

Choke Hold

“Choking is suboptimal performance, not just poor performance. It’s a performance that is inferior to what you can do and have done in the past and occurs when you feel pressure to get everything right.” (This quote is from the book *Choke: What the Secrets of the Brain Reveal About Getting It Right When You Have To* by Sian Beilock.)

We all choke. We will probably choke again.

When we worry about the outcome of a project, fear failure or feel that our performance defines us, we set ourselves up for a choke hold.

This happens when we over-analyze next steps. We experience paralysis by analysis. We tie ourselves in a knot or three and execute below our abilities.

A kissing cousin to paralysis by analysis is procrastination. When we put things off, there is often a latent issue that stems from our past. When my students in college classes developed a pattern of procrastination, I could easily see that they had performance anxiety. They weren’t putting off the work. They put off the evaluation and grade.

Some people start to choke the instant they receive an assignment:

“Why does he think I can do this?”

“I don’t have time to do this right.”

“I’m not ready for this. Maybe later in my career.”

Responses such as these deflect the opportunity for evaluation and coaching. We resist coaching when we receive the advice as a personal rejection.

Perhaps along the way of our career, we've experienced poor leadership. In an environment of fear, workers do less and perform below their optimum capability.

If a love leader is at the helm, workers are not as likely to fear the response to a mistake. If the culture allows workers to feel a freedom to try new things, stress plummets and the threat of choking shrinks.

When workers choke, something blocked the flow!

Love leaders clear the path.

"For freedom Christ freed us. Stand fast therefore and do not be entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1).