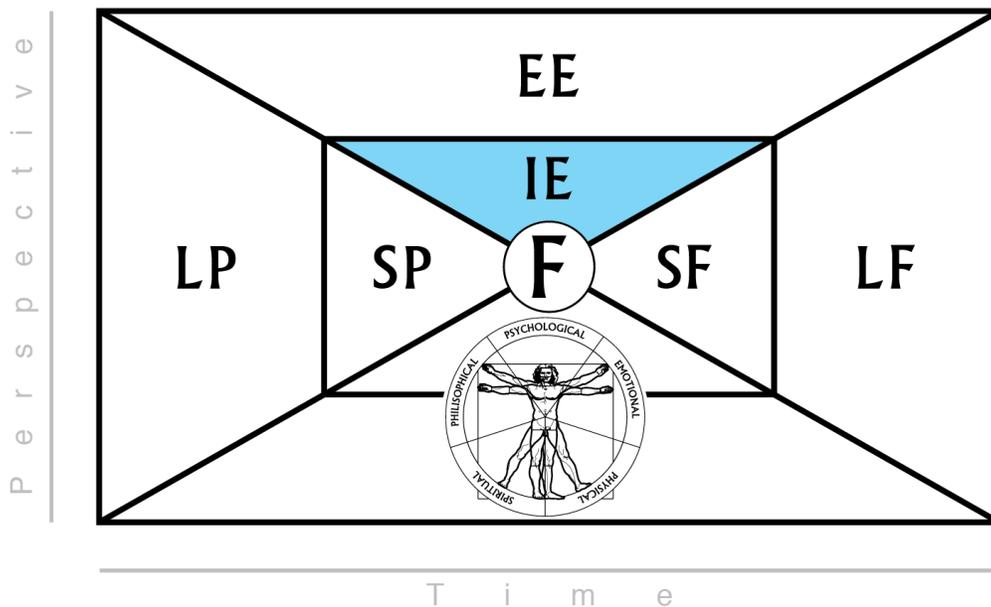




## FINDING YOUR FLOW TOOLKIT VOL. 7 REMOVING DISTRACTIONS

**"By prevailing over all obstacles and distractions, one may unfailingly arrive at his chosen goal or destination."**

**-- Christopher Columbus**



It seems at every turn the world is competing for our attention. The world wants your focus—the only thing you have in this moment.

Last week I flew back from Washington, D.C. and was confronted

with the new Lincoln commercials pumping through the small video-screen in the seat back in front of me. On the way home I saw 30 billboards. Stopping to fill up my gas tank I was accosted by a talking pump trying to sell me on a large hot dog and Pepsi.

While the world competes for your attention, you do have something to say about it—especially within your immediate environment (remember IE).

When I speak with high performers and “flow” seekers and ask them why the struggle to stay focused, they often say—“I get distracted”. Something “interferes” with my work or my game. That is what Finding Your Flow is all about—identifying your Flow Assets and Flow Liabilities and seeking to limit those things that “interfere” with your focus and maximize your ability to stay in the here and now.

After “Setting the Stage” with the right tools and props and “Organizing the Stage” to ensure everything you need is in its proper place, it is important to identify what you can do to make sure that your arena is not prone to distractions.

Once again, from an office environment perspective, five culprits seek to lure us off the dance floor. These are: 1. Unplanned visits/drop-ins; 2. Unplanned phone calls; 3. Trivial emails; 4. Social media; and 5. Any type of Instant Messaging service.

It’s hard to believe that the average Facebook user spent more than 409 minutes on the site last month (that’s almost 7 hours!). Just think of how many pop-ins you took, how many phone calls you took in the middle of an important project, how many emails you allowed to distract you. And perhaps the worst culprit--instant messaging! Each of these is a convenient distracter, which allows you to stray from that which is strategic to that which is leisure.

Perhaps the most well prepared flow environment is that of the surgical theater. All of the tools and props are present. Everything is organized to perfection; people are prepared with clear roles and

goals; the lighting, temperature, and environment are engineered with only one thing in mind: a focused surgical team. Can you imagine this environment with in and out foot-traffic, assistants texting friends: "Last suture almost done. See you at Starbuck in 10" lol; surgeons periodically peeking on a TV screen to get the latest on the Celtics and Lakers game? Do you allow such things in your performance arenas? Of course. Can you do it a little bit less? For sure.

As you consider your performance arenas this week consider the main culprits that either create interference or thwart your ability to focus. Consider your strategies for making your work-time a time of focus and high performance. While you are working can you:

1. Shut your phone down completely?
2. Turn-off pop-ups and any instant messaging services?
3. Take your landline phone jack out of the wall?
4. Place a "Not Now" sign outside of your door?
5. Close any blinds or shades to minimize distractions?

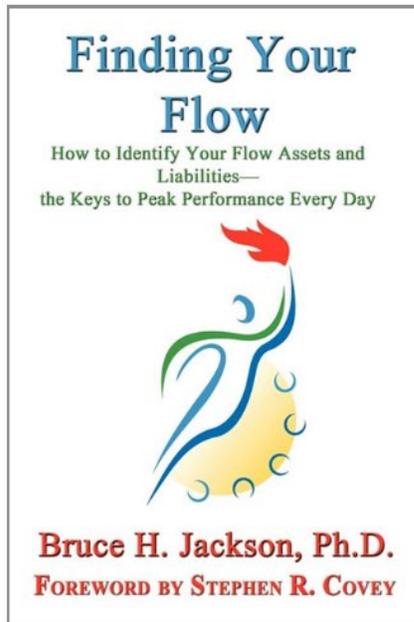
Remember, it's one thing to have all of the right elements in the place where you want more flow to take place; it is another thing to organize this space. It is yet another to minimize distractions so you can do your best work.

Consider a few simple questions in this week's exercise and decide what you can do to minimize your distractions.

### **EXERCISE AND PRACTICE:**

- Review the Questions in: Minimizing Distractions Exercise Sheet

- Consider each of your performance arenas and ask yourself: “What are the three simplest things I can do to minimize my distractions this week?”

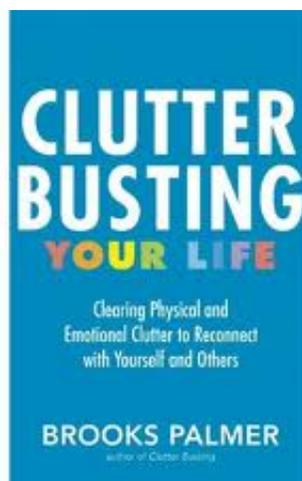


## **Finding Your Flow: How to Identify Your Flow Assets and Liabilities—The Keys to Peak Performance Every Day**

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.

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