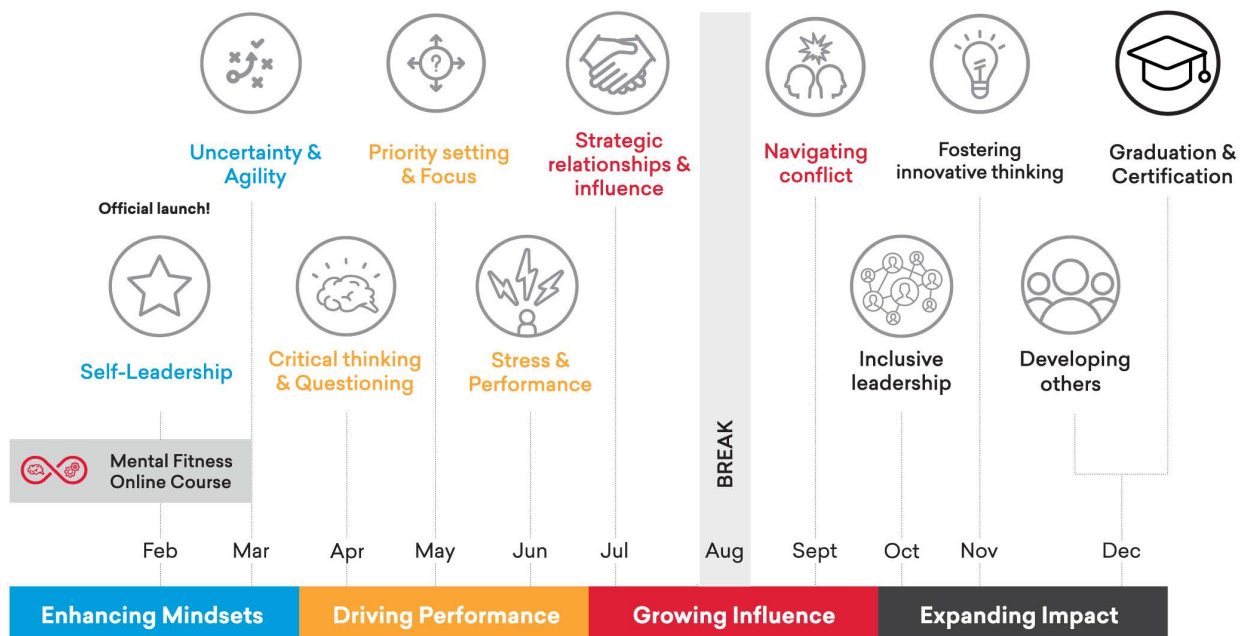


The **EDGE**

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: 16th and 20th June

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), summited Mount Everest (8,848 m) and then Mount Lhotse (8,516 m) exactly 24hrs after summiting Everest! 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**.

Interaction in the chatbox

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.'

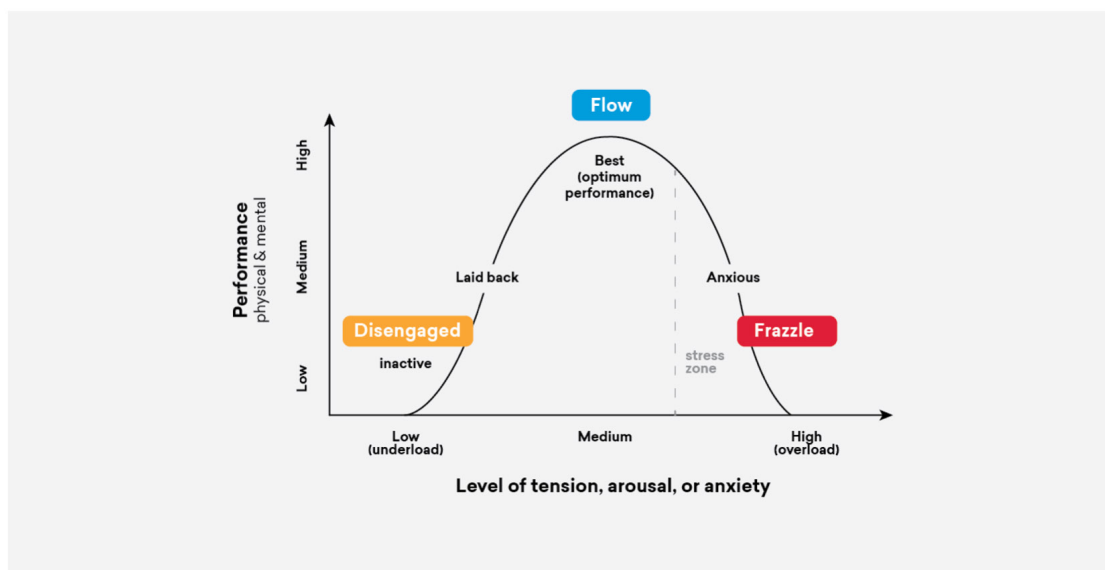
'War.'

'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!***

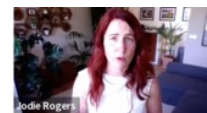
Ways to Manage Stress & Pressure

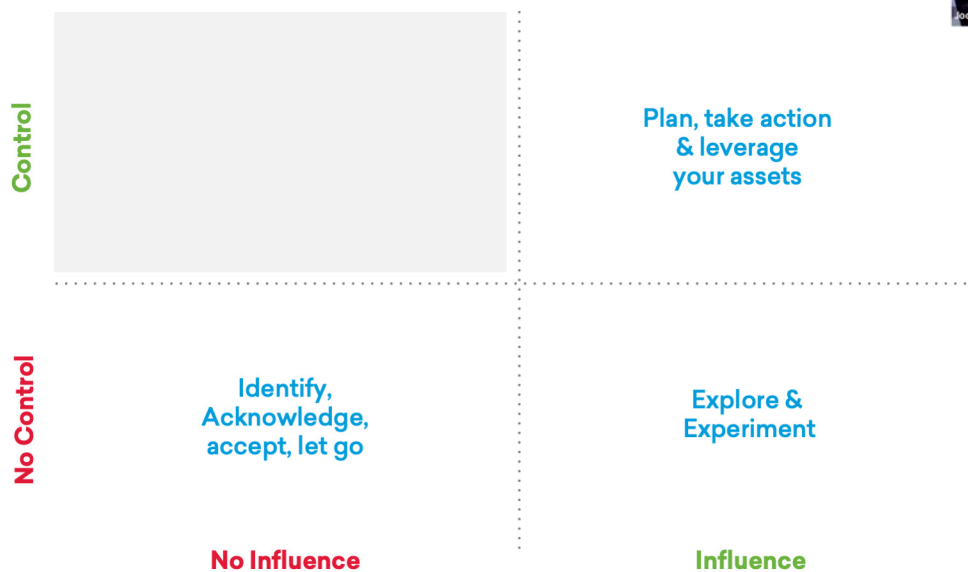
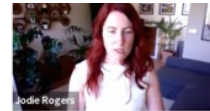
What does Aldo do to manage stress, and how can we apply those things to master difficult situations in our own lives?

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

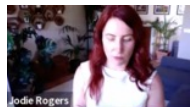




Breathing: Has a direct impact on your body's stress response to a situation.

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"> • Wear seat belt • Drive within speed limit • Take a refresher course • Adjust driving for rain
Shark attack	Nothing happens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 in 1.37 million chance of death by shark • Swim where there are no sharks • Stay in the shallows

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



Silent Scream

At the end of the session we tried an activity called **Silent Scream** which aims at dispersing any built-up adrenaline and tension to return the body to a calm, collected state.



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**