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*“The right kind of stretch brings growth, and in growth there is aliveness, engagement, and passion: qualities that are necessary for achieving great performance in any role.”*

*~ David Rock*

## Capture the Flow!

*“Contrary to what most of us believe, happiness does not simply happen to us. It’s something that we make happen, and it results from our doing our best.”*

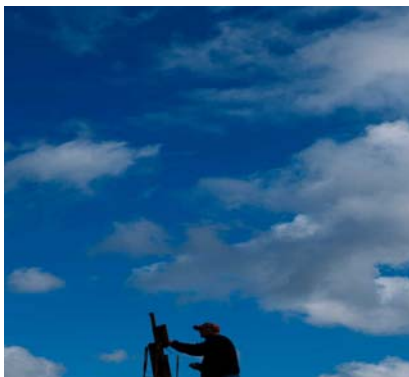
*~ Dr. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi*

In your life, what activities bring you the most happiness? Dr. Csikszentmihalyi has spent much of his life studying what makes us truly happy and, in particular, examining the concept of ‘flow’.

Have you ever had an experience where you were completely involved in what you were doing, concentrating fully on the task at hand, and feeling that time was standing still? If so, then you have likely experienced flow.

When you are in a state of flow, you will often have a

great sense of clarity and effortlessness, as well as the feeling you are performing to the best of your abilities.



People experience flow in a number of situations including creative endeavours, while at work, or playing

sports.

Why is flow so important? Because increasing the

amount of flow experiences you have can enhance the quality of your work, relationships, and even leisure time.

One of the key factors to understanding flow is to realize that it is not simply indulging in activities that give us pleasure. In fact, quite the opposite: flow will be more likely to occur when we are working toward something that is challenging and requires concentration (cont'd on page 2)

## Support Denise as she walks 60 km to support Breast Cancer Research

I am happy to announce that I have made a commitment to walk in the 2007 Weekend to End Breast Cancer!

This **2-day, 60-kilometre walk** will benefit Princess Margaret Hospital, funding important breast cancer research, education, services and care. However, I must raise a minimum donation of \$2000 to enter the event.

Walking 60 kilometres is not going to be easy and I will be training for the event over the coming months. But I’m excited that I

can finally do something this big in the fight against breast cancer.

*So yes, this is a plea for your emotional and financial support.* If you would like to support this important cause, just click on the following link to reach my personal donations page: <http://www.endcancer.ca/>

I thank you in advance for whatever support you can give.

*Denise*



## Capture the Flow!

### (cont'd from page 1)

and commitment. The key seems to be finding tasks that provide us with a challenge at our current skill level – not so easy that we find them boring and not so difficult that they cause us stress.

Perhaps this is why we do not experience flow more often in our daily activities. The pace of our modern work life may push up our anxiety levels and prevent us from really concentrating on, and enjoying, the work we are doing.

In response to this stress, we then seek out easy enjoyment experiences, such as watching TV. However, while these

experiences might be pleasant, they don't provide the challenge, concentration, or sense of accomplishment necessary to invoke flow.

According to surveys carried out by the Gallup Organization, between 15-20% of adults never experience flow. Likewise, 15-20% claim to experience flow on a daily basis. The remaining 60-70% experience flow only occasionally.

So how do we increase the number of flow experiences we have?

Although you cannot directly control when flow will occur, there are a number of factors that will increase the likelihood that it will happen.

To get a deeper understanding of the concept of flow and how it applies to both life and business, read Dr. Csikszentmihalyi's book, *Good Business: Leadership, Flow, and the Making of Meaning*.

For some quick tips you can apply right away, check out this month's *Live Your Strengths* Challenge.

## Live Your Strengths Monthly Challenge

To increase the likelihood of experiencing flow in your life:

**1. Stop multitasking!** The idea that we can do more than one thing *well* at the same time is false. Studies have shown that it takes anywhere from 15 minutes to 1 hour to switch over and fully concentrate on a new task.

By attempting to multitask, we are not allowing our brains the time needed to truly focus on what we are doing—thereby reducing the likelihood that flow will occur.

**2. Don't always opt for easy enjoyment.** Even in our leisure pursuits, being challenged by our activities is beneficial. While it may be pleasant to 'veg' in front of

the TV, you are likely to be happier and enjoy yourself more if you choose to do something that provides you with a purpose and a challenge, such as a creative hobby or volunteering your time for a cause you believe in.

**3. Be willing to stretch yourself.** Let's face it, sometimes we just get in a rut. We are unchallenged at work or don't have anything exciting happening in our personal lives, so we become bored and unmotivated.

The best way to remedy this is to find some new challenges—cultivate new interests! Take a course that sounds interesting, learn a

new sport, and find ways to challenge yourself at work and grow in new ways.

**4. Connect your daily activities to a greater purpose.** Linking our everyday work with a larger purpose can change otherwise monotonous or stressful tasks into steps toward achieving our life's work. Develop a mission and vision for your life and business and watch your inspiration grow!

Could you use some guidance with this challenge? Call Denise for a free 30-minute coaching session. Start living *your* strengths!

“Concentration is the key to economic results. No other principle of effectiveness is violated as constantly today as the basic principle of concentration.”

~ Peter Drucker

Do you have suggestions for upcoming newsletters or success stories you want to share?

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