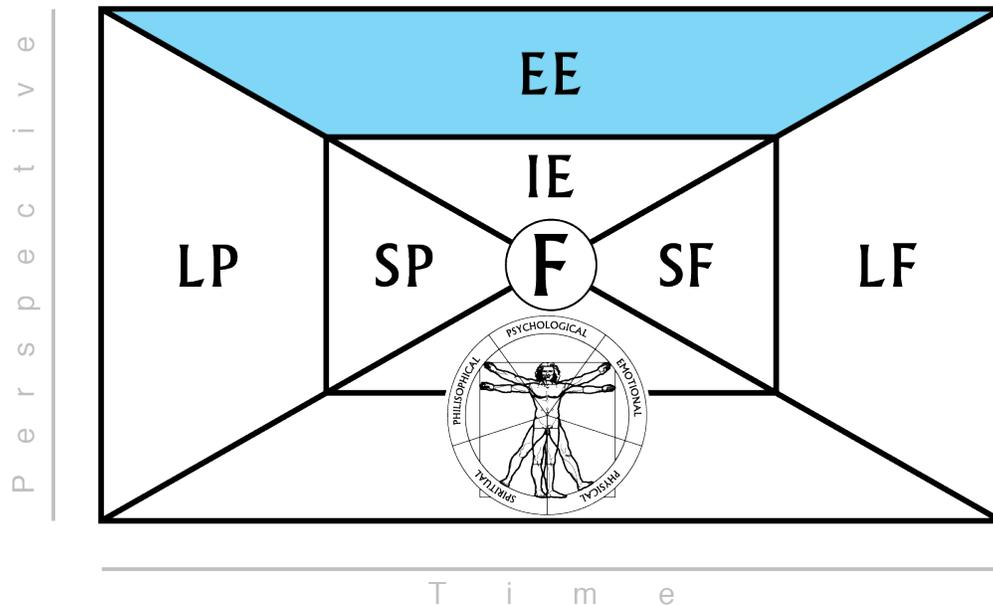




FINDING YOUR FLOW TOOLKIT VOL 3. CHOOSING THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT

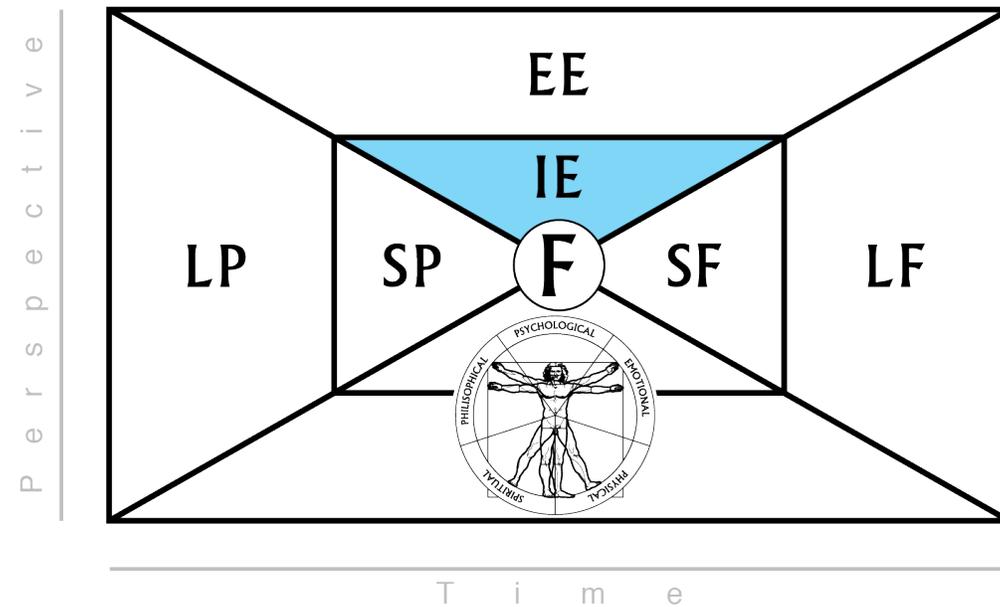
"You are a product of your environment. So choose the environment that will best develop you toward your objective. Analyze your life in terms of its environment. Are the things around you helping you towards success – or are they holding you back?"

-- W. Clement Stone



When you look at "Flow" from the big picture, your environment plays a large part. In the 12 Dimensions of Focus model discussed in the introductory newsletter (and referred to throughout these

newsletters), you can look at your environment from a broad view (External Broad) or a narrow view (External Narrow). Both dimensions—the forest and the trees—play an important part in helping you finding your flow.



Some people find their flow by simply going to a certain place, whether out in nature or in a more structured environment, such as a surgical theater, a dance studio, an office or in a certain room in your house. These spaces simply invite focus and flow. Other environments produce interference and push it away.

Looking at the forest for a moment, your Extended Environment (EE) and its impact need to be part of your awareness. Perhaps you are living in the wrong city, town, working for the wrong organization, or living in the wrong house. I recently worked with a sr. level banking executive who was extremely competent. A star performer for 20 years, she was struggling and didn't know why. As I probed it was clear that the organization she was working within may have been the issue. She was struggling with the culture and the lack of resources. Other friends and colleagues have been discussing the struggle they have within the organizations they serve. The struggle often lies in identifying what they can control and change and what they have to accept—whether to change what's possible and let go of the rest or find a new place to work or

live.

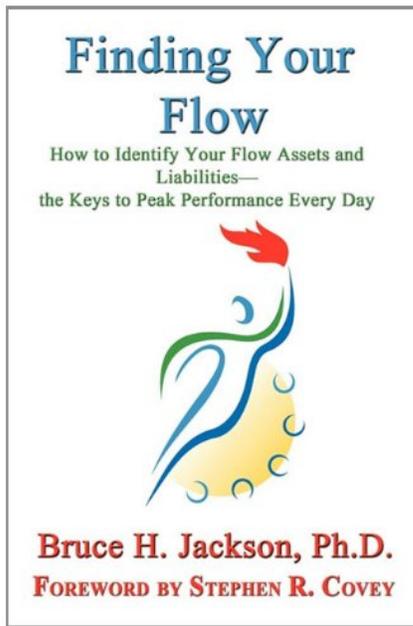
Perhaps you are in the trees and your Immediate Environment (IE) is the challenge. I once had an office that was too small for my staff, too hot on a regular basis, had no windows, and lacked any amenities that made it conducive to focus. We made it work, did what we could to spruce the place up and managed to do great work in this space. However, did we find our collective flow? Rarely! After 5 years we were given a new space and the difference was transformative for all of us. Space, proximity to resources, windows, furniture, bookshelves... It made all the difference in the world.

Place your attention for a moment on your forest for a moment. Are you in the right environment? Can you make the city, town, organization, or home you are in work for you? What about your trees? Are the immediate spaces that you work and live in conducive to focus and flow? If not, is there anything you can do to modify this environment?

Recognizing environmental influence (both EE and IE: forest and trees) is important to consider as you seek to be at your best—to find your flow. Within these environments, consider what you can control and what you can change. Consider what you need to let go of? If such an environment or space produces significant interference for you, how long are you willing to endure it? Is it time for a change? If you could do anything to make this environment or place more conducive to you being at your best, what could you do?

EXERCISE AND PRACTICE:

- Review the questions in: Knowing Your Environment exercise sheet (attached)



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