



Influence
Ecology

MAP STUDY PAPER 6

Welcome to your sixth Mechanics and Practice Study. This program is reserved for those members of Influence Ecology who have successfully completed the Fundamentals of Transaction program, or other prerequisite study, and participation is by invitation only.

This program is a study in the fundamental science and practice of transacting powerfully in the marketplace.

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MATERIALS REQUIRED

The following Books are required for this study:

The E-Myth by Michael Gerber

Influence: Science and Practice by Robert Cialdini

Your Brain at Work: Strategies for Overcoming Distraction, Regaining Focus, and Working Smarter All Day Long by David Rock

Willpower: Rediscovering the Greatest Human Strength by Baumeister & Tierney

Recommended Reading (Optional)

Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

STUDY WORKSHEETS

Studies will include Worksheets. Please download and save the Study Worksheet that accompanies each Study and follow the *Submission Instructions* outlined in the Worksheet.

WORK

We continue our Study in the area of Fulfill in this Study to further distinguish the immutability and inescapability of the Condition of Life – Work. (Have the Primary Transaction Cycle and Personality and Transaction Behavior Chart out while reading this study paper.)

“Like other animals, we must spend a large part of our existence making a living; calories needed to fuel the body don’t appear magically on the table, and houses and cars don’t assemble themselves spontaneously. There are no strict formulas, however, for how much time people actually have to Work. It seems, for instance, that the early hunter-gatherers, like their present-day descendants living in the inhospitable deserts of Africa and Australia, spent only three to five hours each day on what we would call ‘working’- providing for food, shelter, clothing, and tools. They spent the rest of the day in conversation, resting, or [sociality]. At the opposite extreme were the industrial workers of the nineteenth century, who were often forced to spend twelve-hours a day, six days a week, toiling in grim factories or dangerous mines.

Not only the quantity of Work, but its quality has been highly variable. There is an old Italian saying: “Work gives man nobility, and turns him into an animal.” This ironic trope may be a comment on the nature of all ‘work’, but it can also be interpreted to mean that work requiring great skills done freely refines the complexity of the self; and, on the other hand, that there are few things as entropic as unskilled [labor] done under compulsion. The brain surgeon operating in a shining hospital and the slave laborer who staggers under a heavy load as he wades through the mud are both working. But the surgeon has a chance to learn new things every day, and every day she learns that she is in control and that she can perform difficult tasks. The laborer is forced to repeat the same exhausting motions, and what he learns is mostly about his own helplessness.

Because Work is so universal, yet so varied, it makes a tremendous difference to one's overall contentment whether what one does for a living is enjoyable or not. Thomas Carlyle was not far wrong when he wrote, "Blessed is he who has found his 'work' let him ask no other blessedness." Sigmund Freud amplified somewhat on this simple advice. When asked for his recipe for happiness, he gave a very short but sensible answer: "Work and love." It is true that if one finds [satisfaction] in Work, and in relations with others, one is well on the way toward improving the quality of life as a whole."¹

In almost all civilizations, 'work' is considered a curse to be avoided at all costs. It is true that, because of the inefficient way the universe operates, it requires a lot of energy to realize our basic needs and aspirations. As long as we didn't care how much we ate, whether or not we lived in solid and well-decorated homes, or whether we could afford the latest fruits of technology, the necessity of working would rest lightly on our shoulders, as it does for the nomads of the Kalahari Desert. But the more psychic energy we invest in material goals, and the more impossible the goals grow to be, the more difficult it becomes to make them come true. Then we need increasingly high inputs of labor, mental and physical, as well as inputs of natural resources, to satisfy escalating expectations. For much of history, the great majority of people who lived in the periphery of "civilized" societies had to give up any hope of enjoying life in order to make the dreams of the few who had found a way of exploiting them come true. The achievements that set civilized nations apart from the more primitive – such as the Pyramids, the Great Wall of China, the Taj Mahal, and the temples, palaces, the dams of antiquity – were usually built with the energy of slaves forced to realize their rulers' ambitions. Not surprisingly, work acquired a rather poor reputation.

Living a comfortable and meaningful life, for the vast majority of us, requires that we 'do something'. What we do (and how we do it) to care for each of our Conditions of Life may occur at times to be difficult or hard. "[Working] may always be hard, or at least harder than doing nothing at all. But there is ample evidence that [much of what we do] – Work – can be enjoyable, and that indeed, it is often the most enjoyable part of life."² We suggest that Work occurs from time to time be difficult, as do our efforts around deliberate practice, but it doesn't produce narratives of despair. When our activities in life around survival, jobs, occupations, etc. produce negative moods that bring on states of mind such as despair, we can recognize the loss of freedom and certainty that is overtaking us. We lose a creative aspect of our transactional Self – we diminish the conceptual nature of our Selfness – we simply become over Worked and begin to lose the access we have for inventing and constructing new possibilities for our lives, and our lives become burdened, difficult, busy and overwhelmed with 'activity' we 'must do' (or believe we must do) which is our definition of labor.

If we approach the domain of Work (Fulfill) with this specialized study, we begin to recognize and relate to how others view their Work activities. It is quite easy to distinguish where others view 'what they do' as labor rather than Work. They toil, and it becomes noticeable and obvious, over time, that their activity 'labor' – produces moods of resignation, hopelessness and despair. The activity that once was meaningful, productive and educational becomes routine and mundane.

We will delve further into and distinguish the activity of Work and how it differs from that of labor and action, and we will do this Work in later Influence Ecology studies. For now it is only necessary to recognize the importance of Work, what we and others 'do' with our mind and bodies, to provide for the needs, wants and greatest aspirations for our comfort and happiness.

Work, generally speaking, is the 'factory floor' or 'manufacturing plant' for what must be produced in every Move and Phase of your Primary Transaction. When you complete the process for inventing your Primary Transaction, all Work that must be produced will be captured and articulated in this domain. When complete, you will have the foundation on which to build your manual (or similar construct) that provides a complete roadmap for every 'single action' required to produce your offer.

¹Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi *Flow, The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, 1990 Harpers (p.143)

² Ibid (p.145)

THE E-MYTH

By Michael Gerber

Read chapter nine.

FULFILL

Turning Commitments into Action

We continue our Work in this Study on the Move **Fulfill** and specifically in the area of 'getting things done'.

As you learned in the previous Study, Contracts are the articulation of terms and conditions required to satisfy the intentions of the parties to a transaction. The Contract holds the *language of commitment*. A commitment is a speech act – an activity; a promise to act.

The principal activity that occurs in Fulfill is Work. Work is required for transforming *commitments* (Contract) into *action* (Fulfill).

Fulfill – as a Move in the Primary Transaction Cycle - is the aggregate of ALL WORK associated with the Primary Transaction. The purpose of identifying the Move Fulfill and its location in the cycle, is to offer a structure for the effective and proper placement of the high cost associated with the physical construction of the material elements (all 'work product') required to complete a transaction. For Work to be effective it must correspond to the requirements of a transaction. That is, it must produce the action, and ultimately the 'work product', promised for every Move and Phase in the Primary Transaction Cycle.

The Move Fulfill is the transition that turns *commitments* (Contract) into *measurable results* (Satisfaction Metrics). The articulation of specific commitments and agreements to produce action (Contract), whether they are simple transactions in a quick email between co-workers or highly complex legal documents that satisfy a Primary Transaction, ought to be in place before you agree to any activity associated with the Work defined in the Contract. Any Work that does not correspond to specific terms and elements required to satisfy a Contract is high cost and must be carefully considered. (This goes for internal and external transactions of any enterprise³).

The move Fulfill is the location of all Work that is to be accomplished in any transaction. You will learn later in the program that Work is a complex Condition of Life that includes two primary distinctions – labor and action.⁴ Work is distinct from labor in that labor is the activity one 'must' ensure is taken to survive. Any activity that must occur in order for one to care for their Conditions of Life is *labor*. Action is the activity that exists as part of the coordination of living one's life in a social environment. Work, is what we 'do'; it is the activity we undertake to create and produce the existence, comfort and material things that afford us a satisfactory and comfortable existence beyond survival. What we produce through our Work is something other than survival and may or may not be in concert with others.

³ Internal Transactions are those organized within an enterprise or organization such as employment agreements or production processes. External transactions in this case refers to the traditional understanding of 'customer' that a business enterprise serves.

⁴ "Labor is the activity which corresponds to the biological process of the human body, whose spontaneous growth, metabolism, and eventual decay are bound to the vital necessities produced and fed into the life process by it [labor]. Work is the activity which corresponds to the unnaturalness of human existence, which is not imbedded in, and who mortality is not compensated by, the species' ever-recurring life cycle. Work provides an "artificial" world of things, distinctly different from all natural surroundings. Within its borders each individual life is housed, while this world itself is meant to outlast and transcend them all. The human condition of work is worldliness. Action, the only activity that goes on directly between men without the intermediary of things or matter, corresponds to the human condition of plurality, to the fact that men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world. 'Action is a state of living in the world and to live is to live among Men' [coordination of action is the highest state of activity]." *The Human Condition* – Hanna Arendt

SIMPLE AND COMPLEX TRANSACTIONS

A **simple transaction** is any transaction that requires only one exchange for each Move and Phase in the transaction cycle. When a transaction can complete (all the way around the cycle) requiring only a single exchange for each Move and Phase – it is a simple transaction.

A **complex transaction** is any transaction that is made up of and requires more than one transaction to complete the cycle. Any transaction that requires more than one action to complete a Move or Phase is a complex transaction.

Highly valued offers in the marketplace are almost always complex transactions.

Acquiring a chain of burger restaurants would be a complex transaction, and buying a hamburger to eat for lunch would be considered a simple transaction.

Highly complex transactions are configurations and combinations of multiple simple transactions. When invented accurately and powerfully executed, recurrent highly complex transactions produce the greatest opportunity for the attainment of wealth (Money), identity (Career) and satisfying Work.

Embody a Simple Transaction Orientation

All complex transactions are nothing more than a set or series of coordinated simple transactions. People (organizations) who invent and produce highly valuable transactions in the marketplace typically orient themselves around a kind of thinking that we describe as a Simple Transaction Orientation. People who are described as “micro managers” or “detail oriented” tend to be those who act to produce the most basic element required to meet a standard (as in quality) or specific result in a transaction. If you examine the actions effective people take to produce recurrent, highly valuable transactions, it is likely you will find that those managing the transactions (accountable for producing results) hold and carry a focus and concentration around producing simple transactions. This is especially true for those who move effectively in the domain of Fulfillment.

Adopting a Simple Transaction Orientation takes practice, willpower, and self discipline. With practice and proper habits, one can develop the habit of reducing complex transactions into simple ones – but it requires focus and concentration. Our social constructs and Current narratives for ‘multi-tasking’, diversification and generalization do not support this kind of thinking. In fact they act against it.

Our current media, economic and communication technologies have produced environments that make it easy for us to always be ‘plugged in’. We are now living in a ‘constant contact’ social environment. Society is moving toward behavior that insists people be continuously available. We are training each other to ‘react’. The expectations and habits being produced cause breakdowns if we are not always available. It is a good bet that you have recently been on the receiving end of this dynamic intercourse – where someone in your life was agitated by you not being immediately available when they phoned, texted or instant messaged you. These behaviors produce pervasive and constant distractions that dilute our concentration and focus. It is difficult to unplug and concentrate in our current environment. More and more we find that we must use our brainpower, (energy and willpower) in declining opportunities to communicate or ward off interruptions and distractions. That is why we say it will take uncommon strength on your part to practice and develop the habits of concentration in order to build effective, coherent and integrated transactions. It takes time to craft clear and distinct articulations of actions.

It is unlikely that you have even a few people in your ecologies who support your concentration and focus. Keep in mind that this is true for all those with whom you attempt to transact. Consider the cost of your habits in this area – especially with your most intimate relationships and internal customers. Ask yourself if you are prone to habits of distracting others in the manner we describe here.

Orienting our thinking around simple transactions means that we are willing and able to reduce every transaction to its most simple and singular form. To do this, we must spend quality time in concentration and focus on the invention of transactions; we must accurately and properly build the coherent and systematic progression of singular action in each Move and Phase.

Productivity specialist David Allen teaches that a project is any desired result that requires more than one action step. “This means that some rather small things that you might not normally call projects are going to need to be paired down or reduced to a single action in the process of doing the ‘bigger thing’ you desire.” This takes practice and you will be surprised at how complex we make our world. “You don’t really *do* a project,” says Allen, “you can only do action steps related to it. When enough of the right action steps have been taken, some situation will have been created that matches your initial picture of the outcome closely enough that you can call it *done*.” Single action steps are the key to getting things done and done quickly. It takes organization, willpower and lots of self-control.” Allen teaches a methodology that centers on a kind of ‘next action’ thinking. Ask yourself, ‘what is the next single action required here – and move accordingly.’ Articulate that action clearly and complete it before moving to the next related action. Do this consistently and you are on your way to reaching your desired aim.

Most people do not hold the psychological strength to produce powerful Fulfillment recurrently. The general acceptance of weak narratives and lack of appreciation for the ethic of self-control and willpower, coupled with the constant distractions caused by our modern ‘plugged-in’ environment, complicates this as we seek to have others do what they promised. Compliance practitioners know and use this knowledge. We too must learn to produce singular action or simple transactions with others in order to Fulfill on our objectives if we are to reach our Chief Aims in Life. We simply cannot rely on people moving as ambitious adults in our Current marketplace. In many cases you will have to be willing to threaten and agitate people to have them comply with your requests. In some cases you will need to add ‘force’ and compel others to simply follow instructions, or make demands of them to take single actions – and you will need lots of brain power to hold these habits for yourself and others.

Power, as we define it, is organized effort. Organized effort in transactions is the effective coordination of action required to produce satisfactory results. Being known for our ability to coordinate the action of others quickly and effectively is how we gain power in the marketplace.

Most people do not hold a simple transaction orientation. Recognizing this specialized distinction and learning how to apply it, will help you produce powerful complex transactions.

If you can organize your thinking and actions to have your customers (internal and external) complete simple transactions quickly, the odds of reaching your aims increase greatly. If your transactions are accurately invented, effectively coordinated, and coherent with the objective aims you intend, you will succeed in completing valuable complex transactions.

Overwhelm

As you have worked through the building process of transactional development in this program, you have no doubt recognized that as transactions move through the transaction cycle the effective coordination of action that must take place can seem complex, confusing or even overwhelming.

When ‘work piles up’, deadlines loom and people are relying on your commitments, you can quickly find yourself (and others) in bad moods. A common narrative that is easy to recognize in The Current is how ‘busy’ people seem to be. You have heard people make statements like ‘there is not enough time in the day’ for example, or that they are “too busy” with ‘Work’ to take care of important Conditions of Life such as Health, Family or Study (Education).

What we find is that people who fall into these states and moods are attempting to “manage” the “unmanageable.” They try to implement procedures or techniques intended to ‘handle’ their overwhelm,

such as 'task' or 'time' management techniques for example, rather than dealing with the more fundamental issue – that being their own commitments and actions.

The only manageable element that exists in any transaction is our own activity or action. Contrary to popular belief, we cannot manage 'time' and in an objective world – we cannot really manage people. All we can manage is our own action. We cannot manage whether another person takes an action or not, we only manage what we do about it if they do or do not take an action. All we can ever really manage is whether we do something or not. This means if we are intending to compel others to act, we must clearly articulate how we will act if they do or do not act according to their commitments.

A commitment is a promise to do (or not to do) something. In the domain of Fulfillment commitments are objective. They 'are' actionable and as transactions mature, they develop and have a fixed structure. That structure, in its most efficient form, is represented as the transaction cycle.

Commitments are a promise to act – but they are not necessarily the articulation of the proper action(s) required to fulfill on a specific or single objective. People will often make high concept promises with good intentions, but they have no grounding for their fulfillment. At best they are wishes and hopes, or some 'good idea' that they would 'very much like to have happen' so they commit to act on their good intentions and hopes with nothing more than their good attitudes, confidence and personality to see them through. In their proper location in the transaction cycle, (prior to an offer) they are fine. But carried beyond presentation, they become extremely high-cost unarticulated 'intentions'.

If you accept an invitation or offer from another person, you are promising to act. Promising to act without first being able to articulate the pathway to fulfill the promise may be the source of your inability to produce effective results – and the overwhelm you find yourself steeped in on a regular basis.

The best move you will make is to decline to accept invitations, offers or requests unless you know you can fulfill on the activities required to satisfy the minimal requirements. If you hold this ethic, you force yourself (and those with whom you transact) to articulate the terms and conditions of the transaction before you commit. You will likely find that the source of your overwhelm was not that you accepted an invitation, offer or request, but you did so without the conditions of your commitment being clearly articulated.

When you question the terms and conditions of an invitation, offer or request, you will often find that the party making it cannot articulate their specific measures for satisfaction. This is going to be a real 'wake-up call' for some people, because they will recognize how very high-cost other people can become when they don't know what they want, until after you deliver it. You will likely find too, that you accept invitations and offers from others who can't articulate their conditions prior to you beginning to take action – but they magically have them ready to assess your work when you deliver. In these cases you are left being judged based on a criteria you did not know before you began. Expectations and moods come into play and without a clear articulation of what terms and conditions were to be delivered, the outcome will almost certainly not (objectively) meet them. We do not recommend that you accept invitations, offers and requests of any significance where the criteria for performance and satisfaction metric is subjective (as in the expectations of those to whom you make commitments) but rather – MAKE THEM OBJECTIVE or do not accept them.

We are not saying that every detail must be clearly articulated, in fact in many case there are going to be unknowns or contingencies. But we are saying to be clear about what you accept and promise to accomplish. What you are promising to do should be known to you, and if you cannot articulate the pathway - take that into account when you accept and promise to act. Account for what you do not know in your 'agreement' to accept invitations, offers and requests – express (or even better write) your contingencies and account for the unknown in your willingness to accept or counter. There will be costs associated with accepting requests. Make these costs known to those who are making requests of you. What you will find is that in your efforts to be clear with others – they will often revoke or rethink their

invitations, offers and requests. Do not assume that others are doing any accurate thinking – it is likely they are not.

A “good idea” from upper management or an important customer, that is passed down with no articulation of the plan for its accomplishment, is a dangerous and costly invitation or request that if accepted produces commitments you may not be able to keep. When commitments or promises are made without the clear articulation of a ‘plan for fulfillment’ the commitment itself will likely not be fully realized and almost certainly won’t be satisfactory. In most cases, “good ideas from on high” are well intended but often flawed. These are almost always un-invented transactions. This kind of interaction is common in most companies and organizations because people do not apply transactional distinctions to their internal operations and decision-making. They do not recognize transactions internally – this is a mistake made too often by upper management. You must learn how to ‘transact’ away from high-cost, un-invented transactions. If you cannot articulate the transactional Moves and Phases, it is best not to accept it.

Agreeing to produce any Work without a clear understanding of the actions you will need to take and the terms for its production causes breakdowns. If you can’t articulate the most fundamental actions and the time, resources and energy required to accomplish it, you almost certainly will be encroaching into the time, resources and energy you intended for other Conditions of Life. You will then find yourself overwhelmed and resentful.

You are always transacting – whether you are always transacting effectively or not is the broader question. Are you agreeing (Contracting) to take an action for which you have no plan or metric of satisfaction? What is the metric for the other party to be satisfied if you take the action? Do you know the benefits or consequences of the action you are about to accept? Do you know if you have the time, capacity and energy to produce it?

Additionally, as you make requests of others and clearly articulate what actions you are willing or are going to take if they do or do not take the action required to produce the results you intend (your side of a Contract) – you will be surprised at how very objective they will get before they promise to accept. It is not enough to simply tell others what to do and how to do it – you must be willing to tell them what will happen if they do not comply, this not only brings the transaction into a clear and objective view – it produces highly effective action.

People fall into states of overwhelm when they cannot articulate the pathway to achieve an intended action, objective or need. Since we know we cannot act a thing we cannot first articulate, then it is necessary to articulate the action required first, and the result that will satisfy.

When we recognize that another person cannot coherently integrate the actions we need them to take into a simple set of singular actions, it is incumbent upon us to produce them. That means we must be prepared to articulate the action and then produce the appropriate moods, attitudes (agitation or excitement) needed to ensure that the simple transaction is clearly articulated and understood. This includes what conditions of satisfaction are required and the consequences if the objective is or is not met.

Most people do not hold the kind of psychological strength required to produce this kind of action recurrently. It takes practice, and lots of it. It requires an understanding of mood and willpower. Where we recognize that most people do not hold these skills or strengths initially, we also are eager to point out that once they begin to make these moves, once they see the power of holding to the mechanics and practices that produce effective action, it doesn’t take long to see them work, and these people begin to move quickly to put them to good use. When students of this work muster the courage to produce the appropriate actions required to hold themselves and others to these most fundamental mechanics, they notice sudden and impactful results. They report almost immediate increases in invitations, offers and requests from higher ecologies, and in time, they recognize that the Work they are doing is no longer an overwhelming experience of burden or labor, but rather a satisfying Condition of Life.

Whether the actions we take, and compel others to take, is satisfactory depends on many factors, and these factors change over time. We live in a dynamic and ever-changing world and the actions we are taking today may or may not be satisfactory in helping us reach our Chief Aims in Life tomorrow. It is for this reason that we must be present to and account for the measures of our satisfaction at every turn.

The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them. - Albert Einstein

CHECKLISTS AND SPECIALIZATION

The more specialized, complex and recurrent your transactions become, the more you will need to organize your actions around the use of 'checklists'.

A **checklist** is a type of informational job aid used to reduce omissions and failure by compensating for potential limits of human memory and attention. It helps to ensure consistency and completeness in carrying out a task.

In its most general form, a checklist is nothing more than a list of actions to (or not to) take in order to produce some intention.

As you learned from your reading in the Summary of The Checklist Manifesto, most highly technical and professional occupational procedures are organized around some form of detailed checklist. Pilots, surgeons, and other professionals rely on them to ensure that the proper action required to perform their demanding operations are done so with precision and accuracy.

Most of the line items you will find on professional checklists are single actions or simple transactions that must be performed in a set routine or sequence. They are organized (when applicable) in a linear fashion and designed to support taking the action sequentially. They are built to make it difficult (if not impossible) to take any action out of sequence. As you learn to use checklists, you must seek to list and articulate only 'single actions' and/or simple transactions as items on your lists.

You may find that this is more difficult than you think. You can see in personal 'to do lists' where people fail to use checklists effectively. If you write on your 'to do list' an item called – "Go to the grocery store" and you do not write "put grocery shopping list in your pocket" as an item to do before you go to the grocery store you may find yourself at the store, without your list.

Practice with the structure and organization of making checklists. You will need to be proficient in the use of checklists to develop the kind of ethics and practices required to coordinate the action needed to complete highly complex transactions.

PROGRAM MEASURES

If you have any question or concern regarding any aspect of the program measures please contact us during this Study to ensure their accuracy.

Concentrate. Breathe. Make invitations, offers and requests. Transact Powerfully.