



**The NeuroMentor Institute® for Peak Performance**

**STRESS MASTERY AND PEAK PERFORMANCE**

**The Neuroscience of Optimum Performance Under Pressure**

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**Seminar 1. Stress Mastery Strategies and Tools**

Two proven systems of stress mastery for optimum performance:

1. *The Neural Conditioning Chart*  
A systematic identification of stressful emotional triggers and to rewire planned, ideal responses for peak performance.
2. *The ROADMAP System®*  
A strategic way to deconstruct and understand personal performance, and to systematically write new code for mind, brain, and behavior performance under pressure.

**Several Minds, Two Brains, One Focus**

*The faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention, over and over again, is the very root of judgment, character, and will.*  
William James, Father of American Psychology

*Several Minds*

Mindset – a state of mind and the accompanying software program – determines what we perceive, how we process information, and how we respond. Each mindset is its own software system, complete and internally consistent.

Mindsets frame the ongoing process of our operating system.

Two crucial elements in performance:

- How to boot up an optimum mindset
- How to fully develop skills within that mindset for the best results

Surface story: the conscious intention and logical process

Shadow story: the more than 90% of our operating system that is automatic and unconscious.

### *Two Brains*

The “Bottom-Up” System 1 is automatic, intuitive, and immediate. It is quick and impulsive, and requires focus and strategies to develop everything from self-awareness to deliberate planning.

The “Top-Down” System 2 is the conscious, logical, seat of self-control for executive functioning and reasoning. This top-down system determines voluntary attention and choice of decision-making.

*Willpower* is a triumph of the top over the bottom system.

### *One Focus*

The power is in the focus: Focus molds brain pathways and synaptic connections. Possibility focus creates new neuronal networks and connections.

## **Regulate States of Mind and Manage Emotions**

*Everybody's got a plan, 'til they get punched in the mouth.*  
Mike Tyson

State of mind: a set of particular emotions, memories, mental models, and behavioral patterns. A key element of mastery is to become aware of various states of mind, with particular focus on which state works best for what purpose.

Self-regulation is the key ingredient to optimum performance, from executive to academic to athletic.

A gap in performance has more to do with mindset than with motivation and intelligence.

Some factors that lower the threshold to emotional triggers predispose us to impulsive decisions:

- Preset meanings
- Depleted energy
- Distraction

- Emotional overwhelm
- Too many choices
- Significant emotional charge
- After experiencing ineffectiveness or powerlessness

### *The State of Flow*

In the zone of flow, we are most likely to perform at our personal best. In this zone, we also will most readily acquire and integrate new skills in deliberate practice. The zone experience is one of optimal performance.

### **Neural Rewiring for Emotional Triggers**

#### *Column 1. Emotional Triggers*

Identify the emotional triggers that set a reactive state change into motion.

#### *Column 2: The Usual Response: Altered State / Time Capsule*

Certain emotional triggers create an instantaneous state change, with the associated perceptions and feelings preserved in this time capsule.

#### *Column 3: Mantra*

Three parts to a mantra:

- A cue: a personal gesture to initiate the focus and physiology
- A phrase: such as “Relaxed and powerful.”
- Physiology: a deep breath to breathe in relaxation, breathe out tension

#### *Column 4: Ideal Responses*

For each emotional trigger, have a preplanned ideal response, including behavior.

The repetition of these four steps will result in neural conditioning – rewiring the brain.

## Seminar 2. The Neuroscience of Peak Performance

### A Confidence Blueprint

The state of mind of confidence is more correlated with success than competence or expertise. Confidence is more important than ability when it comes to specific outcome measures of success.

Success most often has to do with two things:

- The state of mind of confidence that we engage an endeavor
- How we manage an optimum performance state under pressure-inducing circumstances.

Confidence is a belief that you can create a successful outcome through your actions. Confidence is an internal sense that *I can make this work*. Optimism is the belief *Everything will work out*.

#### *Confidence and Brain Chemistry*

- The brain chemistry that establishes optimum confidence is led by serotonin.
- Oxytocin directly affects confidence.
- In brain chemistry, there is an inverse ratio of stress and confidence.

#### *Precommitment and Preparation for Confidence*

Priming of mind and brain to prepare for an anticipated situation establishes the foundation of a mindset of confidence. Some strategies for successful priming for confidence include:

- Asking yourself positive, powerful questions to induce serotonin
- Focus on connections with important others to activate oxytocin response
- Mental imagery of a future memory of success to live into
- Cultivate a circle of support people and mentors
- Have a preformed mantra for grounding and centering
- Recall a time of successful accomplishment of a similar challenge
- Identify moments of significant confidence, a feeling of “I can do it” or “Whatever it takes.”

#### *Neural Tools for Peak Performance*

Systematic studies of Appreciative Inquiry show that:

- Focus on what works enhances what works. Ask about what you want more of rather than about problems and barriers.
- Focus becomes reality: a focus on possibility elicits a positive mindset; focus on problems elicits a problem mindset.

### Mindfulness Training and Peak Practice

*You can't think and hit at the same time.*  
Yogi Berra

Mindfulness: a mental mode of engagement in the present moment without evaluating or emotionally reacting to the situation.

Mindfulness training strengthens the brain's ability to pay attention.

Mindfulness meditation is a focused attention practice on subjective experience rather than conceptual thought.

Physiological changes in the brain with these practices have been shown to generate faster learning, decrease stress, and enhance performance.

Mindfulness practice cultivates the capacity to self-regulate.

- To not angrily react to someone when angry or offended.
- To not impulsively eat that delicious but unhealthy goodie
- To stay focused on a need and ideal rather than an immediate want
- To not instinctively respond to an emotional trigger
- To not respond to another player or executive in an impulsive response.

STOP

Stop

Take a breath

Observe what's going on

Proceed

*Mindfulness Meditation Focus Exercise*

- Get is a comfortable seated, relaxed, upright position
- Attend to breathing—the flow of air
- Focus on one area of your body as you breathe
- When your mind wanders, refocus on your breath
- Feel your whole body move with your breath
- Anchor state with a cue and phrase
- Finally, release your focus on breathing and simply sit, being aware of your relaxed state, of your body, and the experience of *unfocus* with nothing in this moment to fix.

Mindfulness training is a specific deliberate practice component for optimum performance.

### **Performance Expertise and Deliberate Practice**

Experience doesn't make an expert.

In fact, practice itself can make you worse.

The solution is usually not to try harder, but to try differently.

- Identify the goals
- Determine the mindset and behaviors to achieve them
- Develop an action plan
- Program new identity to incorporate the changes.

*Learning Zone and Performance Zone*

In a *learning zone*, the goal is to improve, to concentrate on what you want to master, expect to make mistakes, and learn from them.

In a *performance zone*, the goal is to do something as best as possible, to execute what has been practiced.

Some of the framework principles of developing significant skills with deliberate practice include:

- Choose an activity that you deeply want to improve
- Establish a fixed time for practice
- Limit practice sessions to perhaps an hour at a time to maintain intense focus
- Establish concrete signs for improvement
- Connect with likeminded people who believe in you and what you're doing
- Align what you do with your core values and strive to excel
- Establish SMART goals – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time limited.

Deliberate practice involves these specific activities in the learning zone:

- Focus on a specific skill to improve on
- Specify a specific goal – not just “getting better”
- Determine a challenge beyond your comfort zone
- Use feedback with repetition and adjustments on execution
- Engage the guidance of a skilled coach or mentor

A component of deliberate practice is developing a corresponding mental representation of the specific process and structure of outstanding performance.

A consistent hallmark of expert performance is the ability to see patterns that are not recognized by those less trained.

### **Peak Experience and Peak Performance**

Peak experiences, like peak performances, are most likely to occur in a state of flow.

Flow is characterized as a total immersion in the activity, relying on default performance activity.

### **Unlearning**

An important principle of learning and change is remaining open to *unlearning*:

- Breaking unuseful habits
- Converting the mindlessness of automaticity into mindfulness of change
- Strategically not engaging a default neural connection, or quickly disengaging

Self-directed neuroplasticity involves three unlearning steps:

- Relabel the old content or practice as an error message from the brain
- Reframe as a false brain message and not a directive for action
- Refocus to a desired or productive activity or process.

### **Output Channel**

Mobilizing an output channel by putting new learning into action:

- Creates new neuronal networks and pathways
- Institutes rewiring with the new information
- Facilitates both attention and retention

## Seminar 3. Peak Performance Under Pressure

*Get your butterflies to fly in formation.*

### Optimum Performance Mindset

The most common psychological characteristics of an optimum performance state include:

- Confidence with positive expectations about performance
- Full concentration with focus on the present task
- Strong determination and commitment
- Feeling energized yet relaxed
- Mental toughness of determined focus under pressure

The Quiet Eye: a selective focus on the most significant target immediately prior to the execution of the skill.

### Self-Talk and Peak Performance

Self-Talk to Enhance Performance

Framing Self Talk for Resilience

Self-Talk mechanisms of brain operation for inner dialogues to rebound from failure:

1. Fight negative feedback.  
*Reflection questions:* What can I learn from this? What are the possibilities here (rather than the problems)?
2. Obstacles are created.  
*Self-reflection question.* What would it be like to *not* create the obstacle, and instead, put the energy into what I want?
3. Use systematic forecasting.  
*Self-reflection question:* Is my usual pattern optimum for this current situation?
4. Assess the current model.  
*Self-reflection question:* Is this plan really working or not?
5. The output channel is essential.  
*Self-reflection question:* What do I next need to put into action?

### Performing Under Pressure

Pressure performance patterns that compromise results:

- Focus on the risk of failure reverts to standard and safe practices
- Deference to high-status members, rather than using expert members
- An athlete or team strongly favored may squander a big lead

Unless pressure is strategically planned and regulated:

- Attention, judgment, and decision-making are adversely affected.
- Focus can be on the fear of failure, rather than the pursuit of excellence.
- A step back to play it safe can replace confidently seeking new solutions.
- Performance incentives and motivational enhancement can camouflage pressure.

*Stress*: excessive demands with inadequate resources

*Pressure*: emphasis of importance on outcome

*Success*: internal state regulation under pressure

Developing Resilience in Performance

- Reinterpreting negative events (reframing)
- Enhancing positive emotions
- Becoming physically fit
- Maintaining a supportive social network to imitate resilience role models.

*Cognitive reappraisal* reframes from a negative to a positive, from problem to possibility

*Mindfulness meditation* focuses on how to consciously live in the present moment

*Resilience Training*: Use the Neural Conditioning Chart

Unfocus for mental energy restoration and resilience development

### **Playing to Win vs. Playing Not to Lose**

- Playing to win is based in confidence; playing not to lose is based in fear
- Playing to win optimizes performance; playing not to lose is defensive
- Playing to win is thriving and superiority; playing not to lose is surviving and mediocre
- Playing to win creates special experiences and memories; playing not to lose creates stressful experience and moments
- Playing to win optimizes abilities; playing not to lose compromises expression of abilities

### **Performance Anxiety Management**

Performance directly depends on how you interpret performance anxiety.

*Success Completion Issues*: *Choking, Sandbagging, Self-Handicapping, Burnout*

*Choking*: A shift even monetarily from the bottom-up to the top-down system

- Framing a situation as a unique experience
- Exaggerating a situation

The remedy: to remain focused, despite pressure, in order to maintain the optimal state of mind for the task.

*Self-handicaps*: Performance barriers or inhibitions created to protect someone's sense of self-esteem and confidence

The remedy: Self-reflection and awareness



*Sandbagging*: Attempts to demonstrate a limitation to diminish others expectations  
The remedy: Change self-talk

*Burnout*: A syndrome including diminished emotional drive, decreased concentration, and lack of motivation  
The remedy: Mindfulness with reappraisal and reengagement

### **Pressure-Management Tools**

- Get grounded and centered.
- Recall previous successes.
- Reframe the pressure moment as a challenge for opportunity.
- Focus on the purpose.
- Recall the previous successes.
- Create a positive vision of the outcome.
- Consider each situation as an opportunity to develop and improve.
- Reduce the importance of a pressure moment.
- Confidence is a state of mind.
- Sustain focus on what you can control.
- Use a brief mantra to stay grounded.
- Train or practice under pressure conditions.
- Use the ROADMAP System® for Performing Under Pressure.

## Seminar 4. Extreme Success Challenges

*Fame has killed more very talented guys than drugs.*  
Keith Richards

### Exceptional Achievement and Overconfidence

Overconfidence can create a misperception of ability.

The stimulation of overconfidence is biologically habituating.

#### *Success Anticlimax*

The sprint system mediated by dopamine can sustain the excitement of expectation, of anticipating a consequence.

The shift to the marathon system to sustain and balance endeavors diminishes excitement.

Facts and beliefs are anatomical realities in our brains.

People regard information as valid evidence when it reinforces their existing views.

### Performance Related Biases

#### *Self-Deception*

- Self-inflation
  - 94% of people place themselves at the top half of their profession
  - 70% of both men and women feel they are better looking than average
  - 19% of people believe they're in the top 1% of income
  - 70% of drivers believe they are better than average
  - 75% of people consider themselves healthier than average
- Derogation of others (the surface story of self-inflation) occurs when:
  - An image has been tarnished
  - A need to align with an in-group and degrade the out-going.
- Moral Superiority
- The Illusion of Control

#### *Invincibility Bias*

- People tend to estimate risk poorly and to exaggerate anticipated performance
- Heavy smokers underestimate their cancer risk
- Skiers ignore warning signs and enter restricted areas
- The gambler's fallacy

#### *Optimism Bias*

To underestimate the possibility of bad events and overestimate the possibility of good events

#### *Hindsight Bias*

Knowing how things turned out can influence the way we both remember and even reframe past events

### *Subjectivity Bias*

We cannot as easily bring our own process of thinking and behaving into objective focus.

### *Present Bias*

We put great value in the present, so much so that it may take a massive future reward to forego the impulse/pleasure of the present to invest in the future.

### *Transparency bias*

A major factor in the perception of fairness is transparency – the effort we perceive that goes into a task or item.

### *Projection Bias*

People believe that others hold the same beliefs and values they do, and will into the future.

### Bias Remedies

Recognize, own, and assess our own stories:

- New information may cause unpleasant feelings.
- New information may demand a change in beliefs.
- We tend to seek information that confirms our beliefs rather than disprove them.
- New information may require undesired actions.

### *The Hubris Syndrome*

Overconfidence enhances with sustained success and power, and can replace active self-reflection with blind certainty. Overconfidence increases with familiarity, repetition, information, and success.

### **Exceptional Talent**

A growth mindset recognizes talents that can be enhanced through dedication and deliberate practice.

A fixed mindset sees talents as present or not present, not to be developed.

Common traits of the development of expertise in elite performers:

- Coping with and controlling anxiety
- Confidence
- Mental toughness and resilience
- The ability to focus and block distractions
- A hard-work ethic
- The practice of setting and achieving goals
- Being coachable
- Optimism

### *The Disadvantage of Talent*

Why spend time and energy trying to improve if success only comes to people with the right talent/genes?

## Experts and Amateurs

*When you get to the end zone, act like ya been there before.*  
Coach Bum Phillips to rookie running back Earl Campbell

The expert works from love, passion, and dedication; failure is information to guide proceeding.  
The amateur may be sidetracked by setback; failure is validation not to proceed.

The expert loves and pursues the game, whatever the game is, with total dedication and passion.

The amateur pursues it as a sideline, part-time, like a weekend warrior.

The expert keeps going, no matter what.

The amateur is dissuaded by setback and adversity.

The expert does what is important first.

Amateurs do what is urgent first.

The expert is on a mission, knows that fear can never be overcome, and recognizes that the best indication of what's next may be what generates most fear.

The expert knows that "fair" is a childhood wish; that there is not even an ultimate arbiter of fair.

The amateur seeks fairness, and is set back at what does not seem fair.

The expert does whatever it takes, even what never could have been imagined.

The amateur needs predictability, consistency, assuredness of results.

The expert respects the craft but is not superior to it.

The amateur believes in inherent luck, intelligence, and waits for inspiration to come.

The expert dedicates to mastery.

The amateur dedicates to demonstrating competence or superiority.

The expert does not take things or people personally.

The amateur is subject to the perceptions of others.

The expert self-regulates and self-validates, takes in new information but does not let it determine meaning.

The amateur becomes an extension of the interest, desire, and needs of others.

The expert has an internal point of reference, and is proactive.

The amateur has an external point of reference, and is reactive.

The expert seeks the mastery of art as work, deliberate practice as lifestyle, success as creation.

The amateur believes that art is inspiration, talent is innate, and seeks the lucky break.

The expert believes that the architect of magic is persistence and resilience.

The amateur believes that magic is magic.

The expert shows up every day, no matter what, and is committed for the long haul.

The amateur shows up as long as something else doesn't get in the way.

Experts know they can do best what they do uniquely well.  
The amateur tries to do many things, to be everything to many people.

The expert knows that the self and every storyline in life are created moment by moment.  
The amateur believes that much is predetermined, some fate, some circumstance, some luck.

The expert believes that we write, live, and create in order to know.  
The amateur believes that we must know in order to write, live, and create.

Experts add value to their art, science, expert body of knowledge, and others.  
Amateurs add value to themselves.

The expert believes that certainty develops with engagement and mastery.  
The amateur must have certainty in order to proceed.

The expert, even at times a warrior, believes in humility and modesty.  
The amateur believes in never showing vulnerability, doubt, or uncertainty.

The expert punches through the bag, runs through the finish line.  
The amateur hits the bag, and relaxes at the finish line.

Experts continue concentrated, deliberate practice on focused areas to develop with experienced feedback.  
Amateurs get to a level of good enough, and stay there.

Experts seek practice and goals that exceed current levels of performance.  
Amateurs seek to sustain a comfort level without challenging it.

Experts understand that there is no predetermined ability.  
Amateurs believe there is a fixed reserve of potential.

The expert knows that courage is to proceed despite fear.  
The amateur believes that courage is the absence of fear.

## SEMINAR EXERCISES

### Neural Conditioning to Make Changes That Last

Old Story		New Story	
Emotional Trigger	Usual Response/ Behavior	Mantra: Cue/Focus/Physiology	Ideal Response/Behavior
?	→	→	→
?	?	?	?

## **Peak Performance Training Exercise**

Set aside a period of at least 30 minutes with no interruptions or distractions.

Step 1. Recall a time when you performed extremely well in a physical or intellectual endeavor, when you experienced happiness or exhilaration in doing what you did. Briefly describe this experience in writing and draw a line around it.

Step 2. In a comfortable position with eyes closed, relive this experience with as many details as possible. Include how you felt, where you were, who was there. Include the thoughts and feelings in your mind at the time. Draw a circle around each of the words describing how you thought and felt.

Step 3. Consider the things in your life associated with your peak experience, including books, friendships, films, mentors, sporting events. Jot each one down and circle them in this growing cluster.

Step 4. Focus on what you did directly and deliberately to accomplish this success. Write down any details about your preparation, education, practice, or history that were instrumental. Draw a circle around these experiences.

Step 5. Connect the various elements in this cluster with lines or arrows that link the components or associations.

As you are making these notes, disregard what may seem irrelevant or remotely connected to the success you are addressing.

This cluster can serve as a specific, individual record of the events fueling your volition, confidence, and performance. These are all components of your performance self.

## **Follow-Up Exercise**

Take this cluster, and highlight the experiences, particularly important or exciting, that have strengthened your choice and experience of success. This highlighted information allows you to plan training activities for optimum impact and performance. How you rate the experiences can inform you of the hierarchy of importance as you plan your success training for optimum performance.

## **Mindfulness Meditation**

Sit comfortably in an upright, relaxed position. Close your eyes and focus your attention on your breath. Notice the subtle sensations of air passing through your nostrils – cool air passing, warm air passing out.

Staying relaxed and mentally alert, continue to focus on each passing breath. When your attention wanders, simply notice the distraction and return your focus to the sensation of the breath. Your ability to stay present deepens by consistently returning to the current moment and focused experience.

When you notice your mind wandering off, immediately refocus on your breathing. The challenge here is that we are hardly aware immediately when our mind wanders off, but often into the process. So as soon as you have the awareness, refocus on breathing. Gradually over time you will notice it sooner and be able then to refocus more quickly. The default mode in the neural web is for the mind to automatically wander. To stay focused requires attention and effort.

To become aware that your mind has wandered is a challenge in itself, as we usually do this automatically without awareness.

Quiet time and disengagement restore energy and the capacity to focus more effectively. Downtime or “unfocus” does not need text or emails, but completely unfocused time, a mental break such as facilitated by a walk in nature. On the other hand, a walk down a busy street requires numerous attention engagements during any walk.



## Mental Training Worksheet

Mental training techniques to consider and customize to meet your specific needs, goals, and individual style, whether athletic, intellectual or other performance. For each of these bullets, write down specifically what works for you for each. Your specific response to each moves it to your brain output channel.

- Set specific goals. A map creates an awareness of where you are, where you're going, how to measure progress along the way, and what is detour and distraction.
- Use self-talk and affirmations. Include a key word or phrase from your mantra to continually re-establish grounding, centering, and flow. This also sustains focus despite distractions, pain, or negative interferences.
- Have a plan to manage emotions and regulate states of mind. The mantra of a cue, focus, and physiology may need to be repeated a number of times during any situation.
- Visualize a successful outcome. Guided imagery and visualization consistently practiced rewires the brain. Affirmations revise minds software. The combination becomes powerful.
- Mindfulness meditation and focus on breathing benefit both practice and execution. Focus on correct breathing becomes an integral part of this process.
- In any competitive or stressful context, focus on breathing as an antidote for stress and a way to stay focused. Then, pair an appropriate image with breathing in and out. Focus on a breath going in and out is the essence of mindfulness relaxation.
- Build in time to relax, recharge, and restore energy; unfocused breaks to intersperse with periods of engaged focus.
- Prepare for the wall. In a marathon, about 20 miles into it, an experience of physical and mental exhaustion occurs. How you respond to it determines the winners from the rest of the pack. Have a plan for the wall, anticipate it, and put the plan in place when it inevitably occurs. Practice hitting the wall and overcoming it. An equivalent of "the wall" will occur in every athletic or intellectual endeavor. Visualization may help in this process.
- Regardless of the endeavor, mental practice can help attain peak performance.
- Visualize dealing with extremes, from extreme success to extreme distraction. Especially in preparation for competition, build in coping with extremes of feeling, weather, unexpected situations.
- Have a post-success plan. Some of the greatest challenges may be in dealing with the success anticlimax of a long-anticipated event or experience.

## **Mental Rehearsal**

Essentially all professionals in any realm of performance including athletic, art, academic, and business have their own forms and styles of mental rehearsal.

It is fairly well accepted that elite performers who are more successful do more mental practice in the final stages of preparation than their less-successful colleagues.

Well over 100 research studies document the benefits of mental practice with imagery on performance. Mentally rehearsing each performance sequence creates a neural blueprint for the skilled development. Additionally, mental practice works because it produces the same sequence in the brain as actually performing a task, as well as producing small muscle contractions similar to those involved in the specific action. Mentally rehearsing images results in corresponding electrical activity in the body. Mental rehearsal both strengthens and conditions muscle firing as well as developing neuromuscular pathways to become more automatic.

## **Practicing and Encoding**

Deliberate practice is a combination of input of information and mentoring for improvement, as well as putting the experience in a verbal and motor output channel. The action-language bridge is the link between the verbal and motor channel, and completes the neural circuit of learning and performance.

Imagery, especially watching the very best and imitating their performance can become a dynamic element in a learning process. Notably, athletes who imitate the actions of others download a picture of their activity and use it as a model for their performance.

Five questions to ask for each performance goal you set:

- Is your goal specific?
- Is your goal measurable?
- Is your goal positive?
- Is your goal inspiring?
- Is your goal displayed?

## **Mental Performance Preparation**

1. **Confidence**  
Establish a mindset of confidence and belief of being able to achieve what you decide.
2. **Goal Setting**  
Specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-specific (SMART)
3. **Focus**  
Focus on the next step in this moment.
4. **Self-talk**  
Specific, positive, powerful self-talk statements
5. **Mental Imagery**  
Visualize successful completion.
6. **Mental Toughness**  
Resilience to stay positive, not focus on the negative, and on the positive about to happen despite adversity.
7. **Mental Rehearsal**  
Use mental imagery as part of deliberate practice to enhance skill development.
8. **Focus**  
Specific focus on the next step
9. **State Management**  
Regulate performance anxiety to enter an optimum performance state.
10. **Affirmations**  
Repeat power phrases with conviction.
11. **Pre-performance Preparation**  
A simple and dependable routine to enter the specific mindset for optimum performance of the task at hand.
12. **Enjoy the Experience**  
Remember my favorite grandmother's admonition, "*If you're not having fun, you're not doing it right.*".

## **ROADMAP System® for Performing Under Pressure**

Changing the way we view a situation and the associated pressure can positively impact performance.

**R**ecognize that you create your own story -- specifically the internal conversation before and during a pressure moment. Each moment, you create whatever you think, feel, and experience.

**O**bserve and own any pressure distortions that generate anxiety. By recognizing, owning, and observing a pressure moment, you can reset to a centered, grounded state.

**A**ssess and access the ideal state of mind for the task. Be aware of whether your thinking is affected by distortion due to pressure, losing the flow, or moving to an observer position.

**D**ecide which Pressure Management Tools to use to reboot a balanced state of mind—a reset for optimum performance.

**M**ap the next best action.

**A**uthor the next best action while maintaining the optimum performance flow.

**P**rogram this automatic sequence as part of your performance identity.