

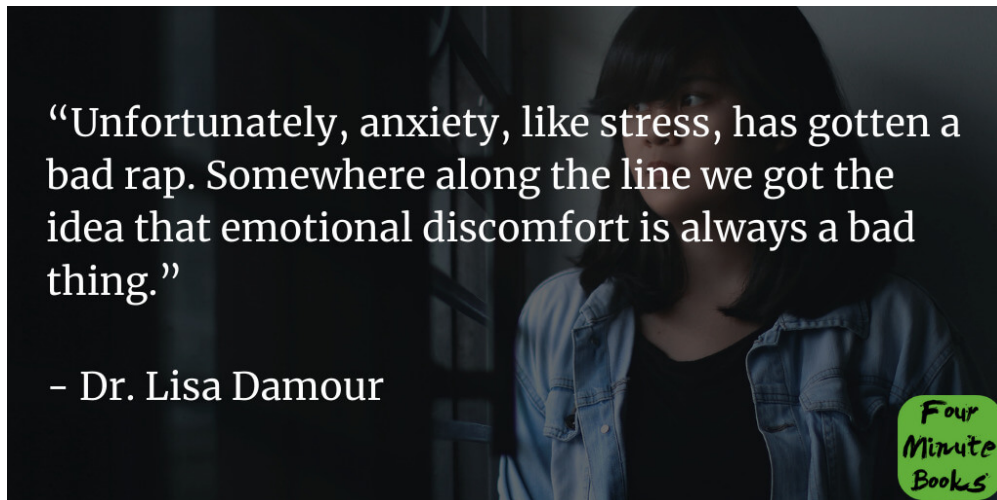
Under Pressure Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *Under Pressure* uncovers the hidden anxieties and stresses that school-aged girls experience and what parents, educators, and all of us can do to help them break through it and succeed.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



A couple of years ago when my wife and I found out we'd be having a girl, I got pretty excited. There's something special about the relationship between a Dad and his daughter. And as thrilled as I was, I had completely underestimated how much I would love her when she finally came.

I also didn't realize how hard girls have it these days, especially when compared to boys. Although my daughter is only a toddler right now, I want to be fully prepared to help her through anything she might deal with.

Until just recently I thought I had a good idea of how to do that. But in the last few days, it's hit me just how little I know of the issues that young women face today, let alone what to do about all of them!

But that's why I'm grateful to have come across Dr. Lisa Damour's book *Under Pressure: Confronting the Epidemic of Stress and Anxiety in Girls*. I have to admit, it scared me a little at first considering all that my daughter faces. But in the end, Damour reassured me with her tips to overcome all of the difficulties that girls these days face.

Here are 3 important lessons I've discovered from this one:

1. Anxiety and stress aren't always bad, it just depends on the situation.
2. Help the girls around you confront their problems instead of avoiding them.
3. Young women are better at school than young men, but they worry about it more.

Let's get right to this and see how we can help the ladies in our lives!

Lesson 1: Sometimes stress is good because it can help us grow.

We've seen many social, political, and legal advancements for women in the last few years. It might be easy to look at this and think they have it easy, but the truth is life as a girl can be difficult.

The amount of anxiety and stress girls are experiencing is rising dramatically. Some of these burdens are negative, but it's vital that we recognize that others are positive.

Getting out of your comfort zone, for example, has been shown to result in personal growth. **This is a form of useful stress because it builds resilience and strength to tackle future trials.** Anything that's unfamiliar, like speaking in public, can produce this kind of growth.

Anxiety is also beneficial at times. Being afraid of something can indicate that something is wrong. If you haven't studied for a test enough, for example, you'll probably worry about it.

But there are limits to how much anxiety can be helpful.

Say your daughter breaks her arm. If she has friends in her class that can take notes for her, this could improve her resilience.

Consider, instead, if your daughter has a broken arm and her chances of getting into college depend on her athletic performance so she can get a scholarship. The anxiety from this situation can be damaging because there's no foreseeable way out.

You can find out if the fear your daughter is experiencing is negative by examining her mental, emotional, or financial capacity to get through it. If she can't change her situation, then it's going to be too much.

Lesson 2: Don't teach your girls to avoid problems, but instead to confront them.

Dr. Damour is an educational psychologist that sees a lot of girls in the middle of a meltdown. One such girl named Jamie came in tears once, afraid of failing a chemistry test she had to take.

Although Jamie wanted to avoid the test, Dr. Damour knew that wouldn't help her anxieties. She did begin by empathizing with Jamie's worries, but didn't let her try to get out of it. That's because anxiety only gets worse when we avoid things that scare us.

Consider the outcome if this young woman had gotten out of the test. She might have felt relief at first, but eventually, the anxiety would come back even worse when she had to take other tests.

Trying to escape your problems also keeps you from learning the important truth that failure isn't always a bad thing.

Rather than letting Jamie evade what she was afraid of, Dr. Damour taught her to approach it with baby steps. She had Jamie watch videos about the subject and ask her teacher for help right before the exam.

A few days afterward, Dr. Damour saw Jamie again, and this time she was relieved. Even though the test still hadn't gone well, she was better for having tried.

When your girls struggle with anxiety, help them approach their fears a little at a time.

Lesson 3: Girls outperform boys in school but have a harder time worrying about how they're doing.

Not only do girls do better than boys in all subjects in school, but more girls go to college than boys. Even in university, they have a higher graduation rate and get more advanced degrees than men.

But there's a hidden expense to this success. Girls are often more stressed out by school than boys.

To see what we need to do to help this problem, we need to first understand the difference between the genders. It begins with girls worrying more than boys about how they perform academically.

Young women tend to rely on teacher feedback more. **They place a higher value on grades and consider them to be the entire picture of their academic capability.** Failing a test or getting a D, for example, might make a girl consider herself less intelligent.

Boys, in contrast, think of bad grades as a result of not working hard enough rather than a reflection of their own abilities.

To help girls combat this, we need to help them get a growth mindset. They need to understand that a test or assignment only shows her current understanding of the material, which they can improve with hard work.

The more they believe that they can develop their skills on their own, the less your girls will worry about school.

Under Pressure Review

Under Pressure initially appealed to me because I have a daughter and I want to help her with the challenges she'll face throughout life. But after finishing it I realize how every young woman around me has had things harder than I imagined. I hope to be a force for good to help alleviate some of the stress that each girl I know feels!

Who would I recommend the Under Pressure summary to?

The 56-year-old elementary school teacher who wants to know how to help the girls in their class, the 39-year-old with daughters that is looking for ways to ease their anxiety, and every guy who still thinks that it's okay to treat women unfairly.