

The Energy Exchange™

...liberating the creative energy within and between people

The Energy Exchange™ embraces a set of Practices that *liberate* and *direct* the flow of personal creative energy *within* and *between* people. These Practices are embodied in two models.

The **Vowels of Personal Power** help individuals maximize the power of their interactions with others, not in a selfish or manipulative way, rather in a way that strengthens both the *relationship* and the *result* of the interaction.

The **Pentacle Path** lays out a six-part approach to problem solving that helps people generate the best possible solution to a problem or opportunity given the time and resources available. It takes its name from the geometric symbol signifying “vigor” and “wholeness.”

In this introduction, we describe both models and highlight the components that give them their strength.

The Vowels of Personal Power: it's not about me – it's about “I”

This is something that everyone – leader, follower, parent, child, teacher, student, coach and employee – needs to know. It's something we all *did* know at one time, and it's something most of us have forgotten. This “something” is what we call the “**Vowels of Personal Power.**”

Our minds our marvelous machines. We begin our lives separating from the protection of the womb to enter a wondrous new environment. Our minds carry no baggage. Immediately we start to become **aware** of ourselves and other things through sound, sight, smell, taste and touch as we actively **engage** with our new world. We are **open** to all stimuli, since we have nothing in *this* world to compare them with. We work naturally to **understand** more of ourselves and our surroundings to get what we want and need. And we learn. Fast.

Throughout this time, we live in the present moment – our memory for the past is short and we have no sense of the future. Everything is now.

Soon, we build a profile of what works – a particular cry, a facial expression – to get our needs are met, whether that be food, a diaper change, or some cuddling. We build our list of shoulds and shouldn'ts, rights and wrongs, “works” and “doesn't work” through our interaction with our physical surroundings and with other people. We include in our world parents, siblings, friends, Barney, the Teletubbies, Big Bird – *anyone* and *anything* that passes our senses. We remember what worked and didn't work in the past. Those things that “worked” become our “laws.”

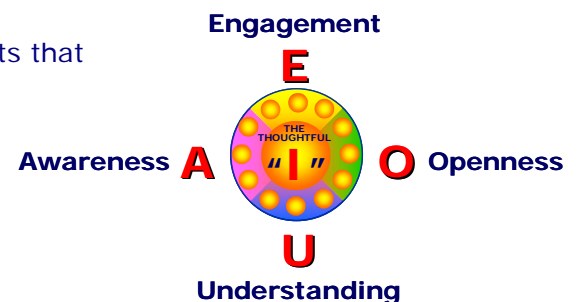
Using these laws, we believe that we can predict what will or won't work in the future. A lot of what we do becomes “automatic”; we apply our past judgments easily and instinctively to current situations and then get on with the next thing.

Slowly a shift happens. Increasingly, we live in the past; and we live in the future; and we miss leveraging the real point of power: the present.

The Energy Exchange™ is all about getting back to the talents that

made us successful human beings in the first place:

- **Engagement,**
- **Awareness,**
- **Openness,** and
- **Understanding.**



As adults, these things don't happen by chance; they happen through thoughtfulness. Distinct from the self-centered "it's all about me," this is your "I" being consciously active along these four dimensions.

Whether you are in dialogue with someone else or alone, these four facets of the **Thoughtful "I"** help you ground yourself in the *present moment* and focus your *attentive energy* to get the most from your life.

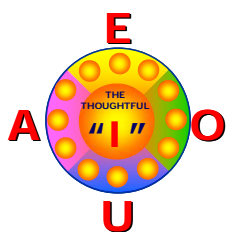
You do not *control* the future: you *influence* it, and only by what you choose to do now, at this very moment. Your present *view* of the future and its obstacles and opportunities *changes* the possibilities. And while you cannot change the "facts" of the past, your present *view* of the past will affect how you view your future.

So where's the power? Right here! Right now! ...and nowhere else.

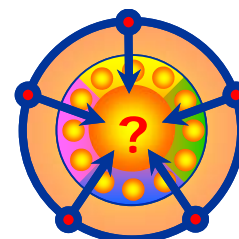
The **Vowels of Personal Power** give you the levers to make the most of your present.

It's all about energy flow – within and between people.

The **Vowels of Personal Power** help you *liberate* and *direct* your personal creative energy. There are two paths for this energy. First, it flows *within* you, allowing you to create your own desired future. Second, it flows *between* you and others, allowing you to collaborate to create a *joint* desired future. When either of these energy paths is blocked, the result is always less than it could be.



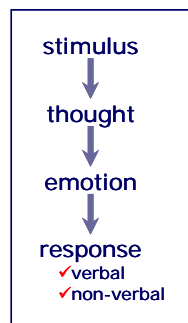
There are three Practices associated with *each* of the four facets of the **Thoughtful "I"** – twelve Practices in all. These **12 Practices** give you the personal power of your human birthright. While each of these practices can be learned independently, they build on one another to give you even greater leverage. We introduce them in useful sequences and groupings so you can remember them and master them more easily.



Further, when you are faced with a choice in your life – from "how will we spend our summer vacation?" to "what will I do with my life?" – you can overlay the **Pentacle Path** system to help you make the best possible choices for you and others in the decision.

Thoughts dictate how we respond to our situation

Recent research confirms the solid connection between *thoughts* and *emotions*. Whenever your brain receives a stimulus through one of your five senses, a thought is generated, followed by an emotion, followed by a response – verbal, non-verbal, or both.



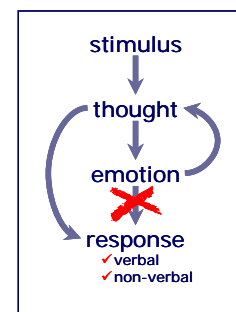
Normally, your first thought is an *automatic* thought based on your experience and past judgments, thereby generating an automatic emotional reaction (look at the diagram on the left).

In this scenario, it's the *emotion* that is in a position to directly guide the subsequent response. And the stronger the emotion, the more dramatic the response.

Remember that, in effect, **emotion** is the "ego in motion," triggered by your past judgments about things, and all those shoulds and shouldn'ts that have crept into your life and have

become your automatic thoughts.

Being more thoughtful, you can *redirect* the flow. The initial stimulus, thought, and emotion remain the same. But as soon as you feel the emotion, you acknowledge it, and think about what response you'd *prefer* to use.



You have a choice. You can let emotion influence – and even control – your thinking, or you can choose to let your thinking manage your expression of emotion.

So, which do you choose? This book is all about letting your conscious thought ascend to help manage your interaction with life. Note that we're not negating the role that the **heart** has to play in managing your interaction – we're just refocusing the role of your **thinking** machine.

The Twelve Practices

The twelve Practices help you create a way of *thinking*, a way of *being*, a way of *doing*, a way of *looking* at the world and your interaction with it. All this helps you make the world a better place, a little bit at a time. Some of these Practices contribute to improving the flow of your *internal* attentive energy. Others facilitate the flow of *interpersonal* energy. Some do *both*.

The good news is that you already know all these practices and principles, and you've used each one of them at some point. The "not-so-good" news is that for each of us, some of the practices may have fallen into disuse or misuse. Becoming more deliberate in your thinking about them will repair them. Here are the twelve practices.



AWARENESS

Stay Mindfully Aware (also contributing to ENGAGEMENT, UNDERSTANDING, and OPENNESS)

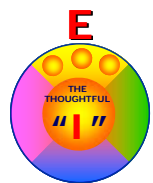
When we stay aware of our own state of mind and the impact we have on others, we help the energy flow towards the matter at hand.

Be Thoughtfully Authentic (also contributing to UNDERSTANDING)

When we share our views and feelings *thoughtfully*, we help to enrich the process of making choices and augment commitment to those choices.

Capture – and Cherish – Your Lightness (also contributing to OPENNESS)

When we take the *issue* seriously – and not *ourselves* – we allow energy to flow towards the issue rather than our personal idiosyncrasies.



ENGAGEMENT

Get – and Stay - Personally Engaged

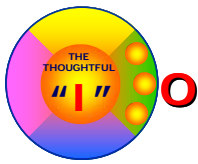
When people are engaged in the *results* of the dialogue and the *relationships* in the room, we get greater commitment to finding creative and workable answers.

Accept – and Support – Your Mutuality (also contributing to OPENNESS)

When we understand that our individual success is *interdependent* with the personal success of others, we generate a syndicated effort towards the realization of the choices.

Stay Resolved without Attachment

When we stay committed to the nature of the desired outcome while allowing flexibility in the path taken, those on the journey become even more engaged and committed.



OPENNESS

Perceive the Positives (also contributing to ENGAGEMENT)

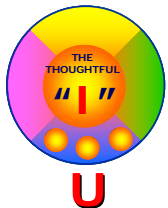
When we look at the facts, how we *view* them changes the possibilities of what we can *do* with them – by perceiving the positives, we enable the free flow of energy towards more workable possibilities.

Accept Every Idea's Inevitable Relevance

When we operate on the principle that every idea is relevant – even if we don't yet know how – we open up the possibilities.

Allow – and Fully Appreciate – Fresh Associations (also contributing to UNDERSTANDING)

When we allow our minds to explore obscure links, we can generate more possibilities and foster greater creativity and power in the potential solution.



UNDERSTANDING

Acknowledge – and Suspend – Judgment (also contributing to OPENNESS)

When we make judgments, we do something that is normal and useful for making decisions, so we must give ourselves permission to feel it. At the same time we must remember that premature judgment limits the options.

Confirm Your Understanding (also contributing to AWARENESS)

When we confirm our understanding, we validate each other and generate shared commitment to more complete and workable answers.

Embrace the Power of the Both/And (also contributing to OPENNESS)

When we move away from the "tyranny of the either/or" we generate a deeper understanding of how seeming opposites can work together to produce a greater whole.

The Pentacle Path: turbocharged creative problem solving

In many of your conversations, you're attempting to reach a decision about something: where to send a child to school, what to do for summer vacation, how to launch a new product, how to build the garden shed. In these cases, having in mind a process that will produce the best possible decision is a major asset. The **Pentacle Path** is easy to understand and easy to use in any decision-making situation.

Like most creative problem solving models – and there are many – this model provides the opportunity for both *divergent* and *convergent* thinking, essential for producing rich outcomes. The Pentacle Path, however, has three twists that give it extra power. Again, the Practices are designed to *liberate* and *direct* attentive energy.



[1] In many problem-solving models, one of the first steps is defining the problem – or opportunity. While a clear definition focuses the conversation, when it is expressed as a *statement*, the energy flow can become depressed under the weight of the problem. When the issue is formulated as a **question**, the energy rises in search of an answer – a subtle, and significant, difference.

[2] Reflecting the fact that “things change,” both *choices* and *action* are **conditional**. This fosters both swifter movement towards the answer, and flexibility to adapt to a changing environment.

[3] The process never stops. Tied to the conditional nature of the choices and action, the last-described part of the path is the vehicle to keep the choices and action **relevant and current**, and lead you back into the cycle as necessary.

These three features render the Pentacle Path more *living* than *linear*. And used in conjunction with the Vowels of Personal Power, the Pentacle Path becomes an extremely powerful tool for creating your preferred future.

The six Practices of the Pentacle Path:

1. Frame the Core Question

Framing the challenge as a *question* causes energy to flow towards discovering better answers, rather than getting consumed by discouraging aspects of the problem.

2. Get to Know What We Know

There is more knowledge in the collective heads than in any one – we each hold part of the puzzle.

3. Explore the Possibilities

Exploring what “might be” opens new avenues of the attainable.

4. Make Your Directional Choices

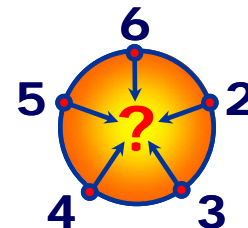
Choices convert *potentials* into conditional *reality*.

5. Initiate Conditional Action

Deciding is not enough; dedicated resources – including effort and time – are required to create new reality.

6. Keep the Choices and Action Fresh

Since “a plan does not survive beyond first contact with the enemy”¹ we need a mechanism to continually check the relevance and validity of our choices and action.



When you are led back into the cycle, you don't necessarily follow the Practices in sequence. Depending on the nature of your “entry” you may move from sharing information right to choices or action, or may bounce back from choices to sharing. In this sense, the Pentacle Path adapts to your need at the time.

The litmus test

Every so often, ask yourself the question, “where is the energy going in this conversation?”

If you don't like the answer, look at your internal energy and notice if anything is blocking its free flow. Then use one of the **Practices** to unblock the channel.

Then, look at the flow of energy between you and others and notice if anything is blocking *its* free flow. Again, use one or more of the **Practices** to break down the blockages.

¹ Carl von Clausewitz, Prussian professional fighting soldier, military educator, as well as political, strategic, and historical theorist, 1780-1831.