

Finding Our Flow

Understanding what we mean by flow, how it is beneficial and how to find flow within our life



What is flow?

In our lives we can talk about 'going with the flow'. Whilst it is a turn of phrase, what do we mean by flow? When you read about flow, there seems to be different layers to it:

Some commentators talk about our experience of being in flow: of feeling happy, in control and consumed (Babuta, 2022). Others extend this and explore the relationship with our environment, sharing how we can lose ourselves, lose track of time and where the world around us quietsens (Houston, 2021).

Building on this, some emphasise how this flow state can impact our performance with things clicking into place, where we can solve problems and access creativity.

"It is an optimal state of mind in which we feel and perform to our best."

Cutruzzola, 2020

Others bring a deeper, perhaps more spiritual, perspective, by describing it as a state when our true essence (sometimes called soul) connects to a higher power.



"Flow involves being intimately aware of who we are at our core and what the universe is asking of us."

Janisch, 2019

Personally, I believe flow is an energetic state. I understand and experience life as energy flows. So, when we are in flow, we connect into our whole body and are connected into the flow of life. Rather than passive, it is something that is active and free-flowing.

Why is it relevant to understand?

A flow state is available for all of us, rather than a select few. Also, rather than it be an ephemeral state, that we may hit upon by accident, it is something that we can choose and actively cultivate.

"We can learn to connect into our flow."

Brown, 2022

Being in flow state can enrich our lives, and the lives of others around us. There are many benefits, with: a happier, less stressful life, and better well-being enabling us to age well



(Ryff, Singer and Dienberg Love, 2004)

Also, flow can enable us to connect into our innate capabilities and talents, and express our true essence in all areas of life. Whilst we often hear how flow state can be channelled in particular areas, for example music, art and sport, flow can benefit all areas of our lives, including work and relationships.

What does it feel like to be in flow?

Whilst we are likely to have our own experiences, it may be helpful here to draw upon the psychologist, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's insights. Often recognised as the founder and architect of flow, in his formative Ted Talk Mihaly outlines the experiences of flow.

"All the concentration goes on to the activity, with no attention left for our identity or our sense of body."

Csikszentmihalyi, 2004

As we become completely involved in what we are doing, we lose our sense of self. What can manifest is a state of

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serenity, with no worries about
ourselves.

"We can grow beyond the
boundaries of our ego."

Csikszentmihalyi, 2004

We have a sense of knowing, or
believing, that we have the
capabilities to attend to our life.
Also, we manifest a greater
sense of clarity, where our seeing
deepens. Flow itself can be
intrinsically motivating for us.

How do we get into our flow?

Everyone gets into flow in
different ways (Cutruzzola, 2020),
and so it may take time to
experiment and to find our own
way. Here are some pointers that
may help:

Focus on activities that we love –
notice what give us energy and
is connected to our aspirations
and dreams

Focus on activities that matter –
our time is precious and so it is
important to channel our efforts
into those things that are
important to us

Remove any distractions –
creating a beautiful space and
environment in which to be.
Clear away clutter or noise that
can drain us

**Draw upon our circadian
rhythms** – be aware of our
natural rhythm through the day
and tap into our best times when
our energy is highest

Create rituals – particular habits
or cues may help to connect
into our flow. This may involve
listening to certain music, or
having a certain routine or

activity, for example going for a
run. Being hydrated helps too

If you are finding it difficult to
stay in flow, it is recommended
to follow the Pomodoro
Technique. This involves focusing
on your activity for 25 minutes
(by setting a timer) and then
having a break for five minutes.
This can be repeated until you
are able to stay in flow (Houston,
2021).

How can we live more in flow?

It is possible to have practices in
our lives that help us to connect
into our flow more easily when
we wish to. It may be that in time
we can live more of our life in
flow beyond particular
occasions when we choose it.
Here are some thoughts on how
we can find our own way into
flow:

Personal integration

In today's world, it is quite
common to live out of our
heads, and to disconnect
energetically from our bodies. It
is important to build awareness
of this and to take steps to
connect our head, heart and
gut (our three brains)
(Goodnet.org, 2020).

Different activities support our
energetic integration. These can
help us to slow down, integrate
and to connect more with
ourselves. Here are some
examples of activities: swimming,
tai-chi, breathing exercises,
meditation, running, cooking,
baking (Houston, 2021)

"Smile, breathe and go
slowly."

Thich Nhat Hanh

Increasing our vibrational rate

When we are in flow, our
vibrational rate is higher. We can
increase our vibrational rate in
many ways, including through
experiencing energetic
therapies, for example: reiki,
reflexology, as well as managing
our thoughts to be positive

Letting go

There may be things in our life
that are pulling us down,
whether these be thoughts,
routines, possessions,
connections. Take time to do an
energetic spring clean. Notice
when your heart sinks or sings

Top tip



If you'd like to explore in
more depth the topics that
this article has raised, then I
would totally recommend
reading and watching,
respectively:

The Secret by Rhonda Byrne
ISBN: 1847370292

Flow, the Secret to
Happiness by Mihaly
Csikszentmihalyi TED2004



About the writer

Cathy Brown
MBA, PhD

Cathy Brown is a Chartered
Occupational Psychologist, consultant
and writer. She runs Evolve Consulting
Services Limited which works with
individuals, teams and businesses to
manage transition and change.

She works as a transition coach and a
career counsellor with individuals and
teams. She is also a guest lecturer at
Henley Business School and University of
Derby. In addition, Cathy is a founding
trustee of the Evolve Transition Trust,
which supports disadvantaged people
through life transitions.