TED - Daniel Levitin - How to stay calm when you know you’ll be stressed.

# Language Focus

*Discuss the meaning of the phrases in bold with your partner.*

1. I had just driven home, it was around midnight **in the dead of** Montreal **winter**.
2. As I stood on the front porch **fumbling** in my pockets, I found I didn't have my keys.
3. It releases cortisol that raises your heart rate, it modulates adrenaline levels and it **clouds your thinking**.
4. Now you might be thinking I've **pulled this number out of the air** for **shock value.**
5. So the idea of the pre-mortem is to think ahead of time to the questions that you might be able to ask that will push the conversation forward. You don't want to have to manufacture all of this **on the spot.**
6. You might change your mind **in the heat of the moment**, but at least you're practiced with this kind of thinking.
7. So I'm not completely organized, but I see organization as a gradual process, and **I'm getting there.**

# Comprehension Questions

1. What happens in the anecdote Daniel tells at the start of the talk?
2. What were the consequences of Daniels clouded thinking?
3. What is the solution he comes up with?
4. What are the two practical tips he gives for common problems?
5. What are the two questions he recommends asking to a doctor before they prescribe you a drug?
6. What was the historical advantage to the brain releasing cortisol in stressful situations?

# Discussion Questions

1. What did you think of the talk?
2. Have you ever been in a similar situation to the one Daniel describes in his anecdote? What did you do?
3. Have you ever forgotten a passport or boarding card when flying somewhere? What did you do?
4. Are you an absent-minded person? What things do you lose/misplace? Where do you keep your keys/mobile/wallet at home?
5. In what situations is it good idea to predict the possible problems that could occur?
6. Are you good at making decisions under pressure?
7. What do you think of what he says about the medical industry?
8. Would you trade quality of life for a longer life?

# Pre-mortem

*What things could possibly go wrong in these situations, and how could you prepare for the problems?*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A job interview | Travelling by plane | An important exam | A first date |
| A wedding | The first day at a new job | A surprise party | Climbing a mountain |