



Happiness at Work

What the research tells us about thriving on the job



Happiness at Work

- ▶ What is Happiness and Why Should We Care?
- ▶ What Makes Us Happy and Motivated?
- ▶ Why Givers Succeed
- ▶ Your Strengths, Your Happiness

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Happiness Boost Introductions

Introduce yourself

What is the best thing that has happened to you at work in the last month?

What is your dream vacation?

What is Happiness?

- ▶ Not easy to define
- ▶ Often studied as “subjective well being” (SWB)
- ▶ The focus of the field Positive Psychology

- ▶ Researched and measured in many contexts and scales



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What is Happiness?

- ▶ 'Happiness' is a scientifically unwieldy notion, but there are three different forms of it if you can pursue. For the 'Pleasant Life,' you aim to have as much positive emotion as possible and learn the skills to amplify positive emotion. For the 'Engaged Life,' you identify your highest strengths and talents and recraft your life to use them as much as you can in work, love, friendship, parenting, and leisure. For the 'Meaningful Life,' you use your highest strengths and talents to belong to and serve something you believe is larger than the self.
- ▶ - Martin Seligman *Learned Optimism*



Measuring Happiness

- ▶ The Satisfaction with Life scale was created by Ed Diener, Robert A. Emmons, Randy J. Larsen and Sharon Griffin
- ▶ Many measures of happiness, optimism, strengths and other related traits can be accessed at www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu.



Why Should I Care About Happiness?





What Makes Us Happy and Motivated?

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A Little Goes a Long Way

- ▶ Small happiness boosts more often are more effective than big boosts once in a while
- ▶ Happiness boosts that we anticipate and look forward to bring extra happiness
- ▶ A variety of happiness boosts are more effective than the same one over and over again
- ▶ Some of the most effective happiness boosts are traditions that are tied to a certain holiday or season



Friends

People with best friends in the workplace are:

- More productive
- Healthier
- More focused and passionate
- More satisfied with their jobs and stay longer



Friends



Students who work with friends rather than acquaintances:

- ▶ Communicate better
- ▶ Work more collaboratively
- ▶ Offer more enthusiastic support
- ▶ Are quicker to give constructive feedback

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How to Nurture Friendships at Work

Don't let professionalism stand in the way – the biggest driver of close friendship is self disclosure

Take breaks together – friends and non-friends at work are differentiated by the time they spend talking about non-work topics

Eat meals together



Reflection 1

- ▶ What are some traditions or practices in our workplace that promote happiness and friendship?
- ▶ Brainstorm some happiness inducing activities or traditions you would like to see started in your workplace? The ideas can be as wild and crazy as you would like.
- ▶ On the sticky notes provided write some of your groups favourite suggestions for increasing happiness at work. Bring them to the front and stick them to the poster. Take some time to review other suggestions.



Gratitude

Gratitude is positively correlated with Subjective Well Being

Gratitude is negatively correlated with depression and some types of anger

The regular practice of gratitude is related to better health outcomes like better sleep and improved immune response



Ways to Practice Gratitude at Work

The Gratitude Visit from Martin Seligman's *Flourish*

Adopt a gratitude habit and make it fun

Say thank you to others (and make it about the details)

Turn your non-grateful thoughts into grateful ones

- ▶ When you catch yourself in a non-grateful thought stop
- ▶ Think of something to be grateful about in the situation instead
- ▶ Act on your grateful thought

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Characteristics of Grateful People

- ▶ Feel a sense of abundance in their lives
- ▶ Appreciate the contributions of others to their well-being
- ▶ Recognize and enjoy life's small pleasures
- ▶ Acknowledge the importance of experiencing and expressing gratitude

Reflection 2 – The Workplace Gratitude Visit





Why Givers Succeed

Three Approaches to Life

From the research of Adam Grant

There are three distinct approaches:

- Givers
- Takers
- Matchers

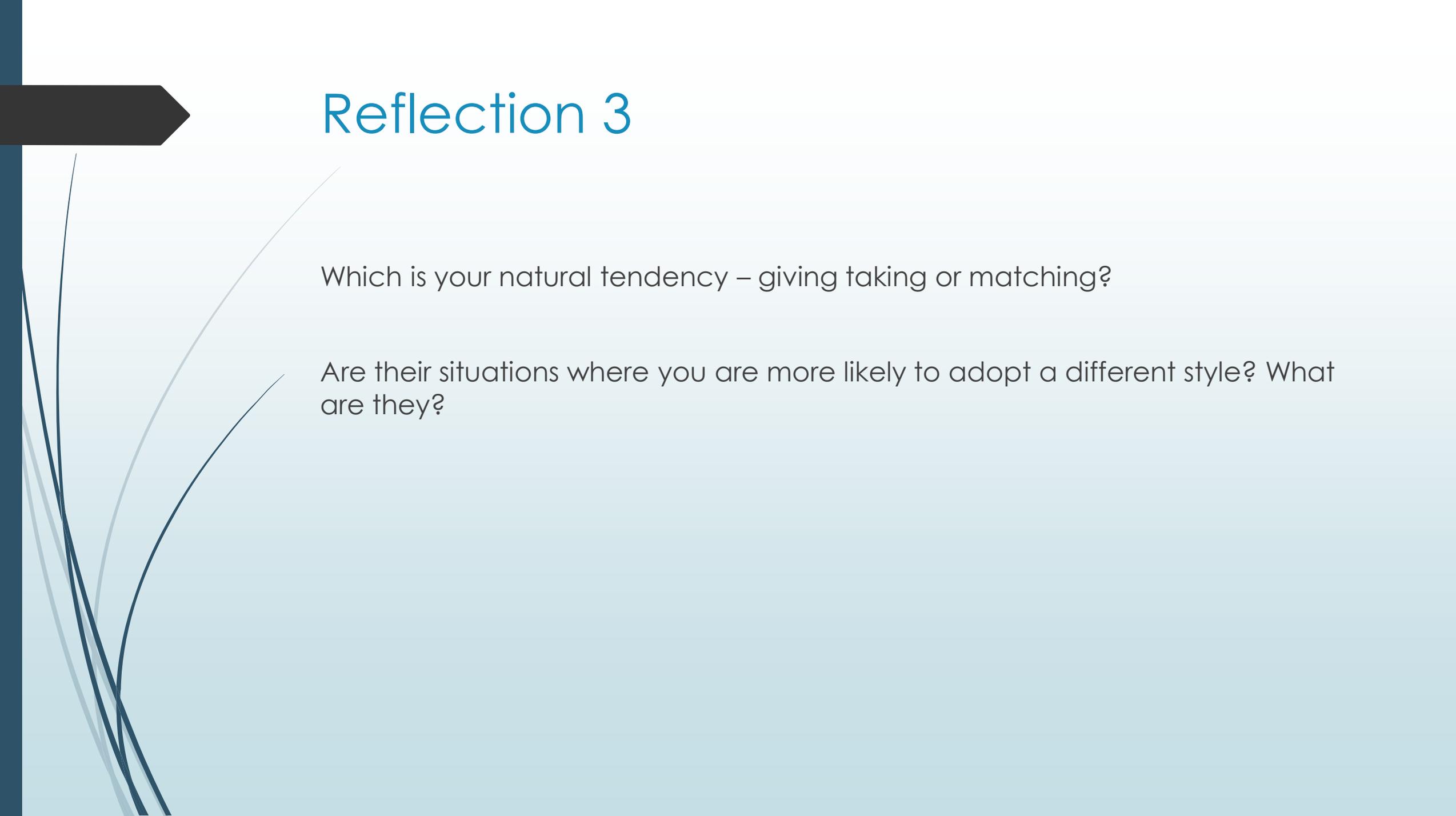
We perceive giving to be a risky approach in the workplace





Givers, takers, and matchers all can— and do— achieve success. But there's something distinctive that happens when givers succeed: it spreads and cascades. When takers win, there's usually someone else who loses. Research shows that people tend to envy successful takers and look for ways to knock them down a notch. In contrast, when [givers] win, people are rooting for them and supporting them, rather than gunning for them. Givers succeed in a way that creates a ripple effect, enhancing the success of people around them. You'll see that the difference lies in how giver success creates value, instead of just claiming it.

- Adam Grant *Give and Take*



Reflection 3

Which is your natural tendency – giving taking or matching?

Are there situations where you are more likely to adopt a different style? What are they?

Spotting a Faker – A Taker in a Giver's Clothing

- ▶ Uses I and Me much more often than us and we
- ▶ Significant difference between how they treat their superiors and their subordinates
- ▶ They are less likely to give credit to others for collaborative work

Protect Yourself –

When dealing with a taker be a matcher





How to be a giving champ not a giving chump

- Seek help yourself!
- Do not confuse giving with timidity or constant availability
- If you are not naturally assertive think about the benefit to others of things you want to advocate for
- Realize you can make a difference in a small amount of time
- Set boundaries for offering help
- Prioritize who you help
- Give from your strengths not haphazardly

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Reflection 4 - Effective Giving

- ▶ What are my areas of helping expertise? What are areas of helping that I good at or know a lot about and like doing?
- ▶ Write down some ideas of five minute favours you can do at work.



Your Strengths, Your Happiness



Why Strengths are Important

Calling on our strengths daily increases our engagement at work (up to six times)

Using our strengths at work decreases stress and anxiety

A sense of mastery at work increases our motivation

Matching our challenge level to our ability allows us to achieve flow

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Knowing Your Strengths

Deeper understanding of personality theory (can be especially important for introverts)

Getting feedback from others (Reflected Best Self Exercise)

Self-assessing strengths through quizzes or personal reflection (Values in Action Survey)



Identifying Your Strengths Activity

Part 1

Find a partner who you know well or work closely with

Take a minute to **reflect on a time when your partner was at his or her best.** When was it? What did they do well?

Take turns telling each other stories of when the other was at his/her best

Reflect on the story your partner told about you. What skills and values were you calling into play during the incident in the story? What does the story say about you.



Identifying Your Strengths Activity

Part 2

Open the envelope labelled Strengths – inside are 24 personal characteristics taken from the Values in Action Survey from the University of Pennsylvania's Authentic Happiness Institute

Reading only the characteristic names **discard 10 characteristics that you feel are the least like you** or come least naturally to you

Sort the remaining 14 characteristics from the strongest for you (the ones that are most like you or most natural) **to the ones that are least like you**. Think about what your partner's story revealed and what others in your life would say about you as well as your own impressions

Share your top 10 characteristics with your partner



Job Crafting

Involves approaching our job from our own perspective

We can build into our job opportunities to do things we think are valuable and purposeful

Involves changes to:

- Tasks
- Relationships
- Perceptions

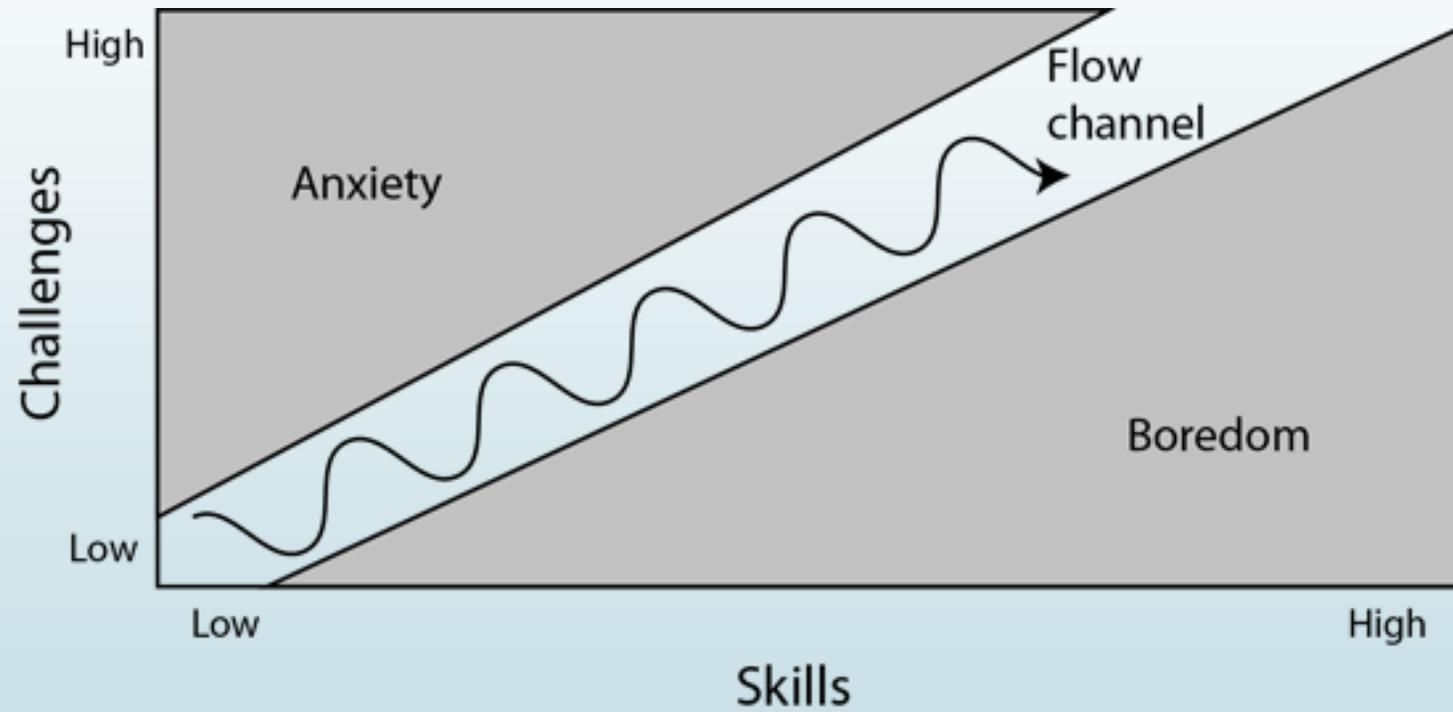
Flow

- ▶ The best moments in our lives are not the passive, receptive, relaxing times... The best moments usually occur if a person's body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile."

~ Mihaly Csikszentmihaly *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*



Achieving Flow

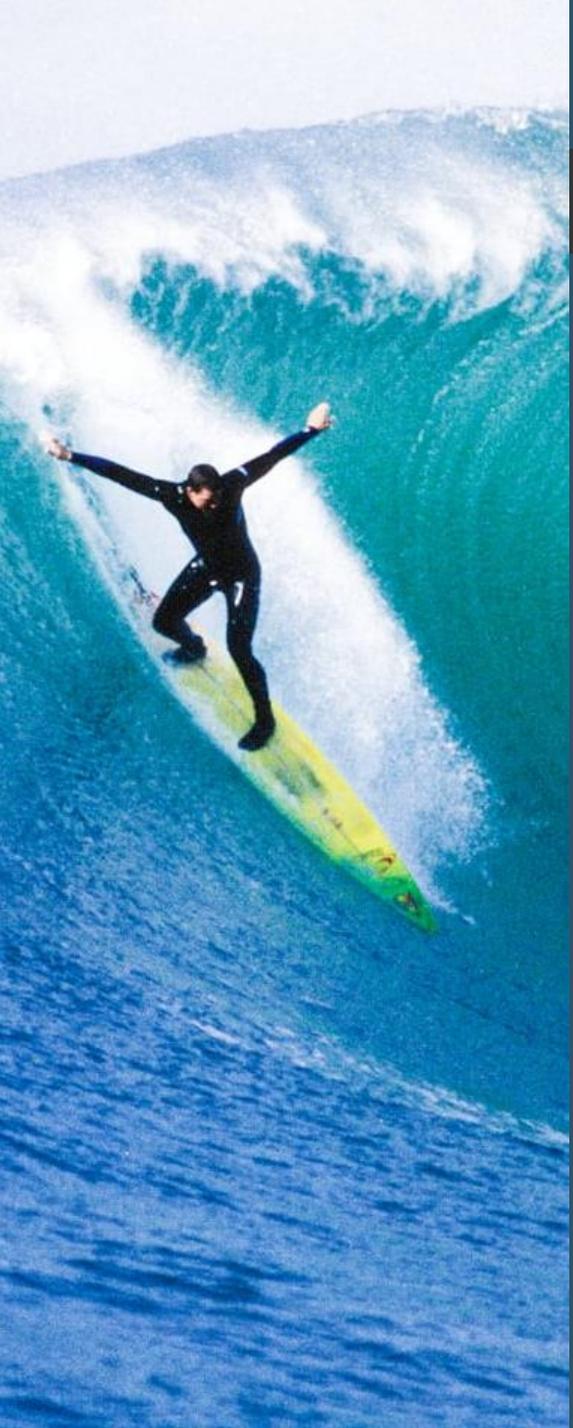




Characteristics of Flow States

(all must be present)

- ▶ Intense and focused concentration on the present moment
- ▶ Merging of action and awareness
- ▶ A loss of reflective self-consciousness
- ▶ A sense of personal control or agency over the situation or activity
- ▶ A distortion of temporal experience, one's subjective experience of time is altered
- ▶ Experience of the activity as intrinsically rewarding, also referred to as autotelic experience



Increasing Our Experience of Flow at Work

To Experience Flow One Needs:

- ▶ A clear set of goals and progress
- ▶ Clear and immediate feedback
- ▶ Balance between the challenge level of the task and the skill level of the doer, at least in the doer's perception



Reflection 5

How do your unique skills and personality impact you in the workplace?

What particular work environment is the best fit for your personality? (Busy and social, lots of structure and supervision, freedom and flexibility...)

How can you use knowledge of your particular strengths to increase flow?

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