

Efficient focus, flow experience Stress

PV236 – TIME MANAGEMENT & EFFECTIVENESS

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The Flow experience

- Theoretical concept introduced by Hungarian psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi
- A state of high productivity and effortless motivation
- No external reward is necessarily present
- Positively correlates with motivation level
 - Enjoyable activity together with concentration may lead to flow experience more often

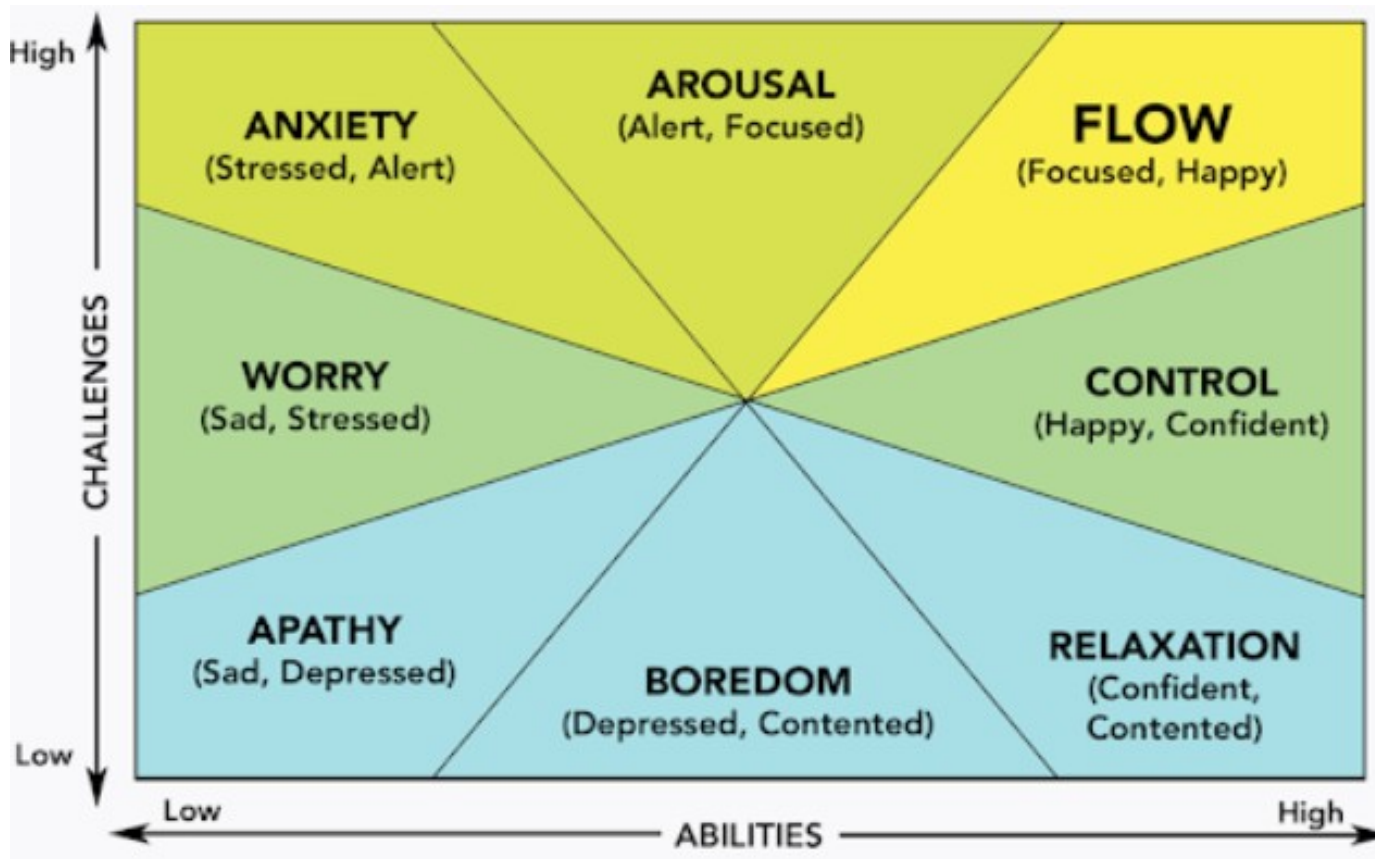
How the Flow looks like?

1. Action-awareness merging
 - Involvement in action is automatic and natural
 - You become what you do
2. Full concentration
 - Immersion, full engagement in the activity
 - Ability to divert distractions
3. Sense of control
 - Rather than consciously trying to remain “in control”, flow experience is about feeling of control without willpower involvement
4. Loss of Ego
 - Normally, we monitor and regulate our behavior to be acceptable by others
 - In the flow, people are involved in the activity to such extent that self-monitoring is suppressed
5. Time distortion
 - Subjective feeling of loosing track of time
 - Time can be slowed, accelerated or may become irrelevant

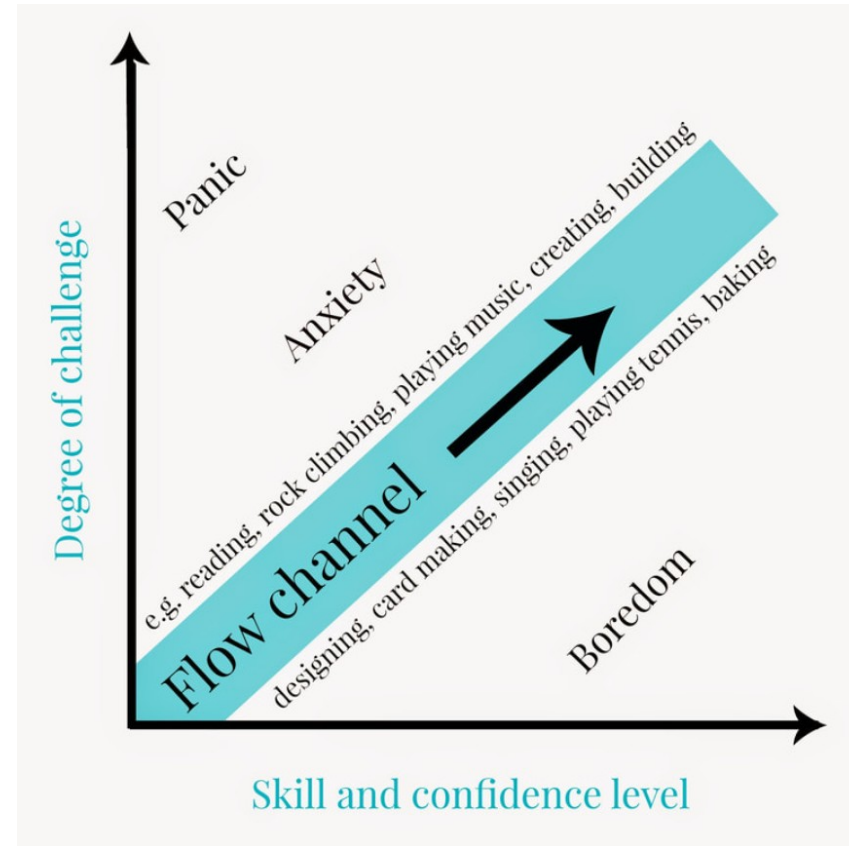
How to enter the Flow?

- Do you experience flow?
- In what situations? Can you repeat it?

The Flow model



The Flow channel



The Flow preconditions by Csikszentmihalyi

1. Challenge-skill balance
 - Task is not too hard, nor too easy
 - “Zone of proximal development”
2. Well-defined task, consistent feedback
 - Both the goal and the path leading to it are clear

Exercises/Tips:

- Evaluate your skill level and set appropriate, clearly-defined goals (write them down)
- Adjust your daily routine & environment
- Create own mission statement – what do you want to achieve?
- Focus on internal validation of success instead of external

Stress

Society vs. mind

- Acceleration of life pace (Paul Virilio – Dromology)
- Fast progress in technology & science
 - Boomer: *“When I was a little kid, I was curious, I was playing with all kind of technical appliance, a radio for example. Today’s kids don’t do that anymore. How will they become radio-engineers...?”*
 - Yes, but radios 40 years ago were much simpler than anything nowadays’ kids can play with 😊
 - Knowledge grows linearly, but potential combinations grow exponentially → increased specialization of scientist
- Increased communication (media/social media, advertising...)
- Globalization

Society vs. mind

Our brain is a result of exponential growth, too:

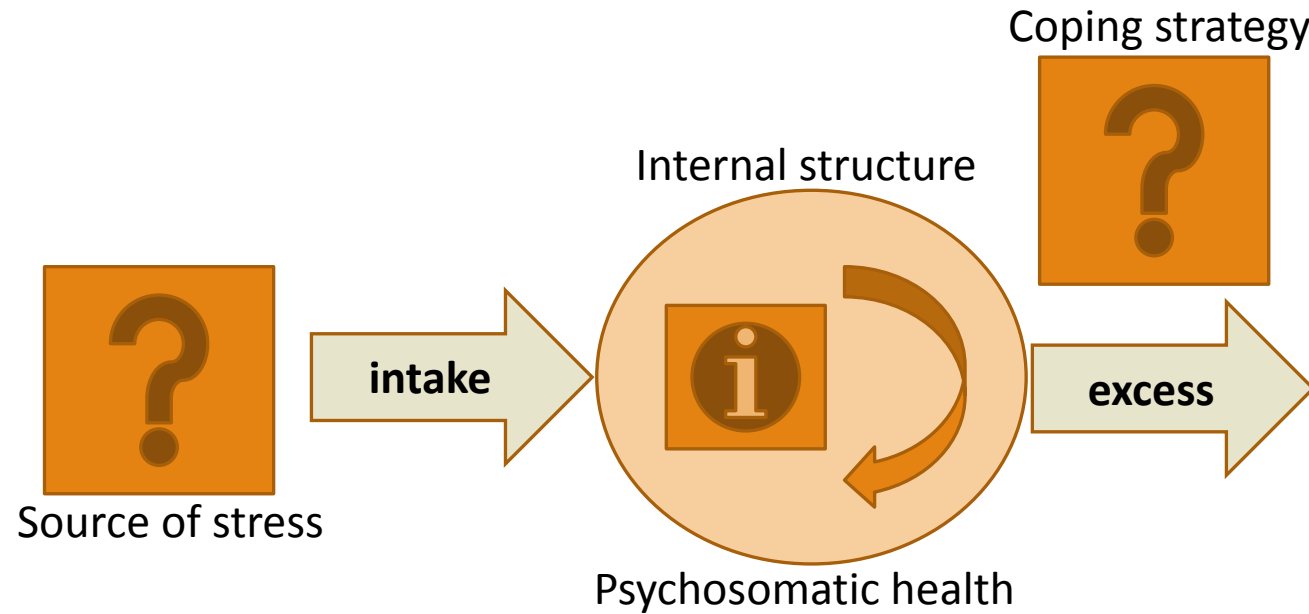
- 550 M years of brain evolution
 - 60 M years of primate brain evolution
 - 200-400 K years of Homo sapiens brain evolution
 - 50 K years of cultural development
 - 10K years since agricultural revolution
 - 150 years since industrial revolution
 - 50 years since computer revolution
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- We live in modern society, but our brain is mostly the same as it was thousands of years ago

What is stress?

Living organisms:

- Intake information from their environment
- Process, accumulate and transform information into internal structure (i.e., they learn → **evolution**)
 - Information initiate reaction (fight vs flight)
- Get rid of excess information
- Excess information that cannot be “dissipated” (relaxed) causes damage (stress)
- Hans Selye
 - Nobel Prize laureate in medicine
 - author of stress response (alarm – resistance – exhaustion)
 - Origin of “civilization” and psychosomatic diseases

The Stress model - discussion



Healthy techniques of managing stress

- increasing awareness about what happens to me
- direct efficient solution
- looking for alternative solutions
- avoiding stressful situation
- seeking emotional & social support
- maintaining narcissistic equilibrium (discussed already)

How not to manage stress?

How not to manage stress?

- denying reality
- not seeking help
- refusing offered help
- self-destructive behavior (substance abuse, promiscuity...)
- social isolation

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