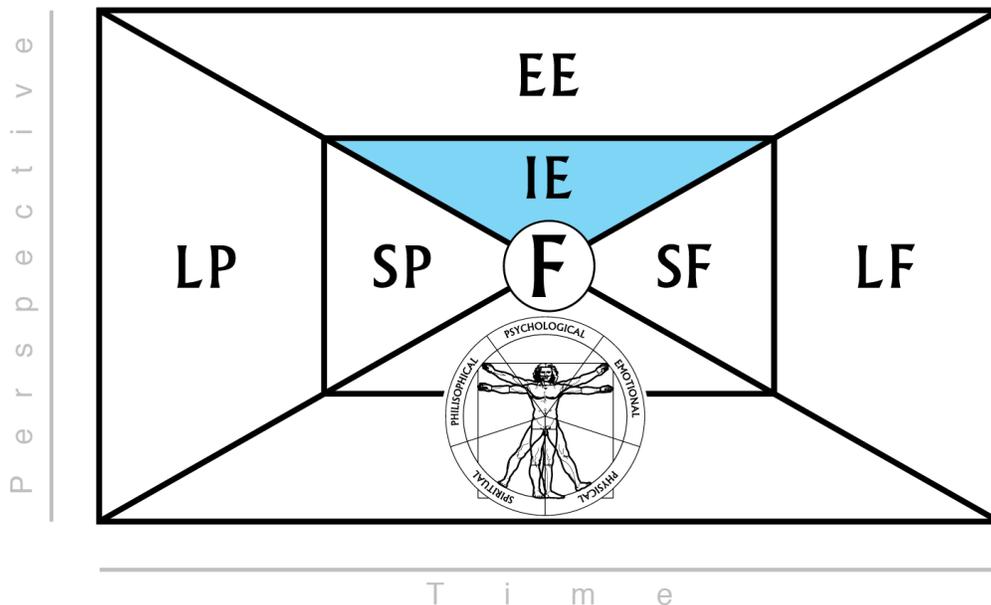




FINDING YOUR FLOW TOOLKIT
VOL. 13
BUILDING SYNERGY

"The whole is greater than the sum of its parts"

-- Aristotle



Over the past several weeks we've discussed the "people" side of flow. As much as people describe their best and most profound flow experiences when they are engaged in isolated arenas, most of our MLA's include others—especially competitive arenas, work groups, and teams.

To maximize our performance with others, we've hit a few of the basics:

- **Conducting Your People Audit**—Becoming aware of your people assets and liabilities while seeking to understand and appreciate the uniqueness of others
- **Communicating Effectively**—Clarifying your mindset, modes, level, intent, types, preciseness, understanding, feedback, vocabulary, and authenticity of your communications
- **Embracing Conflict**—Seeing conflict as an opportunity to sort out differences while building a productive way forward
- **Building Relationships and Alliances**—Looking at your colleagues through the lens of possibility—not the lens of tolerance
- **Mastering Interpersonal Feedback**—Understanding the power of and creating opportunities for giving and receiving feedback

Taken together, these topics and skill-sets help build, enhance, and advance those relationships in our lives that not only help “us” perform at our best, but also help “them” perform at their best in every interpersonal arena.

To top off our discussions on interpersonal dynamics it's important to talk about synergy.

Adam Smith nailed this concept by illustrating the principle in relation to organizing a pin factory:

...Each person, therefore, making a tenth part of forty-eight thousand pins, might be considered as making four thousand eight hundred pins in a day. But if they had all wrought separately and independently, and without any of them having been educated to this peculiar business, they certainly could not each of them have made twenty, perhaps not one pin in a day... Adam Smith, The

Wealth of Nations

Just as Adam Smith ushered in the principles of the Industrial Revolution and the understanding that specialization and focus can yield extra-ordinary results in manufacturing facilities, so too can these principles be applied to any inter-connected physical and social system.

We've discussed the difference between NFL Pro Bowl and NBA All-Star teams. They are awfully fun to watch but often lack the synergy of a seasonal team. Poorly functioning teams often produce something less than the sum of its individual parts ($1+1+1+1+1 = 3$ or less) while teams with high synergy produce something more than the sum of its individual parts ($1+1+1=5$ or more).

Because synergy can be improved, I'd like to close out our interpersonal topics with a few principles and practices that may help you find or create more synergy with the important players/teammates in your life, be they colleagues, spouses, family members, friends, or neighbors.

Authentic Appreciation:

Synergy begins with valuing others and their unique contribution towards a common goal. Seek to identify what makes each of your colleagues unique. Support and affirm their core gifts and talents.

Task Specialization:

Synergy begins when people do what people do best. As many things as you "can" do there are probably only a few things that you "should" do. This goes for most team members. Cross-training and role appreciation have their place, but rarely do they trump focused attention. To get maximum results, identify the core strengths of yourself and each member of your team.

Open and Honest Dialogue:

Teams live and breathe through communication. As soon as this shuts down, the engine slows down and stops running. Sharing real data in real time provides members the information they need to do their job well. Establishing this value up front can minimize distortions and speed up transactions.

Learn from Mistakes:

Synergy is not a short-term phenomenon. It takes a significant amount of energy and many iterations of failure. Acquiring the lessons of these mistakes is the vital task. We will talk about this more in future newsletters, however, whether your mistakes were just made in the short-past (SP) or the long-past (LP) it's the collective responsibility of the individuals involved to make sure that no error has gone to waste.

Showcase Success:

Equally if not more important than learning from mistakes is labeling success. Marking success illuminates the variables and the formula that produced the results you want to repeat in the future. Study your successes as a team from every possible angle.

Capture Norms & Build Culture:

When looking at both the failures and successes, seek to capture the rules and norms that make this relationship and/or team great. Make these both implicit and explicit so that you and your team will build a compelling culture of consistency and high performance.

Celebrate Victories:

Through the process of closing gaps in efficiency and effectiveness, take time to celebrate work well done.

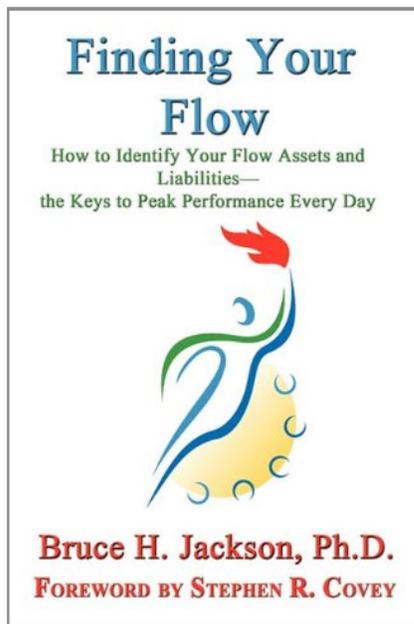
In Sum:

The interpersonal dynamics in our MLA's are complex and ever

changing. However, maintaining focus on some of the key principles will help you build more synergy, find more flow, and maximize the relationships within the performance arenas wherever you play a part.

EXERCISE AND PRACTICE:

- Exercise: Building Synergy exercise
- Make copies of the Building Synergy exercise and to each member of your team, even if that team is one other person. Consider taking 60 minutes to answer and review your answers together.
- Consider a longer meeting time or a second meeting to compile answers and identify working best practices.

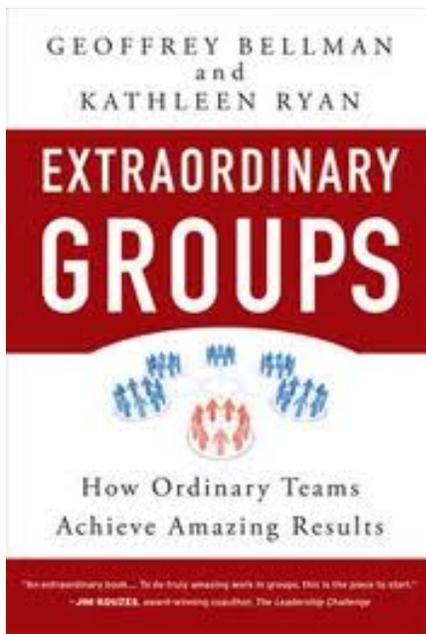


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