

CULTIVATING YOUR ZONE OF GENIUS

When we operate in our *Zone of Genius*¹ we experience ourselves at our best. We perform in a way that our skills and interests, and the challenge at hand, match up almost magically. We find ourselves completely absorbed in the current experience and time melts away. Our understanding and recognition of activities that bring us into this operating zone leads to greater performance and deeper fulfillment.

Activities we perform outside of our Zone of Genius fall into one of three other operating zones: Excellence, Competence and Incompetence. The table below breaks performance into the four zones and identifies the strategy to employ as it relates to each.

Operating Zones

Strategy

Genius	What you most love to do. Activities in this zone are those you are uniquely suited to do, feel effortless and you lose track of time while engaged in them.	Actively seek out
Excellence	Things you do extremely well. You are quite good at activities in this zone yet performing them doesn't make your heart sing. Here you are comfortable.	Maintain and seek to limit
Competence	You are competent at the activities in this zone, yet others can do them just as well, if not better and faster.	Minimize
Incompetence	Activities you're not good at. Others can do them better, more effectively and efficiently than you can.	Avoid

Adapted from Hendricks PhD, Gay. The Big Leap: Conquer Your Hidden Fear and Take Life to the Next Level. Further inspired by Conscious.is

Without thinking too much, jot down the activities you engage in that are in your four Operating Zones. Once you've completed an initial pass, use the questions on Page 3 to do a deeper dive on your Zone of Genius.

OPERATING ZONE	ACTIVITIES
Zone of Genius	<i>What work do you so love doing that it doesn't seem like work? Which aspects of your work generate the highest ratio of positive results compared to time spent?</i>
Zone of Excellence	<i>What do you consistently get positive feedback about in your work and life? What do you do better than just about anyone else?</i>
Zone of Competence	<i>What work do you do that others can do just as well or better? What work do you do well but doesn't feel totally satisfying?</i>
Zone of Incompetence	<i>What do you consistently get negative feedback about in your work? What work do you do that just about everyone can do better?</i>

FURTHER READING

If going deeper is your jam, here are some resources to explore:

The Big Leap: Conquer Your Hidden Fear and Take Life to the Next Level by Gay Hendricks, PhD, 2009.

The 15 Commitments of Conscious Leadership by Jim Dethmer, Diana Chapman, + Kaley Warner Klemm, 2015.

Finding Flow: The Psychology of Engagement with Everyday Life by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, 1997.

Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, 1990.

The Joy of Genius: The Next Step Beyond The Big Leap by Gay Hendricks, PhD, 2018.