

Towards organisational and individual well being

"Flow ... a state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it."

During flow experiences, work is pleasure and is rewarding in itself. "Joy, creativity and the process of total involvement in life"

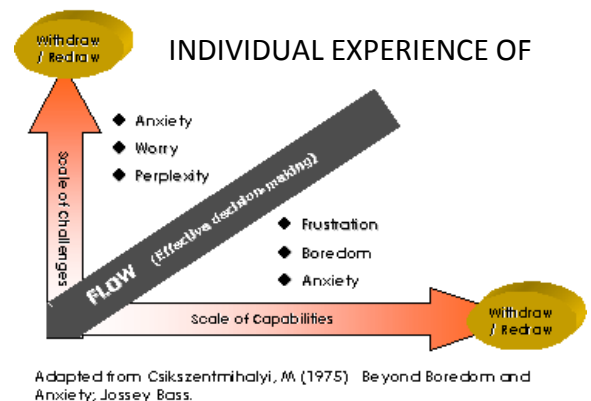
Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

INTRODUCTION

To achieve optimal experience (FLOW), a balance is required between the challenges perceived in a given situation and the skills a person brings to that situation. A challenge includes "any opportunity for action that humans are able to respond to" (Csikszentmihalyi 1988).

WHAT IS FLOW

FLOW – individuals thrive when the challenges of the world in which we work, learn and live draw fully on the perspective we bring to it. We flourish when the challenges are diverse enough for our curiosity and complex enough for the connections we want to make, the potentials we want to imagine. People all over the world describe the feeling of that balance as being 'in flow' – energized, confident, competent, going with the grain, exhilaration as they cope successfully with new challenges. Things just seem to happen right of their own accord. Our intuition is just there for us and if there are choices to make, we make them almost without being aware.



If the challenges are insufficient for the perspective we bring, we feel frustrated, switched off, and eventually anxious, hesitant and low on confidence. We lose touch with our intuition and if there are choices to be made, they seem obvious and self evident, they require no judgment and are felt to be tedious and demoralizing and no fun.

If the challenges are overwhelming, at first we feel perplexed and have to coax our intuition. If overwhelm increases, worry takes over, we lose our feel for significant differences and so are forced to gamble rather than make coherent choices. We long for the comfort of our intuition and yet we fear it.

People seek 'flow' for its own sake because it is a reward in itself giving energy and confidence. Flow is not a luxury but a staple of life; its function seems to be to induce us to grow in that as our perspective grows, we seek 'flow' as often as possible and will achieve it only by facing growing challenges. It often feels as if our growing perspective has a life of its own as it seeks wider horizons.

OUTCOMES OF THE FLOW WORKSHOP

Lecture-based learning, group discussion and debate as well as group and individual exercises result in:

- ❖ Learning about the Flow and the way in which it influences our decisions, and the way in which we deal with challenges in our personal and working lives.
- ❖ Identifying the implications of Flow on leadership (and specific to your organisation).
- ❖ Determining methods of dealing with a possible lack of FLOW (misuse / abuse) it at a personal, team and organisational level.