



# CONNECTIONS

A NEWSLETTER ABOUT FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS & PERSONAL GROWTH

## 10 Ways to Enjoy Life More

**1 Take Control of your life** Many people feel stuck in a rut or routine where they assume that nothing can change. Accepting responsibility for how one spends and prioritizes time is the first step to enjoying your life more. Understanding that each of us chooses what we do (e.g., work, education, relationships, etc.) can be very empowering and lead one to ponder whether to continue engaging in certain activities or not.

**2 Set Boundaries** People that seem to maximize their potential for enjoyment have learned to set boundaries in certain areas of their life. In other words, taking on too much wears a person out and leads to burnout. In addition, they tend to take on projects that they really don't like or really need. Learning to take on projects that you enjoy, are good at, or fall in line with your priorities helps you put more energy into areas of life that will improve quality rather than take away.

**3 Diversify** Many people tend to do the same thing over and over again with fear of exploring, learning, or experiencing something new. Those that enjoy life tend to pull from many areas of society, cultures, and peoples which add stimulation to life by learning more about one's self and the world around them.

**4 Find your motivation** Those that engage in activities in which they are motivated by more long-term principles tend to do those activities better and enjoy them more. Examples of long-term principles are related to sincere, internal motivations relating to personal improvement or helping others.

**5 Maximize your strengths** Each person is unique with specific strengths. Understanding one's strengths and engaging in activities (e.g., work, education, hobbies,



## Understanding the Concepts of Enjoyment

As mentioned in the *10 Ways to Enjoy Life More*, flow is a state of being that is characterized by a sense of optimal experience in which the person is engaged in activity he/she thoroughly enjoys to the point of losing a sense of time. Many of us have experienced or witnessed others experiencing this phenomena. For example, a rock climber may feel flow when he is moving quickly, finding holds in the rock smoothly, and feels "at one" with nature and the activity. A composer may experience flow when she is experiencing a literal "flow" of new ideas as she composes unique, inspiring melodies. A mother may appreciate flow as she is nurturing her newborn baby and feels a deep connection as time seems to slip away. There are many types of flow and many people in different areas seem to experience flow in similar ways.



## 10 Ways to Enjoy Life More

(continued from page 1)

groups) that maximize one's strengths helps one shine quickly and truly inspire those around you. Don't hide your light...let it shine.

**6 Find meaningful challenges** Enjoyment is often measured by movement towards a meaningful goal. Healthy challenges motivated by a need to improve one's self in a meaningful way adds a measure of enjoyment that helps one find purpose.

**7 Understand your role** It may sound cliché, but understanding your role in your family, workplace, society, etc. helps you understand your identity. This identity can further a sense of purpose that leads one to feel driven to meaningful goals and/or harmony with one's surroundings.

**8 Be grateful** Gratitude is related to a sense of seeing what is good in the world. Optimism and humility lead one to feel grateful for the many beauties of others, circumstances, and nature. Living life through grateful eyes helps one appreciate opportunities and the stage upon which they play.

**9 Seek out meaningful feedback** We all need support and understanding especially from people we trust. Feedback lets us know how others are viewing our journey. Many times, feedback from those we trust can open our eyes to new possibilities and perspectives we have not imagined.

**10 Reach towards flow** Flow is defined as optimal experience in which one is so heavily engaged in an enjoyable activity that they lose a sense of time as they excel quickly and progress exponentially. It appears that flow requires the above mentioned traits including feedback, perspective, challenge, diversity, motivation, boundaries, and autonomy. May we all find flow in what we do!

## Understanding the Concepts of Enjoyment

(continued from page 1)

Csikszentmihalyi (1996) was the original researcher who identified the concept of flow by expanding on some of its concepts.

First, Csikszentmihalyi noticed that those experiencing flow seemed to find a balance between challenge and skills (See Figure 1). For example, if one is experiencing high challenge but low skills, a person will experience anxiety. If one has high skills but low challenge, one will experience boredom. Thus, flow is characterized by finding a challenge in which one has the skills to meet that challenge. One interesting implication is that as one finds that challenge and accomplishes that challenge, one must find an additional challenge to continue to maintain flow.

Second, it appears that in order to enter into or maintain flow, one must be motivated to engage in that activity. A number of other theories address the role of motivation in regards to enjoying and excelling in certain activities. Most theories address the roles of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation using different terms. Intrinsic motivation is based on an internal need to either progress one's self or help others. In other words, one wants to engage in a

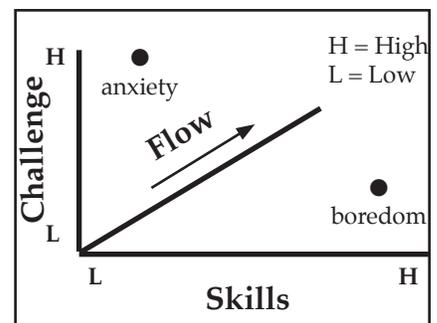


Figure 1



## Understanding the Concepts of Enjoyment

(continued from page 2)

certain activity out of a true desire to personally improve or help others improve. Extrinsic motivation is based more on external rewards with a desire to avoid external punishment, please others, and/or gain instant gratification. The vast majority believe that those engaged in activities based on intrinsic motivation will excel at those activities and enjoy them as well.

Finally, it appears that a number of other factors contribute to enjoyment. Relationships seem to magnify those areas that experience flow. In addition, some activities of flow involve relationships. Meaningful conversations or falling in love in some ways could be classified as a flow experience. Group diversity in the workplace or social environments seems to contribute to the amount of unique experiences one may have which can add to enjoyment. Cognitive diversity seems to add to life stimulation as well by helping one to experience new ideas and activities to expand one's mind.

Overall, the science of happiness is an interesting topic. This is a brief explanation of some of the concepts that seem to contribute to enjoyment. Other areas of importance seem to be spirituality, health, and resources. This list is certainly not exhaustive and, surprisingly, happiness has only begun to be examined scientifically. This may be because more people are finding that happiness in many ways is based on an internal locus of control. In other words, people are taking responsibility for being happy. Hopefully, each of us can begin to enjoy learning more about enjoyment as we explore ways to maximize our quality of life!

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT...



## References

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