

# Engagement

## Finding your flow



Engagement refers to complete self-absorption in activity, where time and the self-conscious are momentarily lost.

Engagement in activities helps us to:

- 1- use our personal strengths each day
- 2- be 'in the moment'
- 3- develop, learn and create to our potential

### Flow

When we are engaged in things that we love doing, we lose track of time. We are living in the present moment and entirely focused on the task at hand. In positive psychology, this is referred to as **flow**. During flow experiences, we are so intensely focused on what we are doing that time seems to stop.

One of the founders of positive psychology and world-leading researcher on flow Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi describes the psychological state as:

*“being completely involved in an activity for its own sake. The ego falls away. Time flies. Every action, movement, and thought follows inevitably from the previous one, like playing jazz. Your whole being is involved, and you’re using your skills to the utmost.”*

Click [here](#) to watch his TED Talk on flow.

### How can we find flow?

Can you think of an activity or activities where you find pleasure and lasting satisfaction? It is these places that will provide you with opportunity to experience a state of flow.

Flow is activated when the challenge set by an activity is evenly matched with our skillset or strengths to provide us with an adequate challenge. If the activity is too easy or too difficult based on our individual capabilities, then we will be less likely to encounter flow.

Based on this science, one of the best ways to find flow in daily life is to first identify and understand our **character strengths**, so that we can choose and plan our flow-inducing activities wisely.



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### Character strengths

Character strengths can be thought of as the positive elements of your personality that are represented in your thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Research into human strength and virtue has produced a common language of [twenty-four character strengths](#) that each of us possess in different levels. Knowing and using our top strengths regularly has been proven to contribute to wellbeing.



You can learn more about your character strengths by visiting [www.viacharacter.org](http://www.viacharacter.org) and taking their free strengths profiler survey to help you [play to your strengths](#) each day. If you're under 18, make sure you take the youth version.

### How can you build moments of engagement into your day?

[Incorporate an activity you love into each day.](#) Try making a list of activities that you really love, think of those that challenge you enough to make them fun without being impossible. When have you totally lost track of time because you've been right into a challenging task? Could you build an element of such an activity into each day?

[Check out your character strengths](#) and learn how to use them daily. The [VIA survey](#) is the perfect place to start discovering a deeper sense of where the most positive parts of you lie.

[Spend time in the present.](#) Have you ever noticed how you spend your time and which activities make it easier to be in the now? Can you identify which tasks or activities leave you feeling energised?

[Mindfulness](#) is a skill that can be developed to assist us to spend more time in the present, but it does require practice in order to enjoy its benefits. [Find out more about mindfulness here.](#)

### Have we caught your attention?

Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi has a [new book](#) out on the psychology of engagement with everyday life.

