



# CARRIDE CONVERSATIONS

## Managing Stress in High Stake Environments

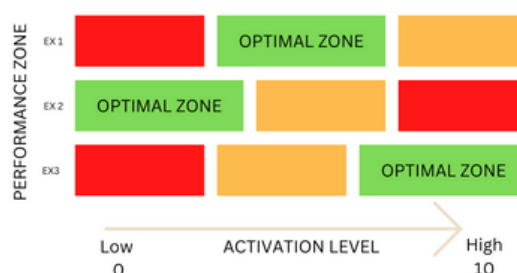
### GET UNTRAPPED

**Question: Have you ever gotten your fingers stuck in a "Chinese finger trap?" What do you do?**

The initial reaction is to pull harder and faster, trying to jerk your fingers free, which ends up doing the reverse: making the trap tighter, resisting your freedom. When you pull more tightly, you are making it harder on yourself. However, the key to freedom is quite the reverse. Lean into the struggle, push inward to release the tension and you can easily set yourself free.

In a high stake environment, stress levels elevate, often spiraling emotions and feelings of becoming overwhelmed. The natural reaction is similar to that of a Chinese finger trap: resist, and fight harder, causing more resistance and struggle. When you fully own, let go, and give into the struggle, you learn to master high stake environments by owning how stress elevates in your body.

### THE PROCESS



- **Understand** that stress is an activator. Activators get the body ready to perform by elevating the nervous system to respond in high pressure situations. Above, example 3 shows an athlete performs optimally when activation is high.
- **Normalize** struggle and discomfort. The first key to owning the struggle is to accept the things that are out of your control
- **Acknowledge** the challenge in the moment.
- **Act** according to what you can control.

## TOOLS AND TIPS

*...for the car ride home*

*Follow these guidelines to help your child develop awareness to increase resilience:*

1. Develop interchangeable language for "stress" and "pressure." Stress activates emotions of excitement and challenge.
2. Help to identify and reframe emotions: instead of describing high stake situations as fear or nervousness, identify them as exciting or challenging. Allowing the use of interchangeable language allows for development to rise to the level of pressure.
3. Help to determine your child's "center." What is their red, yellow or green zone? In other words, how do they perform at their best, when do they start to feel stress, and when does it turn into a crisis. Then, determine a performance plan to hit that ideal level every time in performance.

**Check out our winter sports schedules for post-season information!**

**Save the date:**

6 March  
Spring Sports Begin

Registration for  
Summer Camp is Live!

14 August  
Fall Sports Begin