

In our last article, we were talking about **Red Flags** to indicate that you or your child are in the **Red Zone**.

And today, what I want to talk about is what do you do when you realize, "**I'm in the Red Zone?**"

Because remember, when we're in the Red Zone, we aren't thinking rationally. Our limbic system, that fight or flight part of our brain, basically hijacks our rational thinking. So in order to deal with others, in order to deal with a problem or situation, the first thing you need to do is get out of the Red Zone. Once you're out of the Red Zone, then you can better deal with what's going on.

Same thing when it comes to your kids. If your kids are in the Red Zone, think about a Red Zone brain almost feels like it's drowning, right?

So trying to teach it something, trying to have that brain concentrate on studying or preparing to get into college, it's not going to happen. We need ourselves and our children to be out of the Red Zone.

If you've ever been in the **Red Zone**, and someone told you to just calm down, how helpful was that?

Not at all, right? And think about it, your brain feels like it is drowning. If you were drowning, and flailing around and screaming for help, and someone said it just calm down, do you think you'd just come down? No. You might have a reaction to their comment, but you wouldn't do it, right? Same thing when you're in the Red Zone. Same thing when your child is in the Red Zone.

So when you are in the Red Zone, I want you to **grab stress by the HELM. H-E-L-M**. Grabs stress by the HELM. That's an acronym, it stands for the following.

H is halt. Hold all movement in this region of your body. When you're in the Red Zone, don't let anything out of your mouth. Because that's when we say things we later regret. And don't put anything in your mouth because that's when we tend to consume things we later regret.

E stands for exercise. Now, I'm not saying you have to go to the gym, I'm saying move your body in any manner. Jump on the bed, do some push ups, sit ups, squats, go for a walk, jog up a flight of stairs, right? When you move your body like that, your brain releases biochemicals to get you from focusing on only what's wrong, the Red Zone, to starting to see other options. So exercise moving your body is E.

L stands for laughter. We've all heard laughter is the best medicine. When you can engage in laughter. Sometimes if you just laugh, that can actually help you get out of the Red Zone. Watching something funny, or having a funny conversation is even easier. The other day, my teenager was being rather teenagery. And I noticed myself creeping up in the Red Zone. And in our family, we have conversations about the Red Zone. And they said, I feel like I'm getting in the Red Zone. Give me a couple minutes. I want to make sure the conversation we're having is productive, and I'm supportive of you. So I came in here, my home office, I watched a couple of YouTube clips on SNL. I was laughing, got me out of the Red Zone, then I could go back and be a better parent. So that's laughter.

M stands for music. You've probably heard a song that maybe you haven't heard in years, even decades, and it brought you right back to that moment. Music has a very powerful impact on our emotions. And I actually recommend that people have, get out of the Red Zone, a playlist so that they don't have to think what song would be helpful right now. They just put on their air pods and hit play.

So grab stress by the HELM when you were at a seven and eight and nine or a ten on that distress scale. Halt movement in your mouth. E, exercise. L, laugh. M, music.

Hey, and if you want to **put on some music and dance around**, and that makes you laugh, even better. But the key is to get yourself out of the Red Zone. And you want to apply the same concepts with your child so that they can go from fight or flight to rational thinking and then you can move forward with whatever challenge you're dealing with.

Grab stress by the HELM when you were in the Red Zone so that you can get out and hopefully stay out of the Red Zone.