

## What is Creative Flow and Do You Have It?

Would you give 10 years of your life if it meant true happiness for every moment after that? Dr. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi believes that for the 70% of Americans that don't instinctively, know how to live a "very happy" life, it can take up to 10 years to learn.

Behavioral psychologists in Claremont, CA have finally begun to unravel the human ability to enjoy everyday life. Its called Positive Psychology, or the psychology of optimal experience, and it's measured by Flow. Dr. Csikszentmihalyi's book "Finding Flow", describes it as "the sense of effortless action [people] feel in moments that stand out as the best in their lives." His research shows that most people experience some level of creative flow while playing games or sports. Only a limited few have the natural ability to sustain Flow over a lifetime. However, Dr. Csikszentmihalyi believes its possible to learn, "It is not easy to transform ordinary experience into flow, but almost everyone can improve his or her ability to do so."

### Sidebar 1

#### The 7 Components of Creative Flow

1. Ecstasy - feeling outside of everyday reality
  2. Serenity - beyond your worries and your ego
  3. Inner Clarity - knowing what needs to be done and how to do it correctly
  4. Timelessness - hours pass by in what seems like minutes
  5. Intrinsic Motivation - working becomes it's own reward
  6. Intense Focus - complete involvement in the creative task
  7. Adequate Skills - experience and training related to the task
- (interpreted from TEDtalks [http://www.ted.com/index.php/talks/mihaly\\_csikszentmihalyi\\_on\\_flow.html](http://www.ted.com/index.php/talks/mihaly_csikszentmihalyi_on_flow.html))

### Sidebar 2

Human consciousness can process 7 bits of information in 1/18 of a second, 126 bits of information per second, 7650 bits per minute, or 185 billion bits of information over a 70 year lifetime.  
(Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. Flow. Harper Perrenial, 1991. pp 29.)