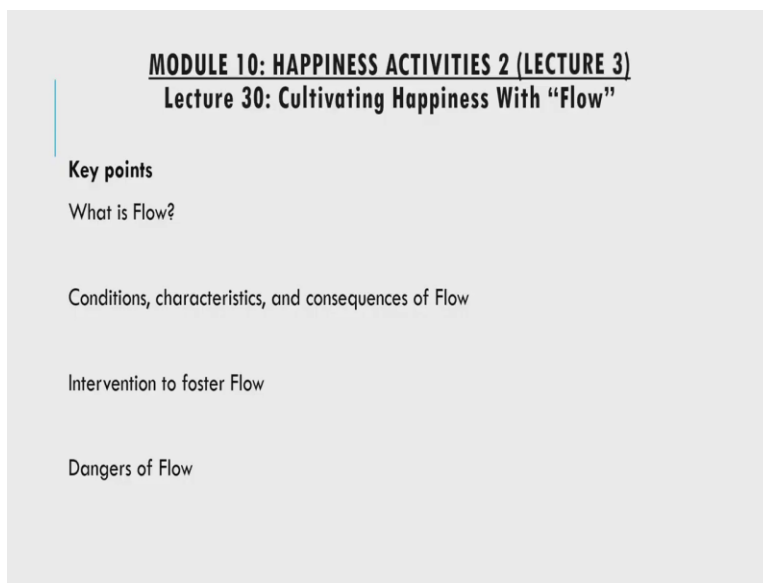


Psychology of Stress, Health, and Well-Being
Professor Doctor Dilwar Hussain
Department of Social Science
Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati
Lecture 30
Cultivating Happiness with “Flow”

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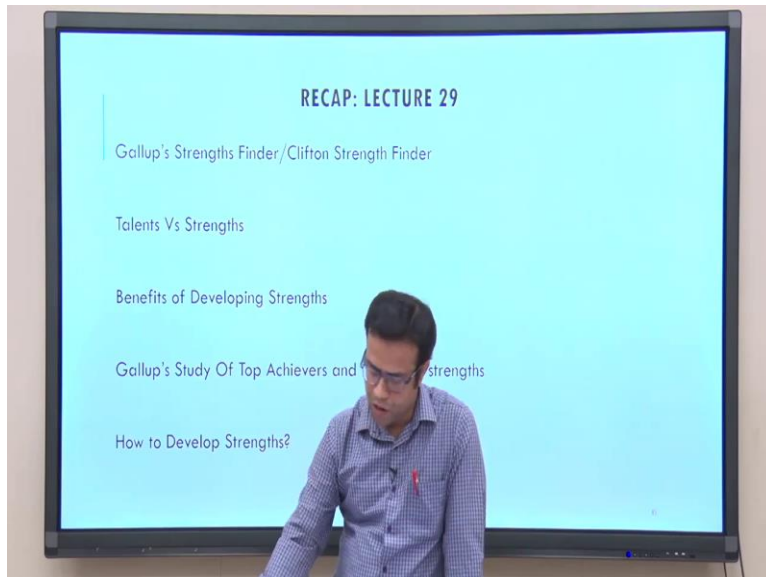
MODULE 10: HAPPINESS ACTIVITIES 2 (LECTURE 3)
Lecture 30: Cultivating Happiness With “Flow”

Key points

- What is Flow?
- Conditions, characteristics, and consequences of Flow
- Intervention to foster Flow
- Dangers of Flow

Hello friends I welcome you to the lecture number 30 of the course title psychology of stress, health and wellbeing. So today we will talk about lecture number 3 of the module 10 and overall it is lecture number 30. So, today we will talk about the last happiness activity that is cultivating happiness with flow. So let me before we start today's lecture let me briefly give you a recap of the last lecture.

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So, in the last lesson, lecture number 29, we spoke about using psychological strengths to improve happiness or well-being. So we had two lectures on psychological strengths. In the first lecture, we spoke about Peterson and Seligman's VIA classification of psychological strength, where we talked explicitly about character strengths, strengths that are desirable and have a certain moral desirability.

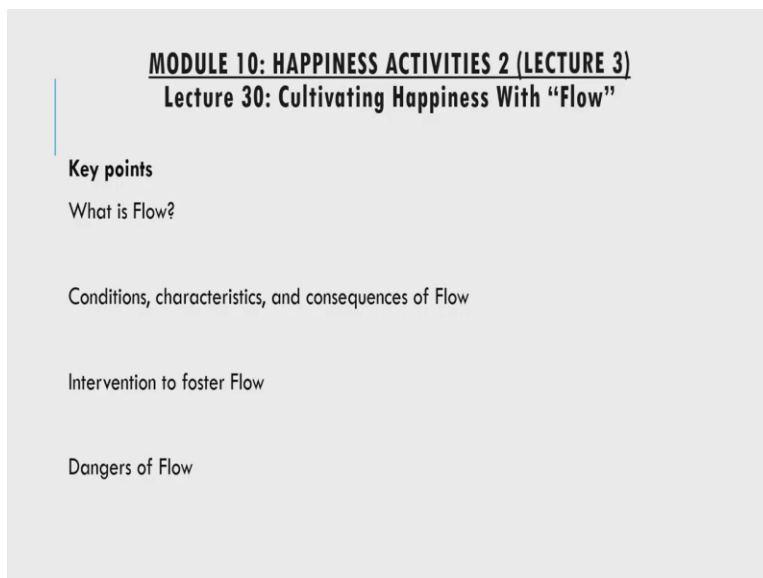
And in the last lecture, we discussed and attempted to comprehend strength from the perspective of the Gallup strength finder, in which two Gallup researchers identified 34 psychological strengths that are relevant in the workplace. So Clifton and Anderson, two Gallup researchers, set out to figure out what makes people excel in their fields or reach high levels of success.

What are their most crucial strengths? As a result, the goal of this particular mission was to interview a large number of high achievers. They came up with a list of psychological strengths that are useful in the workplace. As a result, they stated that talent is the foundation of strength in this particular approach. As a result, talents are raw abilities that we all possess. And when these raw qualities or talents are polished or developed with knowledge and skill, they become our strengths. So that's the concept of strength they're working with here. They also stated that gaining strength from their talent is very essential and has numerous benefits, like increasing your life achievement, giving you a sense of contentment and satisfaction, improving the quality of your life, and increasing your confidence and optimism.

When Gallup undertook a research on top achievers, they basically did a study on them. So, one of the most important results they made was that high performers recognize their gifts and polish them into strengths. Then they put their finest abilities to work in jobs and tasks that best suit their talents and strengths. As a result, they put their skills to use and seek out projects and roles that are best suited to their abilities. Furthermore, they are constantly inventing newer, unique methods to apply their abilities and talents. So these are some of the most important discoveries from their research. So they discovered roughly 34 talents, strengths, and abilities as a result of that study, and they classified all of these 34 strengths and skills into four categories. Strengths related to executing, or implementing a solution, strength related to persuasion, strength related to relationship development, and strengths related to strategic thinking are among them.

They had a total of 34 strengths. Finally, we explored numerous tactics or ideas for gaining and developing strength within ourselves. So, in the previous lecture, we covered all of these topics.

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MODULE 10: HAPPINESS ACTIVITIES 2 (LECTURE 3)
Lecture 30: Cultivating Happiness With "Flow"

Key points

- What is Flow?
- Conditions, characteristics, and consequences of Flow
- Intervention to foster Flow
- Dangers of Flow

Today, we'll discuss the concept of flow. In the field of psychology, the concept of flow is also intriguing. And, in particular, in the subject of positive psychology, which has a significant link to happiness, well-being, and performance. So we'll discuss the concept of flow, as well as the

conditions, qualities, and outcomes of flow. We'll discuss methods to promote flow, and then we'll discuss the hazards of flow. So, what exactly are these concepts?

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Have you ever experienced moments in your life when you were so involved and engrossed in what you were doing that-

- ✓ the rest of the world seemed to have disappeared.
- ✓ your mind wasn't wandering
- ✓ you were totally focused and concentrated on that activity, to such an extent that you were not even aware of yourself.
- ✓ time disappeared too (time passed faster).
- ✓ Only when you came out of the experience did you realize how much time had actually passed

So, before we discuss the meaning of flow, I'll give you a few questions to help you grasp some of the key concepts of this concept. Have you ever had moments in your life where you were completely immersed in what you were doing? So, have you ever had a situation in your life where you're engrossed in a task and the rest of the world seems to have vanished? So you're so engrossed and concentrated on that activity that the rest of the world seems to have vanished. Your mind wasn't wandering; it was entirely engaged on that task and wasn't straying. You are so engrossed in that activity that you are completely unaware of your surroundings. You're not even aware of how self-conscious you are. So you're completely absorbed in the task at hand. Time appears to vanish or to pass more quickly. You didn't realize how much time had passed until you were no longer in the event. So, if you've had firsthand experience with some of these crucial features when performing a work. You may have had what is known as a flow experience. These are the features of a flow state. So, if you've ever been in a situation when these attributes were there, I'm sure you've had at least a few occasions in your life where they were present. As a result, you are in a state of flow at that moment.

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Background

Flow states was first discovered by a psychologists named Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi who popularized the concept through his best seller "Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience"

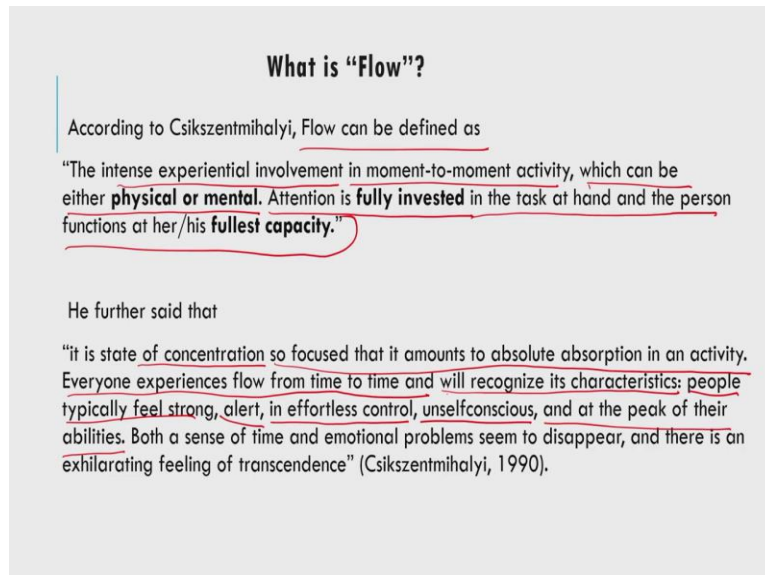
Csikszentmihalyi (1975) began his research on flow with the rather simple question of why people are often highly committed to activities without obvious external rewards. He found that such activities share a common aspect, which he labeled "flow state" or "flow experience".

He was fascinated with artists and their unwavering concentration and wanted to understand the subjective experience (how they feel?) when people are in such state.

So, let me offer you some background information on the flow research. Flow state was developed by a psychologist named Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. He made this concept prominent through one of his best-selling books, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. So Csikszentmihalyi began his flow studies with a simple inquiry in 1975. Why do people often devote themselves to things that have no clear external rewards? He may notice that some people are suddenly so absorbed in their activities, even when there are no external rewards, and so committed to their pursuits that they exhibit all of the characteristics I've mentioned. They appear to forget about everything else, and time appears to vanish. That is why people have such experiences and what they have while they are involved in such duties. He was curious about their subjective experience and wanted to learn more about it. As a result, he discovered that only such activities share a common characteristic, which he refers to as flow state or flow experience. He discovered that one of the common things he discovered in all of these activities or persons who are involved in such deep absorption tasks is the sense of flow, which he expounded on in his later studies. As a result, he was attracted by artists and their continuous focus, and he wanted to know more about it, as well as their subjective experiences while in such situations. When creative persons and artists are fully immersed in their responsibilities and creative work, they frequently experience this condition. They become so engrossed in their work that they lose track of time. And he could see this mood in a lot of people, especially creatives and artists, where there was an unshakeable concentration. And he wanted to know

what happens in such a state and under what circumstances such a state occurs. That was his core notion and goal, and it was this that guided his studies.

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What is "Flow"?

According to Csikszentmihalyi, Flow can be defined as

"The intense experiential involvement in moment-to-moment activity, which can be either **physical or mental**. Attention is **fully invested** in the task at hand and the person functions at her/his **fullest capacity**."

He further said that

"it is state of concentration so focused that it amounts to absolute absorption in an activity. Everyone experiences flow from time to time and will recognize its characteristics: people typically feel strong, alert, in effortless control, unselfconscious, and at the peak of their abilities. Both a sense of time and emotional problems seem to disappear, and there is an exhilarating feeling of transcendence" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

So, what exactly is flow? Flow, according to Csikszentmihalyi, is the deep experiential immersion in moment-to-moment activities. So, in a flow state, there is a high level of involvement from moment to moment. So you are totally present in the current moment, and you are focused on the task from moment to moment. Which can be either a physical or mental task. It could be a mental task, a mathematical problem, or something else entirely. The person's whole attention is focused on the task at hand, and he or she performs to the best of their abilities. People, in general, function at their best and maximum ability when they are in a condition of flow. As a result of the involvement and engagement steadfast concentration, the functional state is highly functional. Csikszentmihalyi went on to say that the state of flow is a state of concentration. Everyone experiences flow from time to time. It is such intense focus that it equates to complete absorption in the task. So flow is something that everyone experiences at some point in their lives. Some people experience it more, while others experience it less, but we have all likely experienced flow at some point in our lives. And we'll be able to spot these qualities.

So, when I asked this question, I'm guessing most of you could relate to those characteristics simply because you've had similar experiences. People usually feel strong, in control, unselfconscious, and at the pinnacle of their talents. So these are some of the things he's noticed while conducting research in the flow state. Both the feeling of time and the emotional difficulty appear to vanish. Because you are not focused on your own conventional concept of self, emotional problems appear to vanish, and you experience an exhilarating sense of transcendence. So you're so engrossed that you lose track of time. As a result, this could lead to a condition of self-transcendence. As a result, this is a broad conceptual definition of what flow entails. And I'm sure you can relate to these notions because we've all been in these situations at some point in our lives.

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Athletes refer to it as "being in the zone," religious mystics as being in "ecstasy," artists and musicians as "aesthetic rapture."

It is the full involvement of flow, rather than happiness, that makes for excellence in life. We can be happy experiencing the passive pleasure of a rested body, warm sunshine, or the contentment of a serene relationship, but this kind of happiness is dependent on favorable external circumstances. The happiness that follows flow is of our own making, and it leads to increasing complexity and growth in consciousness.

So you've probably heard some of the typical expressions connected with flow, such as sportsmen talking about being "in the zone." Most people say they were in the zone because they were so engrossed in the athletic action that their abilities flowed out of them almost spontaneously.

So they were in the zone, operating at maximum capacity, which religious or mystics refer to as an ecstatic state, while artists and musicians refer to as aesthetic rapture. So these are some of the

phrases that connote the concept of flow. As a result, one of the most crucial characteristics of a flow is that the person is totally engaged in the work. So, while involvement in the task may lead to happiness as a result, it is not just about happiness; it also leads to excellence in life. As a result, it improves your life performance and functioning. We can be content when we are enjoying the passive pleasures of a rested body in bright weather, or when we are content in a particular relationship. However, this type of contentment is contingent on positive external conditions. So, even when there are good external circumstances, happiness can be reached without being in a flow state. Happiness can be experienced without even focused involvement, but in the flow state, involvement is crucial. One of the prerequisites is the ability to concentrate on a single job. So it's not simply about happiness in that way. It's more about your current functional state and how you're performing in a task context. The happiness we create as a result of flow is our own creation, and it leads to increased complexity and consciousness expansion. Apart from enhancing your functioning levels, it also improves your mental experiences of happiness.

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There seems to be three common elements in all flow definitions and experiences
(Kasa & Hassan, 2013)-

- (1) Sense of deep involvement and concentration
- (2) feeling of ultimate enjoyment while doing the task
- (3) Intrinsic interest in the task i.e. doing the task for its own sake and not because of external pressure or demands.

So it appears that there are three similar elements in flow definitions from numerous definitions found in the literature. The sense of deep involvement and focus in the job is one of three things that are quite prevalent. Because you are so engrossed in the work, you can only be involved in a task that you enjoy performing. Otherwise, you won't be able to concentrate on the task.

As a result, there is a sense of enjoyment and participation in the work. There must be an intrinsic interest in the activity; if you are not engaged in the task, you will not be able to experience flow. Simply because you won't have the same level of commitment. We had a lot of fun doing jobs that were extremely interesting to us internally, or that we were passionately inspired to do. So, essentially, completing the activity for its own sake rather than due to external pressures or obligations. So, in most cases, when you're doing those kinds of things, you're intrinsically interested in them. There's a lot more to it than that; there's an interest in joy.

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Conditions For Flow To Happen

The state of flow happens under very specific conditions –
when we encounter a challenging task that tests our skills, that is, a task which is high on challenge and the skills levels, stretching us almost to the limit.

We may experience anxiety if challenges exceed skills, and experience bored if skills exceed challenges, Neither of these two cases can results in flow.

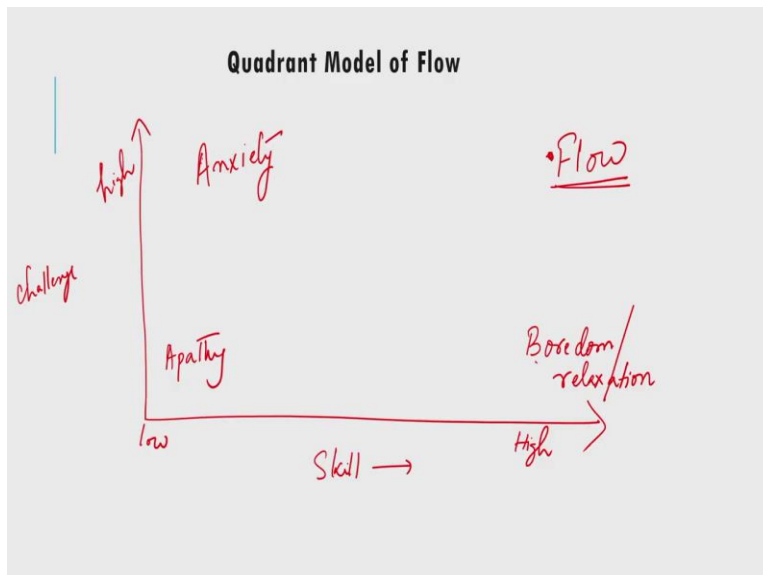
As a result of Csikszentmihalyi's research, he discovered that there is a certain condition under which flow occurs. As a result, when people experience flow, it is not a random event that occurs as a result of random actions. So there are precise conditions, and if those conditions are met, flow occurs. As a result, he discovered that the state of flow only occurs under very precise

circumstances. The state of flow generally happens when we are confronted with a challenging task that puts our skills to test. So, it occurs in the condition of high challenge and high skills.

So, whenever we confront a difficult activity, when we refer to it as demanding, we're referring to the fact that it will stretch your skills. It will not be simple for you; it will neither be simple nor difficult to the point where you will be unable to do it. So there's a sense of challenge here; it won't be easy, but you'll have to stretch your abilities to finish it. That is the definition of the term "challenge." So, when we are dealing with a challenging task that puts our skills to the test. As a result, you'll need to expand your skills in order to finish that task. That is a task with a high degree of challenge and skill. Only in that condition can you stretch practically to your limit and have flow experiences.

If the challenge exceeds our skills, we will feel anxious. So, if our skill level is low and the task is difficult, we will feel anxious since we will be unable to complete it. I'm unable to do that assignment since I lack the necessary expertise. That's because it's extremely difficult, and I lack that ability. As a result, most people will feel anxious in such a situation. And they may become bored if their skill exceeds the challenge. If their talent is high but the challenge is low, they will become bored while performing those jobs. Because it is too simple for them. As a result, neither of these two scenarios results in flow. Flow occurs only when there is a high-challenge, high-skill situation.

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So there's a quadrant flow model that was proposed, and I'll just sketch that. So you can comprehend the conditions in which flow can occur. As a result, this flow quadrant model is depicted in this manner. So, if you draw it as a graph, skill will be on one axis, and skill will range from low to high. And this is when the challenge dimension comes in. What is the task's difficulty level? What is the difficulty level? As a result, the difficulty level could be low or high. So, depending on how these four conditions interact, there could be certain outcomes, such as high and low challenge, high and low skill, and so on. So, when you're in this situation, there's a low skill level and a low challenge level, there will be no involvement and we will feel something called apathy. As a result, the person will have no sense of involvement, which is referred to as apathy. Whenever there is a high level of skill but a low level of challenge. So, while the person has a high level of skill, the task is not particularly difficult. As a result, it is simpler for that person, who may experience boredom or relaxation. Because he has a great level of skill, but the assignment is simple for him. When both the skill and challenge requirements are high, this is the spot where flow happens. This is a situation in which there is a high level of skill as well as a high level of challenge, and this is where flow occurs. When the task is highly challenging but the skill level is low, one will feel anxious. Because the task is extremely complex and the person lacks the necessary skills to complete it. As a result, the individual will suffer anxiousness. Flow occurs only when a high level of skill is required for a task that is highly challenging.

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Characteristics Of Flow

Csikszentmihalyi (1992) after interviewing thousands of people from different areas such as chess players, mountain climbers, tennis players, ballet dancers, surgeons, and so on concluded that flow is a universal experience. It has following important characteristics:

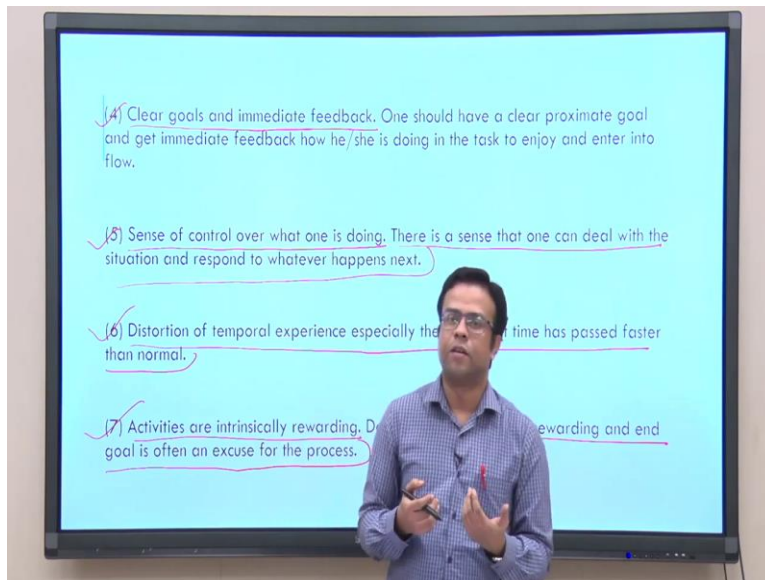
- (1) Intense and focused concentration on what one is doing in the present moment with no room in one's mind for any other information.
- (2) Loss of reflective self-consciousness. The loss of self-consciousness can lead to self-transcending and pushes the boundaries of our being forward. When not preoccupied with our selves, we experience joy and a chance to expand our sense of self.
- (3) The merging of action and awareness. In the state of flow the activity becomes spontaneous and we merge with the action become almost one with the action. E.g., A painter merges with his painting.

So, let's take a closer look at some of the characteristics of flow. As a result, Csikszentmihalyi interviewed thousands of people from various fields, including chess players, mountain climbers, tennis players, ballet dancers, surgeons, and so on. And he came to the conclusion that flow is a universal phenomenon. As a result, it is found practically universally among people of many cultures. As a result, it is a global experience shared by people from all countries and civilizations. And based on his research, he discovered that flow contains the following key characteristics, some of which we've already addressed. One is concentrating intensely on what one is doing at the present time, with no room in one's thoughts for any other knowledge. As a result, there is a high level of involvement, and the attention does not stray. The person is completely focused on the task at hand. The second is loss of reflective self-consciousness. What this means is that a loss of self-consciousness can lead to self-transcending and pushing our being's boundaries forward. When we are focused on a task, our attention moves away from the egoistic self and broadens our consciousness which may lead to the experience of happiness. So that's what loss of reflective self-consciousness means, and it's pleasant because it allows you to forget about your own emotions and concerns.

Third is merging of action and awareness. So, when we're in a state of flow, our activities become more spontaneous, and we blend with them, virtually becoming one with them, similar

to how a painter merges with his painting. So flow is simply a description of how you kind of merge with the thing you're doing. As a result, you become one with it.

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As a result, there is no separation. When there are clear goals and immediate feedback, flow occurs. So once there is a very clear aim, I know what I should do and what I intend to attain. In addition, you will receive immediate feedback. It feedback might come from you or others. It feedback can come from you executing the chores on your own or from others.

As a result, one should set a clear proximate goal and receive immediate feedback. In terms of experiencing flow, they are also key features or requirements. Fifth is the sense of control over what one is doing. Because you're so involved, you have a sense of competence, which explains why you feel so connected. As a result, there is a sense of being able to deal with the situation and respond to whatever comes next. So, even though you are marked by the action, you have that sense. So there's that, but there's also a sense of control over the circumstance. The sixth characteristic is a distortion of temporal experience, particularly the sense that time has flown by. As a result, temporal experiences are highly subjective. So there is a concept of time known as objective time, which is clock time. We are only stating the fact that there is another time, which is referred to as subjective time. In your mind, how you perceive time. As a result, time can be experienced in a variety of ways depending on your mental state. For instance, when we were experiencing positive emotions like happiness or overjoyed, time seems to speed up. We can

spend hours and feel as if it was only a few minutes. So this is what happens, and perhaps this is why, when we are unhappy or depressed, time appears to be trapped or frozen, as if we are unable to spend time. As a result, time appears to be passing more slowly, and a few minutes appear to be hours. So, objectively, time is the same for everyone, but experientially, it depends on your state of mind. You can feel as if time is passing you by faster or slower. So that's what they're displaying. So when you're in a state of flow, you're fully engaged. As a result, it is a joyful state of mind. As a result, time appears to be moving at a rapid pace. And the seventh is that activities are intrinsically rewarding because the action itself is enjoyable, and the end objective is frequently an excuse for the process, and flow is more likely to occur when the activity itself is inherently interesting and satisfying.

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Activities that are Conducive and Non-conducive to Flow

Activities that can facilitate flow experience are called autotelic (from the Greek: auto = self, telos = goal), because they are mostly intrinsically motivated and enjoyable and have an end in themselves (Boniwell, 2012).

Many activities can be conducive to flow experience as long as the activity is able to activate high challenge and high skills (Della Fave & Massimini, 2004).

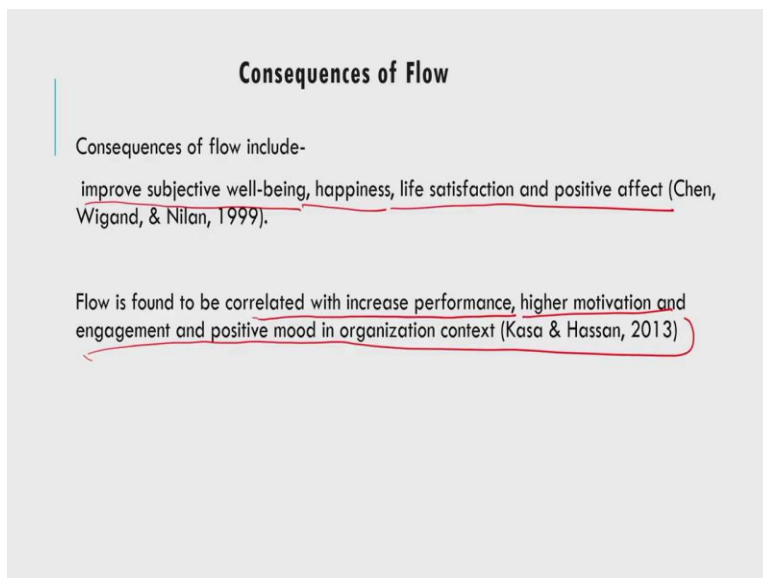
Activities such as sports, dancing, creative arts and other hobbies, socializing, studying, reading and, very often, working (Boniwell, 2012).

Activities in which flow is less likely to be experienced include housework, idling and resting, watching TV etc. (Boniwell, 2012).

So these are some of the key qualities he discovered during his research. What are the activities that are favourable to flow and those that aren't? Autotelic activities are activities that can help people experience flow. So autotelic refers to a Greek phrase in which auto denotes self and telos refers to a goal. Activities that are intrinsically interesting and have a self-directed goal. Because they are mostly intrinsically motivated, enjoyable, and have a self-contained goal. As a result,

flow can occur or is conducive to occurring in any activity as long as the activity is capable of activating a high challenge and high skill condition. As a result, any activity can produce flow state if the required conditions of high skill and high challenge are met. Flow can occur in a variety of activities, including sports, dance, creative arts, and other hobbies, as well as socialization, studying, and reading. It can even occur in a work scenario. Assuming that a high-skill, high-challenge task is available. It can happen in any scenario, but it is more often in creative endeavors. And most people who work in a work-life situation have a lot of flow moments. Housework, idling, and sleeping, watching TV, and other activities that are less likely to create flow experiences. These activities can be relaxing, but they are unlikely to create flow because they do not necessitate a high level of involvement and concentration. You can watch TV and relax and enjoy yourself, but it is unlikely to put you in a flow condition. Because there is no such thing as a high challenge situation if absolute absorption and focus are not required. As a result, these activities are unlikely to cause a flow state in most people.

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Consequences of Flow

Consequences of flow include-

- improve subjective well-being, happiness, life satisfaction and positive affect (Chen, Wigand, & Nilan, 1999).
- Flow is found to be correlated with increase performance, higher motivation and engagement and positive mood in organization context (Kasa & Hassan, 2013)

What are the consequences of flow? There has been a lot of research done in this area, and the results reveal that flow has a lot of positive effects. Let's take a look at some of the research

findings. Flow appears to promote subjective wellbeing, happiness, life satisfaction, and positive affect, all of which are almost the same thing. As a result, all of these factors contribute to subjective well-being, including life satisfaction and positive emotions. So, on an emotional and experience level, flow appears to improve all of these. Flow has also been proven to be linked to improved performance. It's clear because you're so invested in the activity that whatever the outcome is going to be excellent. As a result, your efficiency and work production will be significantly improved because your level of involvement is really high in this situation. As a result, overall performance improves, as does motivation and engagement, as well as a positive emotions in the organizational context. When employees in the workplace feel flow, they perform better, are more motivated, are more engaged, and have a more positive attitude.

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Few research indicated that by developing enriching and challenging working environment that are conducive for flow may enhance employee productivity while boosting organization productivity level as a whole (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003).

According to Engeser and Rheinberg (2008), flow is correlated with better performance for two main reasons-

- (1) Flow is highly functional state which promotes performance by itself.
- (2) A person experiencing flow are more motivated to perform further task to keep on experiencing flow and will set their own challenging task.

Flow can facilitate positive mood which may further promote creativity and positive thinking but also encourage helping behavior among employees (George & Brief, 1992)

According to several studies, creating a stimulating and challenging work environment that is favorable to flow might boost employee productivity. So, according to study, improving the work environment in an organization might make it more conducive. Furthermore, a challenging work environment can help people achieve flow and increase productivity while also increasing overall organizational productivity. So we'll look at a couple more examples of how that may be done and how to make it more favorable to flow. As a result, creating a high-challenge, high-skill environment can boost an organization's productivity. Flow is linked to higher performance,

according to Engeser and Rheinberg, for two reasons. There are two basic reasons why flow improves performance. The first is flow, which is a highly functional state. So you're completely focused on the task at hand. So it's clear that you're in a high-functioning condition because you're totally engaged, and it increases performance on its own. As a result, engagement will boost performance. Second, when someone is in flow, they are more motivated to complete the next activity. As a result, because experience is better, motivation will be much higher. As a result, individuals will be more driven to complete this activity, as well as any future tasks that are related to them, in order to continue experiencing flow. As a result, individuals will be more inclined to complete such tasks in the future since they enjoy being in a flow state. They will set their own challenging tasks to experience flow because they are in the present condition. These are the key reasons why it leads to increased productivity. Flow can also foster a positive mood, which can lead to more creativity and positive thinking, as well as motivate employees to help one another. So flow state produces positive emotions, moods, and happiness, all of which help to facilitate creativity and critical thinking. As a result, all of these factors can indirectly boost productivity.

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experiencing flow encourages a person to persist and return to the activity because of the experiential rewards it promises, and thereby fosters the growth of skills over time (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009).

Flow was associated with commitment and achievement during the high school years (Carli, Delle Fave, & Massimini, 1988; Nakamura, 1988).

longitudinal research also suggests that mastering challenges in daily life (flow experiences) may protect against negative outcomes (Schmidt, 2000). For example, flow experience was associated with diminished delinquency after two years of high adversity at home/school in a sample of American adolescents.

Because of the experiential benefit, experiencing flow drives a person to persevere and return to the activity. As a result, if a person is in a state of flow, they are more likely to engage in such

tasks in the future because the task is gratifying, which develops growth and skills over time. Flow is also linked to high school commitment and accomplishment, according to some high school study. Students who feel flow appear to be more committed to their studies and to achieve more during their school days. Longitudinal study demonstrates that mastering problems in everyday life is also beneficial. So, flow mastery tasks are linked to flow experiences, and flow experiences can protect against negative life consequences. In a sample of American adolescents, for example, flow experiences were linked to lower delinquency after two years of high adversity at home school.

So, according to the research, if we experience flow from our childhood or from our school days, we will be protected from some negative outcomes in life, such as becoming involved in or becoming involved in behaviors related to child delinquency, criminal behavior, or negative behavior. Because the individual will be guided in the direction of productive activities. After even two years of significant adversity, flow experiences were linked to lower delinquency. Because many children, or perhaps a large number of youngsters, are prone to turn delinquent after experiencing difficulties at home or at school, particularly after experiencing unfavorable occurrences in their lives. As a result, flow appears to protect against all of these dangers.

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Autotelic Personality: Individual Differences In Flow

There are large individual differences in the frequency and intensity of flow experiences which may be linked to both personality and situational variables.

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) hypothesized that some may have an increased likelihood of experiencing this state- he called them as "autotelic personality".

He suggested that autotelic personality (from the Greek words *autos*, meaning "self," and *telos*, meaning "end"), as exhibited by a person who enjoys life and "generally does things for [their] own sake, rather than in order to achieve some later external goal" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p. 117).

Another notion related to flow is autotelic personality, which basically says that there is the possibility of individual variances in the frequency and intensity of flow experiences. As a result, it's probable that individual experiences of flow varies; some people are more prone to experience flow than others. As a result, there could be some individual differences, which could include personality differences.

As a result, autotelic personalities are more prone to experience flow. As a result, flow experience may be linked to both personality and situational factors. According to Csikszentmihalyi, some people are more likely to be in a state of flow than others. He coined the term "autotelic personality," which refers to those who are more inclined to engage in flow activities and feel flow in their lives.

He proposed the term autotelic personality, which is derived from the Greek words autos, which means self, and telos, which means end. As a result, he proposed that autotelic personality is exemplified by someone who likes life and does things for the pleasure of doing them rather than for the sake of achieving some external goal. So, on general, the autotelic personality that has more flow moments in their life appears to be guided more by internal standards or motivations. So they are less likely to be guided by external demands to do things that they like inwardly rather than external pressures that someone says they should do. They are more guided by doing things they enjoy since they are organically motivated to pursue them. So it was one thing he noticed.

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Autotelic individuals have a disposition to be intrinsically motivated in high-challenge, high-skill situations. They are least happy and motivated in apathy (low-challenge, low-skill) situations (Hektner, 1996)

Nonautotelics (those least motivated in high-challenge, high-skill situations) on the other hand did not find the apathy condition aversive (Hektner, 1996).

Rathunde (1988, 1996) demonstrated that autotelic personality is fostered in what he has called a "complex" family environment, one that simultaneously provides support and challenge.

Autotelic people, he added, have a proclivity to be intrinsically motivated in high-challenge, high-skill scenarios. As a result, there are individual differences. Some people prefer being in high-challenge, high-skill situations, and they appreciate taking on challenging tasks. As a result, individuals are more likely to have that flow feeling, even while they are unhappy in low-challenge, low-skilled situations. They strive to stay away from certain settings, preferring instead high-skilled and high-challenge scenarios. He also stated that non-autotelics who are not autotelics are least motivated in high-challenge, high-skill situations. People who do not experience a lot of flow are individuals who avoid high-challenge situations. As a result, there may be some individual differences. So, while they may be skilled at what they do, they appear to prefer to avoid high-challenge, high-skill circumstances. As a result, they miss out on a lot of flow possibilities. Such people, on the other hand, may favor apathy for a low-challenge situation. Individual differences may exist, and some people are inclined to flow merely because they desire a challenging situation. Another explanation is that they choose to enjoy or engage in jobs that are intrinsically interesting to them, rather than just external societal pressures for what to do. As a result of their intrinsic motivation, individuals are likely to experience more flow. One of the researchers, Rathunde, revealed that autotelic personality is cultivated in a complex family environment. One that provides both support and challenge at the same time. As a result,

research suggests that the family environment, particularly the family environment, may play a role in the development of this autotelic personality. It provides both support and challenges at the same time. As a result, they have been exposed to challenging situations since childhood. There is also a supportive family environment. As a result, such a home atmosphere may encourage autotelic personality development. In adulthood, they are more likely to have autotelic personalities.

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Interventions To Foster Flow

Flow principles have been applied in a variety of contexts.

In general two types of intervention approaches can be applied (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009)-

- (a) To shape activity structures and environments so that they foster flow or obstruct it less and
- (b) To assist individuals in finding flow.

So, as a result of this research's findings, people have attempted to employ this research and understanding to enhance flow in various environmental contexts. Flow principles have been used in a wide range of situations. In terms of numerous applied researches, two sorts of intervention approaches may be seen in general. One is to design the activity structure and environment to promote flow rather than inhibit it. So one thing you can do is change the work environment, which may be at the organization or in the school. As a result, you alter the structure and environment of a workplace. As a result, they enhance flow more because there is less barrier to flow. As a result, modifying the environment to allow flow could be one strategy to promote flow. Another technique is to assist individuals in finding flow.

Another way is to assist individuals in experiencing flow by clarifying and explaining how they can experience flow and assisting them in doing so. As a result, intervention can take place at both the individual and environmental levels.

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One of the best application of flow principles took place in Key School in Indianapolis, where the goal was to foster flow by influencing both environment and individual (Whalen, 1999).

The school tried to

- (a) create a learning environment that fosters flow experiences and
- (b) help students form interests and develop the capacity to experience flow.

So one of the best applications of such flow concepts, both of these principles of the environment and personal intervention, can be observed in one of the schools in the United States, which is called Key School in Indianapolis, where they created a separate flow activity center in their school. They also try to put these concepts into practice in the classroom. How do they put these into practice there? As a result, the idea was to encourage flow by affecting both the environment and the individual. As a result, both principles were used in that school. As a result, the school attempted to develop a learning atmosphere that encourages flow. As a result, they aim to establish a school climate that promotes flow while also assisting students in developing an interest in and capacity for experiencing flow. Students are likewise interested in learning how to experience flow. As an example, both environmental and person level interventions were made in this case.

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In the school's Flow Activities Center-

students are given regular opportunities to actively choose and engage in activities of their own interests and then pursue these activities without demands or distractions, creating what has been described as "serious play" (Csikszentmihalyi et al., 1993).

To support students' capacity to develop and experience flow, teachers encourage students to challenge and stretch themselves; teachers also provide new challenges to the children to foster growth.

Similarly, principles of flow research have been applied in other settings such as organizations (police, automobile factory, art museums) and psychotherapies (assisting individuals to find flow)

So, what did they do in that school flow activity center? Students are given the option to actively choose and participate in activities that they are interested in on a regular basis. Students are given the freedom to choose activities at the flow activity center in order to facilitate the flow experience. One thing to keep in mind is that when you pick something, you are doing so because you are intrinsically driven. It is given to you extrinsically when it is given to you. Intrinsically motivated tasks, according to research, boost flow experiences. As a result, students were offered the option of participating in activities of their own choice. Then, without interruptions or demands, pursue these activities. There were few demands and distractions from the environment, they were free to chose their hobbies, and they essentially established a serious play-like setting.

So there's a sense of playfulness, but there's also a sense of seriousness. So this is one of the things they did at the environmental level in terms of providing activities and situations that could enhance flow. Teachers also encourage students to challenge and stretch themselves in order to support their potential to generate experience flow. As a result, the teachers are guiding them to feel flow from there. As a result, on an individual level, teachers presented new challenges to the students in order to stimulate growth. So they were given new demanding tasks and asked to choose more challenging tasks in such a way that flow might be promoted. This is how applied flow can be used in a variety of settings, such as schools. Flow research ideas have

also been implemented in other settings, including as police organizations, manufacturing factories, and art museums. And flow experiences or flow principles have also been applied in psychotherapies, where therapists help their clients experience flow by guiding them through what activities to choose, and all of these types of individual assistance are also given in psychotherapies situations.

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Dangers of Flow

Flow experience can happen to both morally good as well as bad activities. It can happen to activities such as gambling games such as bridge and poker games.

Some flow activities can become addictive such as mountain climbing. Addiction to flow can also lead to losing a larger perspective of life (Boniwell, 2012).

In this context, Csikszentmihalyi (1992) wrote-

"enjoyable activities that produce flow have a potentially negative effect: while they are capable of improving the quality of existence by creating order in the mind, they can become addictive, at which point the self becomes captive of a certain kind of order, and is then unwilling to cope with the ambiguities of life." (P. 62)

So these are some of the key findings, and the majority of them suggest that flows have numerous advantages in terms of happiness and positive emotion experiences, as well as performance in terms of increased outputs and efficiencies. As a result, it has numerous advantages. However, research suggests that there may be certain risks associated with flow experiences. Flow experiences can occur in both morally acceptable and morally harmful actions, which is the danger. Now, flow occurs during an activity; however, the type of activity you pick is entirely up to you. As a result, even acts that are not regarded morally desirable can induce flow. Flow can occur in activities such as gambling, video games, and some internet gaming and gambling activities, for example. As a result, those situations or actions provide high-challenge, high-skill prospects. As a result, some people become extremely addicted to those activities as a result of their positive experiences. So they've had a lot of positive emotions and there's a lot of engagement on the experiential level. They enjoy it so much that they want to

do it again and again. So there is a risk in that it can become addictive in things that are not beneficial for the person's life, so it can be harmful in that sense. Mountain climbing, for example, is a flow activity that can become addictive. Some people become so addicted to specific activities that they forget about other elements of their lives and focus solely on them. Flow addiction can sometimes lead to a loss of perspective on life. Then you don't give other aspects of your life adequate attention, and you get addicted to only those activities. As a result, you disregard other elements of your life that are critical to your development. So, in this context, Csikszentmihalyi argues that enjoyable activities that promote flow might also have a potentially detrimental influence. While they can improve the quality of life by bringing order to the mind, they can also become addicting, causing the self to become enslaved to particular kinds of order and unable to cope with life's ambiguities. It is possible to become engrossed in the activities since flow is induced.

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Therefore, it is important to remember-

"The issue regarding flow is not only how we can make it happen, but also how we can manage it: using it to enhance life, yet being able to let go when necessary."
(Boniwell, 2012, p. 35).

According to Csikszentmihalyi, (1998), flow is a source of mental energy that focuses attention and motivates action and like other forms of energy, it can be used for constructive or destructive purpose. Therefore, he suggested that it is not enough to strive for enjoyable goals only, one must also choose goals that will reduce the sum total of entropy in the world i.e. constructive goals.

As a result, it's critical to remember that the issue of flow concerns not just how we make it happen, but also how we manage it. Using it to improve one's life but also being able to let go when needed. As a result, it is critical in every situation and for all we accomplish in life. It can be used in both a negative and a good context. So, comparable things can happen in the case of flow.

You wanted to choose the activities carefully so that it enhances your life. You may utilize flow to enhance your life, to make it happier, to make it more satisfying, to make it more productive, and to make it more achievement-oriented. However, it might also have negative consequences. If you become addicted to the wrong activities, this is a possibility. So that option was always available, and I wanted to make the best decision possible. So, according to Csikszentmihalyi, flow is a source of mental energy that, like other types of energy, focuses attention and stimulates action. It has the ability to be both beneficial and destructive. Because it may be done in both ways, he suggests that pursuing enjoyable goals alone is insufficient. Goals that lessen the total entropy of the world, or constructive goals, must also be chosen.

So, for the most crucial part, choose goals that are beneficial to your life and to the lives of those around you, for the organization, for the society, whatever it is, choose constructive goals. And if you engage in or experience flow while pursuing those constructive aims, your quality of life will be much enhanced. It will also result in a great deal of satisfaction and productivity. As a result, if you chose the wrong things, the same thing can turn dangerous. Also, there are some acts that are not morally desirable. As a result, individual discernment is crucial. So there are a few concepts to consider when it comes to flow.

So, in the last two modules, we've covered a variety of happiness-enhancing activities such as gratitude, acts of kindness, and social comparison. We've also covered psychological strengths, how to use strengths to improve our lives, and how to use flow experiences to improve our lives. So these are really significant concepts, and we can apply them to our lives to improve the quality of our experiences, as well as the function and goal of our lives. So that concludes today's lecture. Thank you very much.