

Health Coaching Hints



How to identify flow-inducing activities in your life.

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HEALTH

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Health Coaching Hint #1: Why you should create times for flow in your life

The concept of Flow was first discovered and by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in the 1960s as “A state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter.”

Most often experienced by artists or athletes, the state of flow can also be present in activities at work or in school. Often, this state is referred to as “being in the zone.”

Why is Flow important? Including regular moments for flow in your life can result in increased creativity and productivity by experiencing feelings of pride, success, and accomplishment. Flow has also been shown to help regulate emotions by reducing anxieties about oneself and the world.

Health Coaching Hint #2: How To Identify Flow-inducing Activities In Your Life

In this non-stop world we live in, it can be difficult to find time to slow down and create time for flow.

A good place to start is to notice which activities you already do that you can completely immerse yourselves into, that you never tire of when doing, and often result in losing track of time.

What is necessary for an activity to result in a state of flow? According to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, these are the eight characteristics of the process:

- > Complete concentration on the task;
- > Clarity of goals and reward in mind and immediate feedback;
- > Transformation of time (speeding up/slowing down);
- > The experience is intrinsically rewarding;
- > Effortlessness and ease;
- > There is a balance between challenge and skills;
- > Actions and awareness are merged, losing self-conscious rumination;
- > There is a feeling of control over the task.

What activities come to mind that you already do that have these characteristics?

Health Coaching Hint #3: How To Create Moments For Flow In Your Life

Regularly experiencing states of flow have been linked to an increased overall state of happiness or eudaimonia.

What can you do to increase your chances of reaching a flow state?

Here are a couple suggestions:

- > Recognize the value of regularly experiencing flow. When it becomes an important part of your life, you are more likely to make time for it.
- > Schedule it into your week to ensure you honor this valued activity. Start small. Even ten minutes can have an influence on your general happiness.
- > Reduce distractions by silencing your phone and any other potential interruptions.
- > Choose an activity that will challenge you but is not beyond your skill set. This will keep you from getting bored or overwhelmed.

> Make sure the motivation for your chosen activity is intrinsic (because you love it and want to do it) not extrinsic (because someone else wants you to do it).

Ultimately, you want an activity that excites and interests you while not creating extra stress or anxiety.

Have you found your flow yet? Which activities most excite you?

Health Coaching Hint #4: How To Flow With Friends

Flow does not have to be a solo activity. For some it can be difficult or less enjoyable to achieve flow by themselves.

For these people, working co-actively with others or interactively as a team can increase the chances for regularly experiencing flow.

Here are some suggestions for team-based ways to create flow:

- > Co-working: either in person or virtually
- > Group activities: running, hiking, biking, etc.
- > Shared hobbies: art, music, scrapbooking. etc.
- > Team-based sports

The key is to connect with people who enjoy a similar hobby or interest and make them a regular part of your life.

Do you prefer solitary flow, co-active flow, or interactive flow activities?

