjudgmental interest.
9. View things as familiar or unfamiliar rather than difficult or easy.
10. If something seems hard, say: "I haven't discovered the simplicity in it yet."

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Pamela Enders is a psychologist with 25 years of experience. She has a Performance Psychology Coaching practice in Cambridge and is on the faculty of Harvard Medical School.