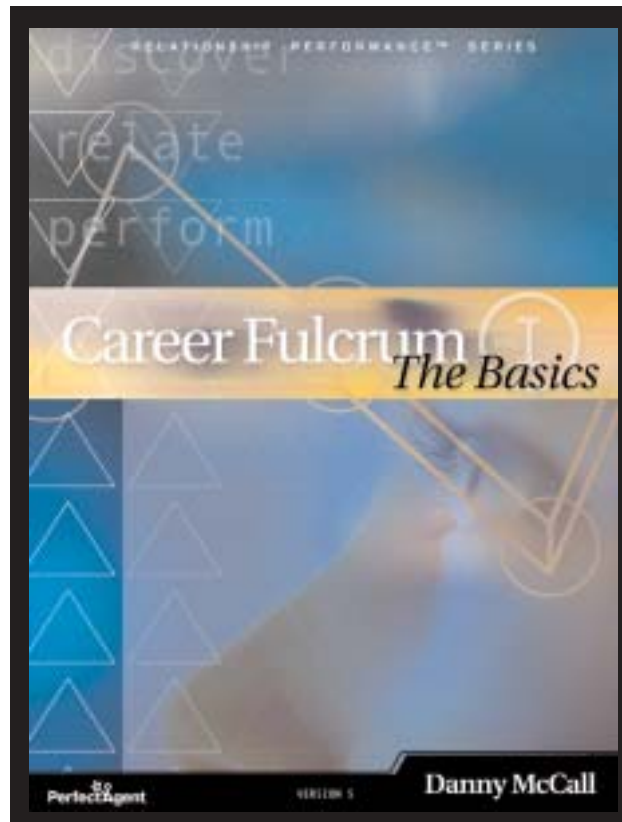


# Career Fulcrum Vol. I

*excerpt from Chapter 1*  
***The Flow! Framework***



This is an excerpt from *Career Fulcrum Volume I: The Basics*.  
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# FLOW!...

Now let's examine an interesting model of comparing and aligning who you are with what you do. In *Figure 3, The Flow Zone*, we bring these two dimensions together and discover how important it is to properly balance, position and align ourselves with our roles. It's important to differentiate the aspects of who you are and what you do, because the relationship of these two

dimensions has very important implications for your personal fulfillment, self-image and life satisfaction. As you can quickly see, when who you are at the moment is reasonably balanced with what you do (the role you play), you have the opportunity to be in "Flow"—the desirable zone of balance between who we are and what we do. The basis for this concept has been well developed by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi at the University of Chicago in his book, *FLOW: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (see nearby Brain Food). I hope this graphic resonates deeply with you and begins to

explain the quest we are now on—to help you predictably seek, establish and maintain organizational roles (what you "do") and assume for yourself relationships that are optimally aligned with who you are and what you desire as you grow and change throughout your life.

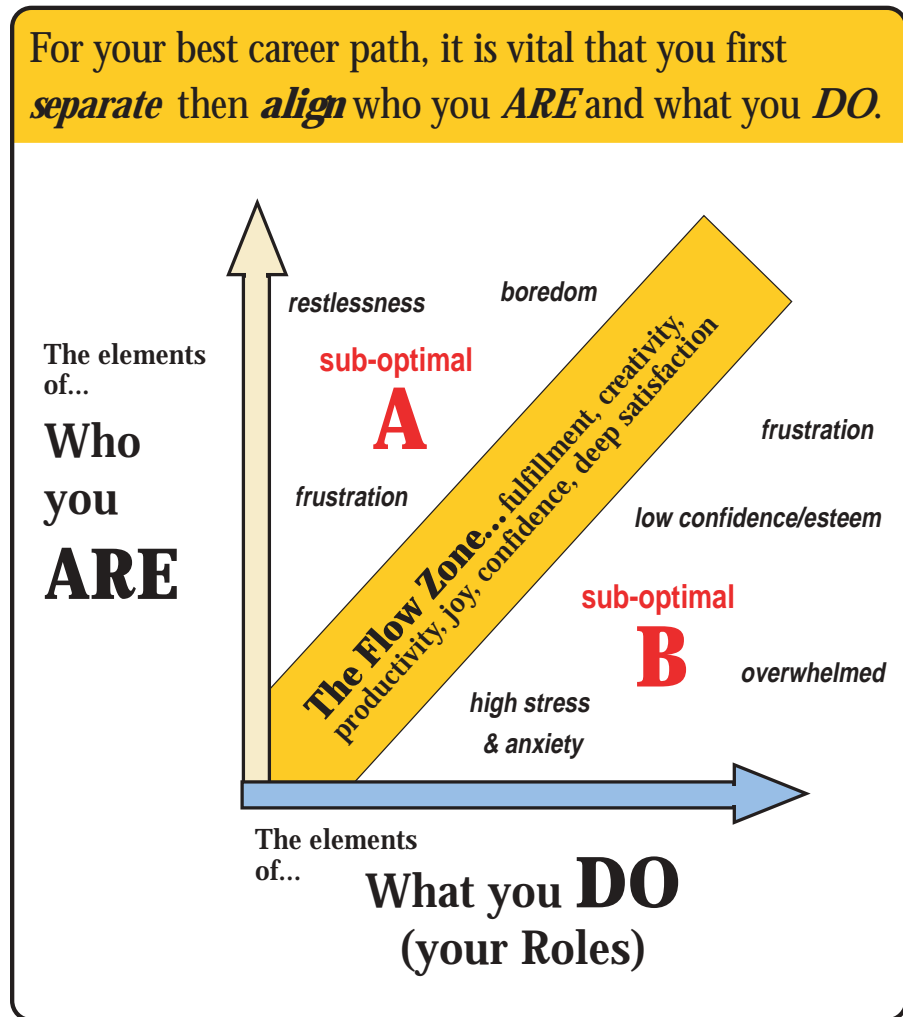


Figure 3 — The Flow Zone

“It is not real work unless  
you would rather be  
doing something else.”

—James Barrie

“Flow” is that place, that state, that circumstance and situation where you are enthusiastic, confident, fulfilled and capable in what you do and are looking forward to doing more of it. In such a state of mind, you often lose track of time, and the degree of stress and role challenges are constructive and desirable. You are “at one with your work.” You don’t dread Monday, because you deeply enjoy what you do. You enjoy who you work with and are proud



## BRAIN FOOD

See the seminal works of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. His books *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, *Beyond Boredom and Anxiety: Experiencing Flow in Work and Play*, and *Finding Flow: The Psychology of Engagement With Everyday Life* may serve to give more insights, perspectives, and implications into the power of “Flow” in your life.

of the purpose of your work and of your organization’s purpose as well. You are pleased with the effect your work has on the rest of your life.

However, put in an oversimplified way, if who you are relatively exceeds what you are doing, you will tend to be bored, unfulfilled, restless and sometimes frustrated. On the contrary, if the things you do exceed who you are at the moment, you may find yourself having unhealthy stress, anxiety, low self-esteem, a sense of being overwhelmed; you may have performance challenges and feel frustrated. The secret is to keep who you are and what you do (the roles you

play) in a reasonably healthy equilibrium and balance with each other as much as possible. I feel it is unrealistic to expect this state at all times for there will always be the “off periods,” the bad days, the shifting situations. But in general, you should strive “to hover” in the vicinity of your Flow area across the majority of your work life. Why would you want to be in any other state of mind and utilization when you spend so much of your life and energy at work?

“Work is more fun than fun.”

—Noel Coward



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