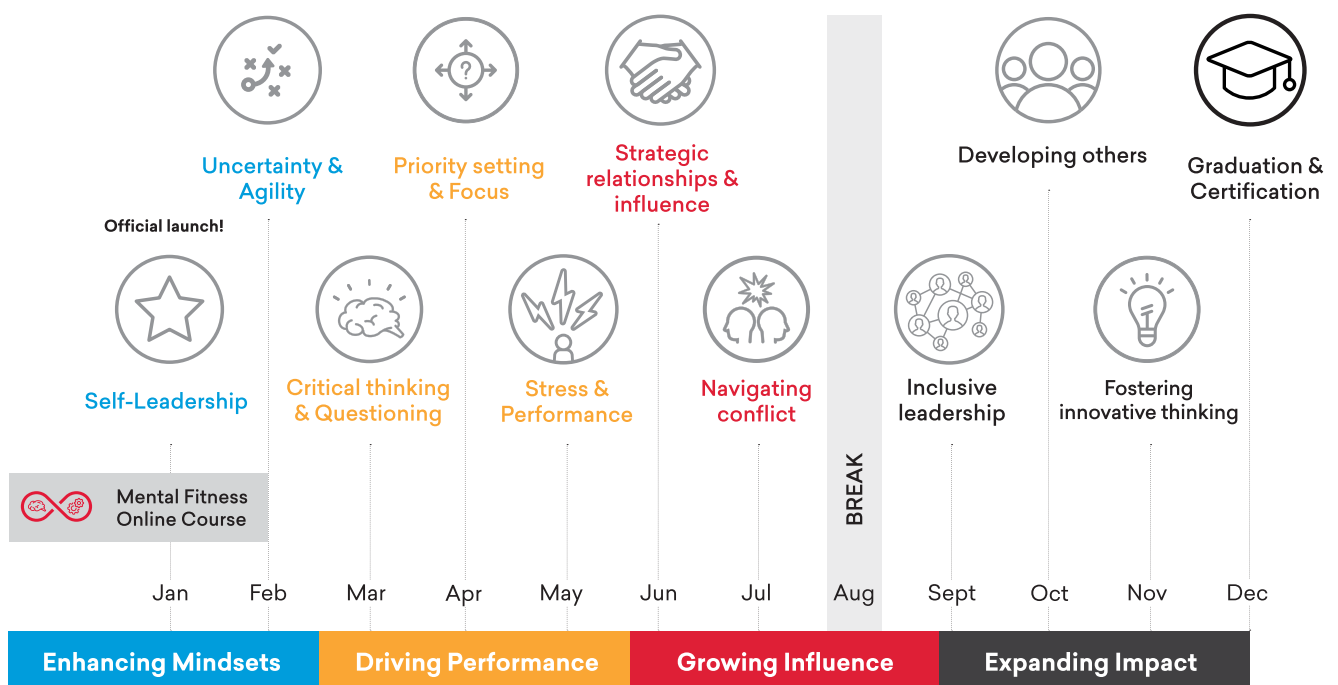


# The **EDGE**

## Welcome to The EDGE recap for zone 2

### Driving Performance

#### Session 5: Stress & Performance



This module helps you understand what drives **motivation, momentum and productivity**. You'll enhance your ability to cut through the clutter of our always-on world with its endless urgencies and priorities. Why? Because the way to accomplish more isn't to do more—it's to do strategically less.

**Ready to get behind the wheel of your success? Hop into the driver's seat and crank up the engine—it's time to drive performance!**

# Driving performance



## Driving performance

### Critical Thinking and Questioning

Move from executing requests to uncovering the why that drives them

### Priority Setting and Focus

Gain clarity on what really matters and optimize your capacity

### Stress and Performance

Capitalize on positive stress and thrive in chaos

## Session 5: Stress & Performance

**Date:** 19th May

**Trainer:** Aldo Kane

This session was a little bit different! We took a deep dive into **how stress affects performance**.

Today's trainer is living **proof of concept**: Aldo Kane provides protection & safety for film crews on the set of extreme and remote locations.

His CV is impressive: he spent time in Western Africa during the Ebola crisis, **rowed from Portugal to Venezuela** in a tiny boat with 4 other people, has filmed narcos in Colombia and Mexico (and also with Will Smith). And he's a former **Royal Marine Commando Sniper**.

All this to say: if anyone is qualified to give advice on **thriving under duress**, it's Aldo Kane.



## Whiteboard Time!

Jodie got out her **trusty whiteboard** and pointed out the not-so-obvious. While a lot of Symbia's work—especially when it comes to leadership training and workshops—focusses on how our beliefs (our **thoughts and feelings**) impact our behaviour, today's session goes a step further to look at **physiology**:

How does what's **happening in our bodies** as a result of stress influence our performance?

## The Commando Spirit

Like every Royal Marine recruit, Aldo learnt the **Commando Spirit** during basic training:

- **Courage**: Get out front and do what is right.
- **Determination**: Never give up.
- **Unselfishness**: Team first; Teammate second; Self last.
- **Cheerfulness in the face of adversity**: Make humour the heart of morale.

These principles have **guided Aldo ever since**—through thick and thin, through adversity and extremes.

**Courage** isn't about catching bullets or pulling people out of a burning car. It's about doing the **right thing when no one's watching**.

**Determination** is about drive. What gets you out of bed in the morning? If you're not truly committed to **running a marathon**, you won't want to get out of bed in the morning when it's cold and raining.

**Unselfishness**: Enlightened self-interest because you're looking out for everyone else knowing that they're also looking out for you. It's doing the **small things that make a difference** for everyone else on your team.

**Cheerfulness in the face of adversity**: Don't underestimate the **importance of this principle**, especially in the **post-pandemic world**. The one thing that can get you through dark, difficult times is the **ability to laugh**.

## Breakout groups

**Question:** Write a list of all the things that are weighing you down in your life.

*A sampling of what groups said:*

'Endless to-do lists'

'Toddler dramas.'

'Feeling out of my depth.'

'Sickness.'

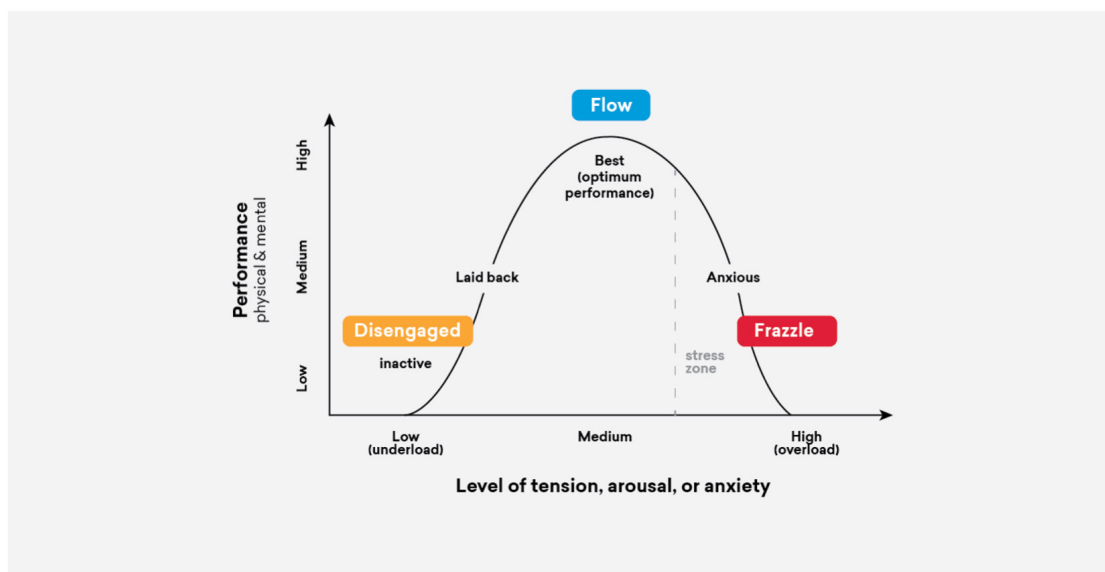
'War.'

'Massive laundry pile.'

*Is it any wonder we feel pressure and stress?*

## Finding comfort in chaos

### Yerkes-Dodson



There's an old adage: **'If you want something done, give it to a busy working mother.'**

We can get a lot done when we have an **intense workload!** Sometimes we forget that.

**Optimal performance** is in the middle, and we need some **pressure to get into that state.**

Frazzle is when you go over the line—and your proportion of stress **outweighs your capacity and capability to perform.**

What are the **signs of frazzle**, and what can we do to get out of it?

For Aldo, he knows when he's in this state that he's not doing anything particularly well and feels a **lack of focus**—doing 5 or 6 things and not finishing any of them.

Aldo's mantra for when he feels frazzled: **'Do the thing.'**

By that, he means: focus. **One thing at a time.** The key to surviving when you don't know what to do is: just . And that leads to the next thing, and to the next thing, and so on.

## High stress, high stakes

How to manage this on expeditions: very basic stuff: **eating, drinking, keeping warm, and shelter.**

Nothing else matters on expedition. This is why for Aldo, life is more stressful when he's back in **'normal' life!**

Everyone's **capacity for stress** is different. For Aldo, having to catch up on 4 weeks of email is stressful.

**Sleeping on the side of a cliff**, on the other hand, is a bed of roses—because he's in a flow state, knows his mission, and has trained extensively for it:



# Breakout groups

**Question:** What do you do to manage stress and pressure?

A sampling of what groups said:

*'Focus on what's important and just do those few things. That helps.'*

*'Values help. When I feel myself getting worked up, I remind myself of who I want to be.'*

The best way to deal with stress: **breathe!**

## Ways to Manage Stress & Pressure

What does Aldo do to manage stress, and how can we apply those things to master difficult situations in our own lives?

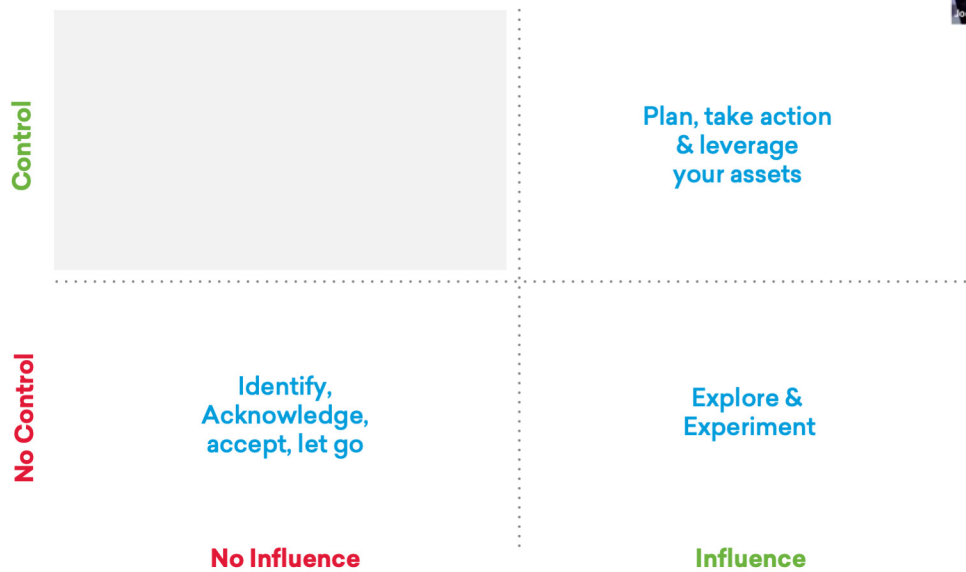
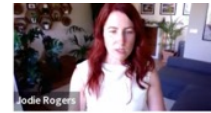
**Perception:** Perspective and how you see the situation

**Controlling the controllables:** Control your thoughts, control your breathing—control the things that you can control. Those are limited! The range of things we can control is quite small, but those things are **very important** and useful.

### Control the controllables



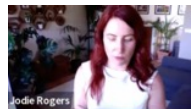




**Breathing:** Has a direct impact on your body’s stress response to a situation.

When other people are super-stressed? It’s the **same 3 things** you need to manage to protect yourself against their stress.

You can’t manage stress without **assessing your risks**.



**Risk assesment**

Hazard	Worst case Consequence	Extreme control
Road accident	Death	Don’t drive
Shark attack	Potential death	Don’t get in water

Hazard	Likely Consequence	Measured control
Road accident	Normal commute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wear seat belt</li> <li>• Drive within speed limit</li> <li>• Take a refresher course</li> <li>• Adjust driving for rain</li> </ul>
Shark attack	Nothing happens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 in 1.37 million chance of death by shark</li> <li>• Swim were there are no sharks</li> <li>• Stay in the shallows</li> </ul>

## Beliefs about stress

Our **beliefs about stress** change how it affects us. These were explored in a longitudinal stress study of 30,000 Americans over eight years.

Of those who said they experienced a lot of stress in the last year, **43% had an increased risk of dying.**

But this was only true if they believed that stress was **harmful for your health!**

## Physiological Responses to Stress

How might you react?



Quickly  
pounding heart



Breathing  
rapidly



Shaking  
with anxiety





## Summary: Stress & Performance

You can get better at it, and: by capitalising on positive stress, you can learn to thrive in chaos.

### Notes from The EDGE

- **Unselfishness** can be as little as **asking someone if they're okay**.
- If we were all just **5% nicer to each other every day**, our whole experience of life would be better!
- Take the time to find the **good in every situation**—the collateral beauty!
- If you can identify the stressor that's creating problems for you, that's **half the battle**.

### Resources

- **Thriving In Chaos:** With Ex Royal Marine Commando and Extreme TV Adventurer Aldo Kane (Jodie Rogers, [The Hidden Edge of Team Performance](#) podcast)
- **Team effectiveness needs courage** the way a ship needs a captain. Here's [how to manage stress to increase it](#).
- **The Commando Spirit:** The Importance of Ethos, Culture & Psychological Wellbeing for **Optimal Performance**