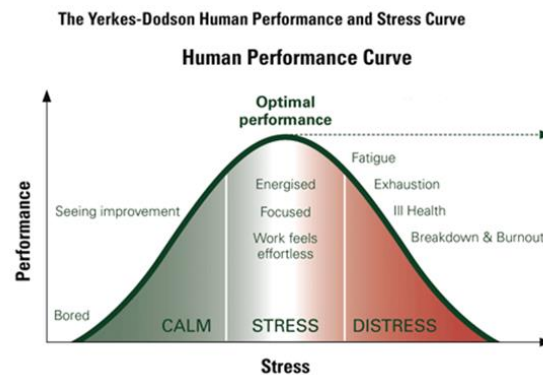


Using Stress to Your Advantage

Have you ever felt completely bogged down by stress? Wished for an extended holiday? Yep- we've all been there; wouldn't it be nice if we could transform that stress into something beneficial, like coal to diamonds? "My head is about to explode!" --> voila! A bouquet of exotic flowers! It turns out that we can, and **our capacity to use stress for our benefit increases by altering our mindset**. In 1908 psychologists Robert Yerkes and John Dodson illustrated an empirical relationship between performance and mental and physical arousal, stating that performance will increase with arousal, but only up to a point. When levels of arousal become too high, performance decreases.



Fast forward 100 or so years, and it looks like we might be able to move this inflection point by changing our mindset. You may have heard Stanford's own [Kelly McGonigal on NPR's Ted Radio News Hour](#) last week talk about how stress prepares us for action. When we understand the positive effects of stress, then stressful events seem less daunting and can often be beneficial. Making that shift is sometimes easier said than done, so Alia Crum at Stanford's Mind & Body Lab has created the [Rethinking Stress Toolkit](#) to help people make the shift. This self-guided course using short videos can be accessed from home, but if you are really pressed for time try reframing your next challenge and celebrate: "What a great growth opportunity!".

-Dr. Rachel Roberts