

DISCOVERING FLOW

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- when we encounter a challenge that is testing for our skills
- our skills and capacities are such that it is just about possible to meet this challenge (both the challenge and the skills are at a high level)
- if challenges exceed skills we can become anxious
- if skills exceed challenges we become bored

The seven characteristics of flow:

- 1 **clarity of goals and immediate feedback on the progress** - In competition you know what you've got to achieve and know exactly how well you are doing (winning or losing)
- 2 **complete concentration** on what you are doing in the present, with no room in your mind for other information
- 3 **actions and awareness are merged** A guitarist merges with the instrument and becomes the music she plays. The activity becomes almost automatic and the involvement seems effortless (though being far from so in reality)
- 4 **loosing awareness of oneself or self-consciousness** is also a common experience, but interestingly, after each flow experience the sense of self is strengthened, a person becomes more than she or he was before
- 5 **sense of control** over what you are doing, with no worries about failure
- 6 **transformation of time** usually time passes much faster than expected. The reverse can also be true
- 7 **activities are intrinsically rewarding**. This means they have an end in themselves, you do something because you want to, with any other end goal often being just an excuse

*You must act
only for this day
and this hour,
Because
tomorrow is
unfixed and
difficult to know.
You must
meditate
without wasting
time,
thinking that
there is only this
day and this
hour.
After that it
becomes truly
easy.*

Dogen