



## Changing Existence into Flow, by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

"[Flow means] being completely involved in an activity for its own sake. The ego falls away. Time flies. Every action, movement, and thought follows inevitably from the previous one, like playing jazz. Your whole being is involved, and you're using your skills to the utmost." "Contrary to expectation, "flow" usually happens not during relaxing moments of leisure and entertainment, but rather when we are actively involved in a difficult enterprise, in a task that stretches our mental and physical abilities. Any activity can do it. Working on a challenging job, riding the crest of a tremendous wave, and teaching one's child the letters of the alphabet are the kinds of experiences that focus our whole being in a harmonious rush of energy, and lift us out of the anxieties and boredom that characterize so much of everyday life." "The well-matched use of skills provides a sense of control over our actions, yet because we are too busy to think of ourselves, it does not matter whether we are in control or not, whether we are winning or losing. Often we feel a sense of transcendence, as if the boundaries of the self had been expanded. The sailor feels at one with the wind, the boat, and the sea; the singer feels a mysterious sense of universal harmony. In those moments the awareness of time disappears, and hours seem to flash by without our noticing." "But to change all existence into a flow experience, it is not sufficient to learn merely how to control moment-by-moment states of consciousness.

It is also necessary to have an overall context of goals for the events of everyday life to make sense. If a person moves from one flow activity to another without a connecting order, it will be difficult at the end of one's life to look back on the years past and find meaning in what has happened. To create harmony in whatever one does

is the last task that the flow theory presents to those who wish to attain optimal experience; it is a task that involves transforming the entirety of life into a single flow activity, with unified goals that provide constant purpose." --Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi