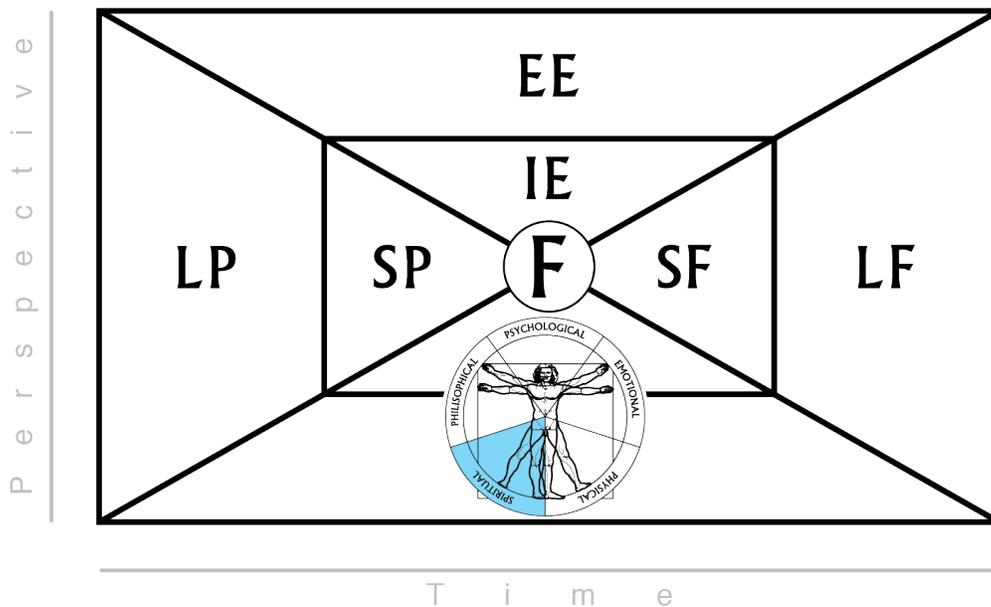




FINDING YOUR FLOW TOOLKIT
VOL. 23
BUILDING YOUR PHILOSOPHY OF ENGAGEMENT

“My dad believed that people should have a worthwhile and productive philosophy of life if they are to amount to anything”

-- John Wooden



(Note: this is a long one, but well worth your time and effort)

If you study the lives of great men and women, you will see that

their lives are filled with powerful and profound experiences—just like you and me.

Study such biographies carefully and you will see a Philosophy of Engagement in action—a governing ethos that you too will develop through time, starting today if you are ready to put the capstone on your Missions, Vision, Legacy statements.

This type of document is called many things: creed, ethos, decalogue, constitution, maxim, tonic, rules of civility, virtues, personal codes, or what I like to describe as a “Philosophy of Engagement” or POE... A POE is primarily derived from our life lessons—many of which inform our future experiences and performances. Core beliefs, principles, attitudes, perspectives, qualities, virtues, rules, standards and other factors define our core values and place us on the rails towards personal excellence.

In his essay on Nature, Ralph Waldo Emerson discussed the difference between religion and ethics. He surmised that religion and ethics were the practice of ideas. The former coming forth from one’s God and the later coming forth from man.

There is a difference in the process of how we orchestrate our lives to serve a higher being or power (religion) and how we seek to engage the practical day-to-day world on a personal basis (ethics or ethos). Taken together both religion and ethics influence our daily thoughts, feelings, and actions—ultimately becoming our virtues and character. In this regard religion and philosophy are seamless partners in promoting personal excellence.

Your Philosophy of Engagement (POE), however, is derived primarily from your past experiences, where important life lessons have been learned, and internalized.

If your mission, vision and legacy statements define with greater clarity “what” you seek (with three perspectives in mind: future, present, and past), defining your POE represents the operating software. It is a document that governs and guides, giving you

greater clarity and direction for acting intently with each and every Moment of Performance (MOP).

From Benjamin Franklin's 13 Virtues to Helen Keller's personal essay on faith, a vital part of any leading performer is getting in touch with his/her POE.

Like the great men and women of history, you too can espouse a clear POE— implicit or explicit—that need only be dusted off, polished and used with renewed energy and commitment.

Building your POE is about extracting from your life those experiences and lessons that have been instrumental in your learning and success. While I contend that most people already have a POE, few have brought it to light or lived it to its full capacity. It is my goal to help you begin this process.

Your POE is a living and breathing document. It changes as you change, learns as you learn—through time and experience. The older and more experienced you are, the greater number of experiences and personal wisdom you have to draw from.

Each year, world-renown mountaineer and adventurer Jeff Evans and I, take top executives, professionals, and other seekers of high performance, to Peru for a 12-day outer and inner journey (a shortened 3-day "A Call to Adventure" program has been put together with partner Dave Fedler). In either scenario the mountains provide the backdrop for deep discussions and story telling to pull from each participant their POE's. While you too, are invited to join us on these adventures, I'd like to share with you the framework from which you can begin building your POE today. Let's review the elements briefly:

Beliefs & Principles (knowing)

First and foremost is a declaration of acquired beliefs and principles, or what you hold to be true and right through your collection of experiences. A very powerful declaration of beliefs

comes from Abraham Lincoln who was a great seeker of truth. Read the attached philosophy of Lincoln and begin thinking of the core beliefs & principles that influence you.

Principles & Concepts (understanding)

In his "Last Lecture" Randy Paush, a notable professor of computer science at Carnegie Mellon University, suggested that it was important to leave behind certain lessons, experiences, and ideas that would impact one's family or friends. Before passing away on September 18, 2008, Dr. Pauch offered his rules list to those closest to him. Read the attached philosophy of Dr. Pauch and begin thinking of the principles & concepts that most influence you.

Attitudes & Perspectives (seeing)

Next is what I call "ways of seeing" through the lens of attitudes and perspectives. An attitude is a way of thinking. It is part of our internal climate that dictates how we experience and impact the world around us. We all recognize attitude. It is one of the most important skills in our self-regulation repertoire. From positive attitude to negative attitude, engaged attitude to passive attitude, the variety is endless, yet each reflects an internal climate that we create. Consider the attached creed of Promise International and begin thinking about the attitudes and perspectives that have helped you with your internal climate.

Qualities & Virtues (being)

Many POE's depict the importance of cultivating qualities and virtues. A quality is a positive (or negative) aspect of self. Of course, there are many personal qualities to practice or emulate: friendly, outgoing, inclusive, self-less, tough-minded, loving, trusting, etc.... In close proximity to, but possibly elevated ever so slightly above qualities, are virtues. Virtues differ from qualities in that they take the moral high ground and are linked to ethical rules and principles. They provide a bar or standard that elevates one's

existence or “becoming-ness”. These may include honesty, integrity, resiliency, empathy and honorability, etc.... Taken together, qualities and virtues represent the essence of a person’s “who-ness” and helps define him or her as an evolving being.

Benjamin Franklin, one of my heroes, was dedicated to personal excellence. In his Autobiography he identified 13 virtues that were to be practiced weekly, then rotated and recycled until mastered. History reveals that he achieved excellence in many of these virtues, even though he struggled from time to time with a few of them. I’ve attached Franklin’s 13 Virtues for your review and to help you identify the qualities & virtues that you would most like to develop.

Rules & Standards (doing)

The last two categories are what I like to call rules and standards. Rules are simply our dos and don’ts. We’ve learned them, we live them, and sometimes we break them. Experienced people, especially those who excel in life, have certain rules by which they live. These rules place boundaries around behaviors and channel their focus in order for them to achieve valuable goals.

Directly related to the rules we make are the standards we set. Standards are behavioral commitments in reference to an inner or outer metric. These represent specific actions that you will or won’t take, given a particular situation.

By considering and building these lists, you will now have some building blocks for creating your own POE.

To translate these lists into something meaningful at the end of our 12-day and 3 day journeys, our leadership adventure clients write poems, songs, creeds, letters to their children, etc... whatever they find to be the most valuable way to express their innermost values. I challenge you to do the same.

Carve out some time this week and complete the “Building Your

Philosophy of Engagement” exercise. Refine these lists then start getting creative. I guarantee that the amount of time you spend (and continue to spend) to create and refine this document will be one if not the most important documents that you can create for yourself, your family and your friends.

I hope you enjoy the process...

EXERCISE AND PRACTICE:

Building Your Philosophy of Engagement:

First, create the following lists:

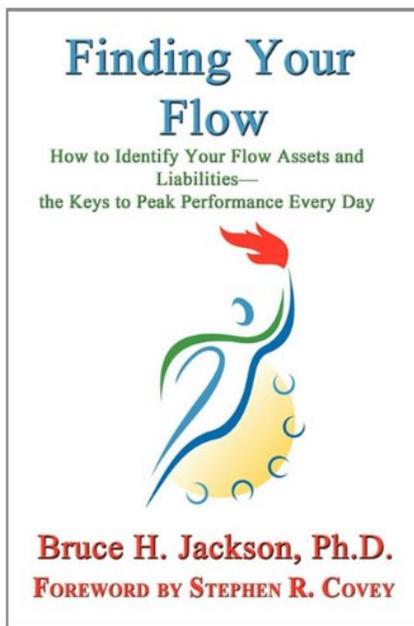
- Top 5 Beliefs & Principles
- Top 5 Attitudes & Perspectives
- Top 5 Qualities & Virtues
- Top 5 Rules & Standards

Second, write a 1-2 page document summarizing your Philosophy of Engagement using these building blocks. Now, consider the following formats:

- Letter to family or friends
- Song
- Poem
- List
- Creed

Play with this exercise and make it your own. There is no right or wrong way to do it.

**Finding Your Flow: How to Identify
Your Flow Assets and Liabilities—The
Keys to Peak Performance Every Day**



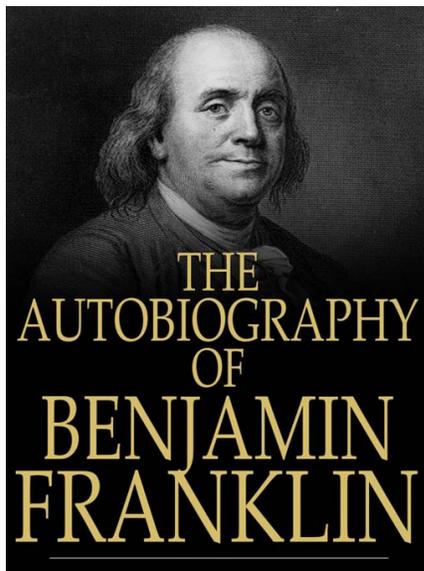
Do you remember your last peak performance? Do you remember asking: how do I do this? How can I do it again? If you have asked this question, and want to know the answer, then this is the book you have been searching for.

[Learn More](#)

RESOURCES:

BOOKS:

- [Benjamin Franklin \(his life as he wrote it\) edited by Esmond Wright.](#)



SERVICES, COURSES, TOOLS AND ADVENTURES:



Personal
Leadership App



Consulting
Services



Training
Services



Speaking
Services



Coaching
Services



Team Building
Adventures

If you have a colleague, friend, or family member who would like to receive the Finding Your Flow weekly tools, send them this email and have them click below:

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