

Rewriting the Rules: Updating the Mental Shortcuts That Shape Your Life: Session 2

Session 2: Heuristics Under Pressure

How Stress, Fear, and Fatigue Hijack Our Decision-Making

Core Focus

This session explores how heuristics change when the nervous system is activated—and why under stress we often default to outdated or unhelpful mental shortcuts.

You will learn:

- How stress narrows perception and accelerates heuristic use
- The brain's "efficiency mode" vs. "wisdom mode"
- Why fear-based heuristics feel true but aren't always accurate
- The difference between intuition and threat-driven assumptions

Interactive Exercise

"Pressure Mapping"

Identify:

- Situations that activate them (conflict, deadlines, rejection, uncertainty)
- The heuristic that shows up under pressure
- The cost of that shortcut in relationships, leadership, or health

Reflection Questions

- "Who do I become when I'm under pressure?"
- "What rule do I default to when I don't feel safe?"
- "What would change if I regulated first, then decided?"

Practice:

A Pause Protocol:

1. Notice activation
2. Name the heuristic
3. Regulate the body (breath, grounding)
4. Choose intentionally