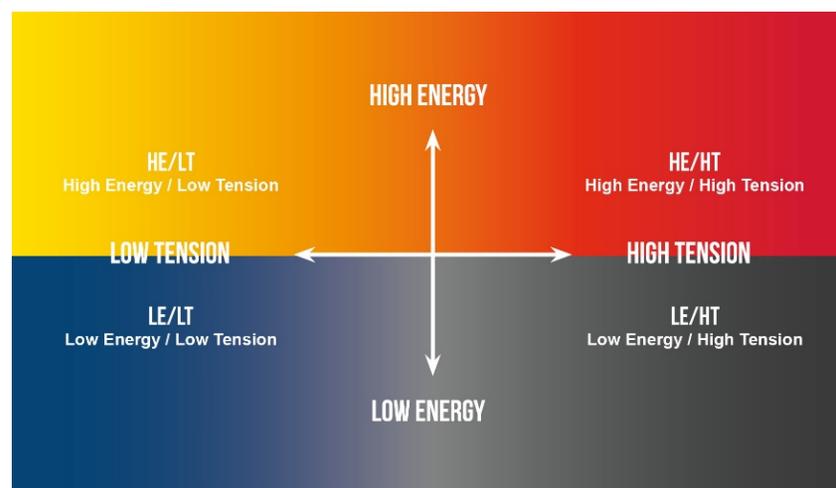


The key to Self-Regulation is the “Self”, it is all about you and your well-being. Shanker Self-Reg, developed by Dr. Stuart Shanker, is based around understanding and managing **energy** and **tension** levels in order to keep yourself happy, calm and healthy. If you take care of those things, everything else in life should be a lot more manageable.

The Thayer Matrix is a tool we can use to gain some insight into our Self-Reg specifically by looking at our energy and tension and whether it is high or low.

- You can think of **ENERGY** as how much gas you have in your tank. Like a car, if the gas tank is full (or you have a lot of energy) you can drive a long distance, getting a lot done. If the gas tank is running low (or you have very little energy) you won't get too far without having to stop to fill your tank back up.
- **TENSION** is the amount of tightness and pressure we feel in our bodies and minds. If you have low tension you are most likely relaxed or unphased by what you are doing or your environment.



Adapted by The MEHRIT Centre from: Robert E. Thayer (1996), The Origin of Everyday Moods: *Managing Energy, Tension, and Stress*

Each quadrant is a combination of high or low energy and high or low tension. Your combination of energy and tension can make you more or less susceptible to feeling "stressed".

- **High Energy + Low Tension** = low stress, e.g. when you are enjoying a walk, gardening or enjoying a day at the beach.
- **Low Energy + Low Tension** = low stress, e.g. when you are relaxing or reading a book before bed or taking an afternoon nap.
- **High Energy + High Tension** = low or high stress, e.g. going for a job interview, writing an exam or waking up on the morning of a special event or holiday.
- **Low Energy + High Tension** = high stress, this is typically where you will see “bad” or shutdown behaviours

**SELF-REG ACTIVITIES:** The Thayer Matrix can be a bit confusing to start with, these activities can help you familiarize yourself with it and get used to pointing out where you are in any given moment.

- **MAKE YOUR OWN THAYER MATRIX**

1. Take some painters tape, sidewalk chalk or baskets and make a + shape on the floor. This will be your Thayer Matrix.
2. Along the horizontal y-axis write 'Low Energy' on the bottom and 'High Energy' on the top.
3. Along the horizontal x-axis write 'Low Tension' on the left and 'High Tension' on the right.
4. Next, write some examples of different scenarios on paper, sticky notes or simply a list you will shout out. See some examples in the table below.
5. Place each sticky note/paper or have your kids stand where they feel it goes in relation to energy and tension.
  - Note – remember individual differences, for example someone with stage fright may not feel the same energy and tension levels when placed on a stage as someone who thrives in the limelight.

- **CUT AND PASTE THAYER MATRIX**

1. Cut out each scenario below and paste them into their corresponding quadrant on a blank Thayer Matrix. Keep in mind individual differences.

<b>Feeling Calm and Relaxed</b>	Playing a championship hockey game	Storming out of a room
<b>Feeling High Energy and Alert</b>	Relaxing in a hammock in the sun	Talking to your friends
<b>Feeling High Energy and Calm</b>	Having a bad day and yelling at your sibling	Going for a jog or playing outdoors
<b>Feeling Low Energy and Anxious</b>	Curling up under a blanket to watch a movie	Reading a book before bed
Acting in a play in front of your classmates	Hitting a friend who is annoying you	Going to your favourite class

# MODULE 1B

The Thayer Matrix - ADVANCED

FAMILIES

