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An Excerpt from The Flip Side: When Motivation Meets Science May 17, 2007 By Flip Flippen

Years ago my company began a long and rigorous development process to identify personal constraints. We gathered and compared behavioral and attitudinal data from top performers in a variety of fields, including corporate executives, schoolteachers, professional athletes, stay-at-home moms, administrative assistants, construction workers, midlevel managers, salespeople, doctors and ranch managers.

I wanted to know which traits they consistently had in common, but I also wanted to know what makes these people different from others who seem to perpetually struggle. So I took this a step further, gathering data on low performers as well.

As we analyzed the information, we were struck by the findings. Even across occupations, the top achievers had consistent patterns in common that distinguished them from low achievers. Combining this information with my decades of case studies and counseling notes, we devised a truly unique and statistically valid process.

I well remember the first time we compared data for high performers against data for low performers. The statistical differences confirmed all our projections and validated our process of measuring and quantifying behavioral attributes that were associated with both success and the lack of it.

Through all of this we have found ten critical constraints that—either alone or in combinations with other constraints—repeatedly did the most damage to personal growth, relationships and careers.



We have named them the Top 10 Killer Constraints and will highlight them with stories and illustrations so you can recognize these behaviors in yourself and others. This process is designed to give you an effective "diagnosis and prescription"—complete with steps to begin the process of breaking each constraint.

As you read the chapters and complete the corresponding assessments, remember that each assessment is just part of the identification process. You may find that you have many symptoms from one constraint, a few from several constraints, or several symptoms from a few. You may even find that you have only two or three symptoms from one personal constraint, but if these symptoms are found frequently at the "scene of the crime" in work and relationship troubles, then each one needs to be treated seriously if you truly desire to move forward in life. To be clear, there are a few people who may not have a dangerous level of any of the constraints, but shades of certain constraints can surface, especially during times of stress. Additionally there is a section at the end of each personal-constraint chapter to help you deal effectively with that constraint when you encounter it in those around you. We all influence and impact each other for better or worse, and understanding why we do what we do is a great start to helping others turn their lives around.

To give you a snapshot of the nature of these constraints, we have personified each of them for you:

- Bulletproof (Overconfident)
- Ostriches (Low Self-Confidence)
- Marshmallows (Overly Nurturing)
- Critics (Too Demanding, Nitpicky, or Harsh)
- Icebergs (Low Nurturing)
- Flatliners (Low Passion, Vision, or Drive)
- Bulldozers (Overly Dominant)
- Turtles (Resistant to Change)
- Volcanoes (Aggressive, Angry)
- Quick Draw (Low Self-Control, Impulsive)

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