

Worksheet 4.31 Recalling Flow Experiences Instructions

Flow is defined as a psychological experience in which one is fully immersed in what he or she is doing. Often, athletes, musicians, and other performers refer to flow as “being in the zone.” There are 9 characteristics or conditions of flow that can help you understand when you have experienced flow and how to choose activities that will make flow more likely for you in the future (Jackson and Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). The 9 characteristics of flow are:

1. There is a balance between your skill level and the challenge or opportunity you are taking on (the activity is not underutilizing, nor overtaxing your skills)
2. The challenge or opportunity is rewarding
3. The challenge or opportunity has clear goals
4. You receive immediate feedback on your progress as you engage in the challenge or opportunity
5. You feel a sense of deep, effortless involvement
6. You feel completely absorbed in and focused upon the task at hand
7. You are not concerned with what others are thinking or about being judged (your sense of self vanishes)
8. You feel a sense of control
9. Time seems distorted (for example, time seems to stop or to pass more quickly than normal)

Think of a time when you were totally involved in what you were doing – a time when you felt strong and positive, not worried about yourself or about failing. In the space below, describe the situation as fully as possible: When and where you were? Who were you with? What was happening? How did the experience start? Use as many senses as you can to recall/imagine the event. Jot down thoughts, feelings, and impressions of the experience, including how you felt after the experience was over.