



The Productivity Booster

ebook

Welcome

Have you ever found yourself so immersed in a task that you completely lose track of time?

You look up from your task to discover that hours have passed in what seems like just a matter of moments.

Your focus was so intense that the world around you faded away and all that mattered was the task in front of you.

And you absolutely crushed the task you were working on.

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- Your productivity skyrocketed. You were focused on one thing and only one thing for a long period of time. Because your focus was so intense, you made massive progress on that task - much more than you would normally make. Nothing took you away from what you were working on.
- Your concentration increased. Normally you find yourself distracted when you're trying to work on a particular task, but not this time. You were so "in the zone" that absolutely nothing could distract you. Your focus was at an all-time high. It seemed like every part of your brain was fixed on the job in front of you.
- Your enjoyment of the task went through the roof. Because you were so immersed in and focused on your task, your enjoyment of your work went up significantly. You weren't thinking about the things you would rather be doing. You weren't worried about the things that normally worry you. Rather, you were 100% laser-focused on what was right in front of you.

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How often do you experience what I just described? My guess would be not very often. Most of us find ourselves extremely distracted when we try to do our work.

Our phone buzzes, Facebook beckons, text messages call for us, and a thousand notifications spring to life. Our brains feel like they're scattered in a thousand different places.

Just getting any work done requires a significant amount of effort. There are so many interruptions. So many distractions. So many things that take you off the task you're trying to make progress on.

It's almost as if the world is designed to distract us from working on what really matters most.

- Our productivity is low.
- Our concentration is scattered all over the place.
- Our satisfaction with our tasks is minimal.
- We don't live up to our full potential.

But it doesn't have to be this way.

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What would you say if I told you that you could reach this state of heightened focus, increased concentration, increased productivity, and overall happiness on a regular basis? What if I told you that massive increases in productivity, concentration, and happiness are not only possible but easily within your reach?

It's true. Even in today's noisy, crowded, seemingly overwhelming workplace, you can get into a highly focused, highly productive state. That state is called "flow state" and it's what this report is all about.

If you want to achieve maximum productivity, you must understand "flow state." It's what sets the highest achievers apart from everyone else. Flow state allows a person to become a world-class performer in any area. It can enable you to be hugely productive even in the midst of endless distractions. If you want maximum productivity, as well as maximum satisfaction in your day-to-day tasks, it's important to know how to get into the heightened state we're calling "flow state".

Are you ready to start being more productive than you ever thought possible?

Are you ready to start making progress on your biggest, most important projects?

Are you ready to achieve more satisfaction and happiness in the work you do?

Are you ready to achieve flow?

Then let's dive in. It's time to go with the flow.

Where is Flow State?

On the surface, the term “flow state” sounds a bit strange, right? Sort of Zen-like, where your mind is empty, and you’re only focused on your breathing. As if the only thing that matters is whether your breath is under control.



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But really, they're quite different.

Let's give a brief definition of flow state:

When you're in flow state, you're completely engaged in the task at hand, to the point where you lose track of time and experience great joy simply in doing the job before you. Everything fades into the background except what is immediately before you, and you focus intensely on a single task without any distractions.

When you're in flow state, your mind is 100% engaged.

You are completely and totally focused on what's in front of you. Rather than emptying your mind, you're trying to completely fill it. You're highly attuned to what's in front of you and striving to keep your attention in one place. And above all, you are actively engaged in a particular task. You are so focused that nothing can distract you from the job in front of you. You've got laser focus. One leading orchestra conductor describes his experience of entering flow state:

You are in an ecstatic state to such a point that you feel as though you almost don't exist. I have experienced this time and again. My hand seems devoid of myself, and I have nothing to do with what is happening. I just sit there watching it in a state of awe and wonderment. And [the music] just flows out of itself.

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The conductor is so in tune with his orchestra that:

- He is completely focused on conducting, and nothing can distract him.
- He loses track of time and even himself.
- The actions just seem to flow out of him.
- He experiences great joy as he directs.

Entering flow state is a totally immersive experience. You are fully committed to what you're doing and have no room in your consciousness for anything else.

You have no room for other:

- Thoughts
- Distractions
- Tasks
- Desires
- Worries

You're so totally engaged in what you're doing that everything else fades to the background.

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In his book Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience, Dr. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi writes:

“...I developed a theory of optimal experience based on the concept of flow— the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it.

The mark of a person who is in control of consciousness is the ability to focus attention at will, to be oblivious to distractions, to concentrate for as long as it takes to achieve a goal, and not longer....”

This ability to:

- Control the consciousness
- Focus the attention at will
- Be oblivious to distractions
- Concentrate for as long it takes to achieve a goal

...describes flow state.

Are you starting to get the picture?

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It's an experience in which nothing seems to matter except that which is right in front of you.

When you're in flow state, it's as if you have blinders on.

- Nothing can distract you.
- Nothing can pull you away from your task.
- Nothing can keep you from making progress.

Your entire mind and body are occupied, leaving room for nothing else. You're focused, locked in, and completely engaged in what you're doing. Distractions ping off you. You're oblivious to what's happening around you.

When you're in flow state, you'll experience several significant things. Each of them will be described in more details in the following chapters.

Total Immersion

As Dr. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi noted, when you're in the flow state, nothing else seems to matter. In other words, you're so immersed in the task at hand that everything else fades to the background.

This is a pleasant experience, so much so that it's worth pursuing. In other words, because of all that you experience when you're in flow state, you want to come back to it again and again.

Being in flow state is highly enjoyable and can turn even the most difficult jobs into pleasant experiences.



Increased Focus

When you are in flow state, your productivity goes through the roof. Why? Because you're only focused on a single task.

You're not trying to multitask. You're not simultaneously surfing Facebook, responding to emails, and texting your friends. You're not trying to work on five different things at once, making very little progress on any of them.

You're completely zoned in on an important task that stretches your abilities and requires the use of all your skills and strengths. All of your energy is dedicated toward achieving a single goal.

You're focused on the one thing that is going to make the most difference in your life.

And because your energy is focused so strongly on one thing, you make significant progress on it. You achieve more in one hour of flow state than you do in many hours outside of flow state. Your productivity skyrockets.

Flow state allows you to do what Alexander Graham Bell described when he said:

*"...Concentrate all your thoughts upon the work at hand.
The sun's rays do not burn until brought to a focus...."*

When you concentrate all your thoughts on the work at hand, you can achieve extraordinary things.



No Distraction

The thought of not experiencing any distractions may seem impossible to you, but when you truly enter flow state, your brain shuts out everything except what you're working on.

It's why the orchestra conductor said that he felt as if his hand was moving independently. His brain was so focused on the orchestra that nothing else could invade his consciousness.

Now, to be clear, there are some steps you'll need to take to minimize distractions in the beginning when you're first seeking to enter into flow state. We'll get into that in a bit.

But imagine being able to work distraction free. Imagine being able to shut out: Notifications, Buzzes, Dings, Alerts, And every other distracting noise

Imagine being so in the moment that nothing else seems to matter. Imagine being completely oblivious to the distractions that are flying around you and completely focused on achieving something that actually matters to you.

That's the power of being in flow state.



Increased Enjoyment

When you're in flow state, you're not thinking about what you're missing out on. You're not thinking about the problems in your life. You're not worried about that report that you need to file. You're not preoccupied with that meeting that you still haven't prepared for.

They're not even a blip on your radar. The only thing in your mind at the time is what you're working on. All your attention is in a single spot, not scattered about by a thousand different thoughts and worries.

The result is a hyper-productive bliss.

You are so in the zone that all your worries, fears, and struggles take a temporary back seat. Your brain simply doesn't have time to think about them. You don't have the mental capacity to focus fully on your work and also entertain these worries.



Lose Track of Time

Because you're so immersed in the task before you, it's not uncommon for people in flow state to completely lose track of time. Suddenly you look up and realize you've spent hours on a particular task.

This is also why you tend to be more productive when you're in flow state. You are able to dedicate more focused time to a task than normal, which allows you to get significantly more done.



Stretching Yourself

Entering flow state requires that you stretch yourself. That you tackle worthy, challenging goals. That you use your God-given gifts and strengths. It's difficult to get into flow state when you're working on mundane, tedious tasks. Your brain wanders and you get easily distracted.

To enter flow state, you must:

- Work on a task that requires you to stretch yourself.
- Tap into your gifts and abilities.
- Fully apply your mind to what's in front of you.

This is why we tend to lose track of time when we're in flow state. Our brains aren't thinking about time. Rather, they're fully focused on getting the job done. You're using all your gifts, strengths, and abilities to achieve what's in front of you.

The last thing you're thinking about is what time it is.

As Csikszentmihalyi said:

„...Contrary to what we usually believe, moments like these, the best moments in our lives, are not the passive, receptive, relaxing times.... The best moments usually occur when a person's body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile....“

So, when you're in flow state, you're stretched to your voluntary limit to achieve something truly worthwhile.

Live more meaningful

What many people misunderstand is that flow state is not only about being more productive, although that's certainly one benefit. The primary benefit of flow state is that it allows you to live a more meaningful life.

How?

Flow state can ensure that you're dedicating a significant portion of time to tasks that are meaningful and not mundane and allow you to experience joy while you perform those tasks.

As mentioned, flow state doesn't happen when you're working on mundane tasks.

Rather, it occurs when you're giving yourself to a task that actually matters. To one that brings you joy. To something that will move the needle forward for you personally or professionally.

The more you work in flow state, the more joy you experience and the more you accomplish, which then leads to a much more meaningful life.



The Power of Flow

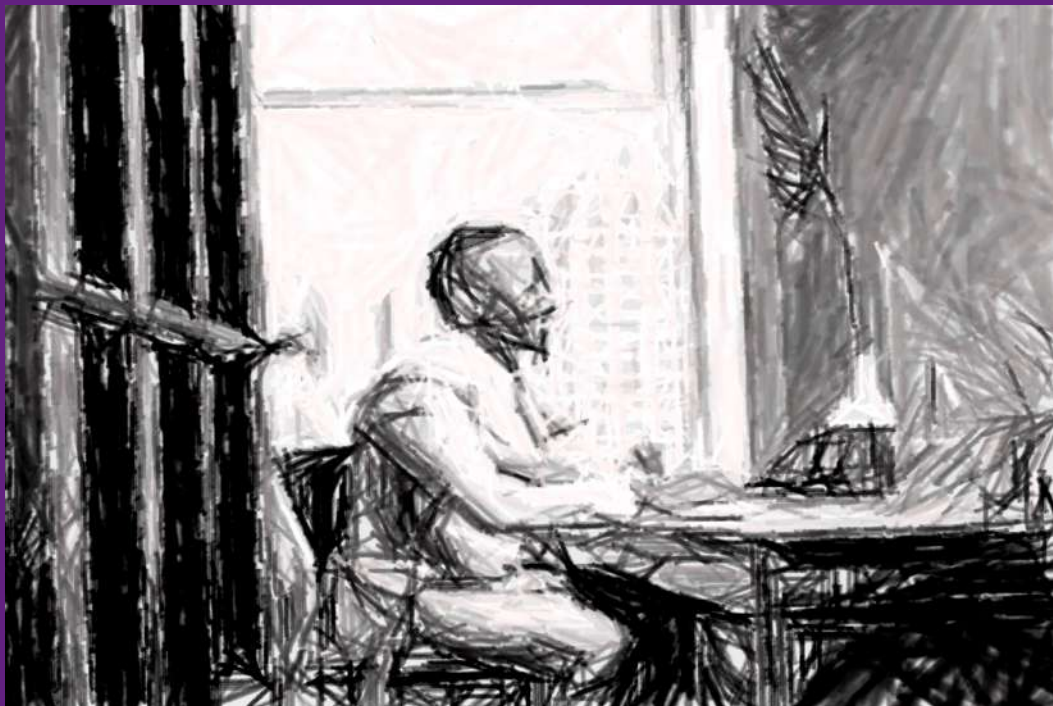
Are you starting to see just how powerful flow state really is? Are you starting to see how much you can accomplish when you enter that deep state of concentration that accompanies flow state? See how it can add so much more meaning and value to your life?

Now let's talk about specific ways you can enter flow state.

How to Enter Flow State?

Now that you know just how powerful and beneficial flow state is, let's talk about how to actually get into flow state.

To get into flow state on a consistent basis, use these steps.



Step #1: Choose a challenging task

Remember, flow state happens when you're applying yourself to a worthy, challenging task. You're probably going to have a difficult time getting into it if you're working on mundane things such as:

- Filing paperwork
- Writing emails
- Responding to notifications
- Making phone calls

You need to set a challenging, worthy goal for yourself. A goal that will stretch you and require you to use your skills to the maximum.

As Csikszentmihalyi said:

"...Flow is important both because it makes the present instant more enjoyable, and because it builds the self-confidence that allows us to develop skills and make significant contributions to humankind..."

So, your goal with flow state is to make significant contributions to humankind. In other words, to achieve something noble and worthy. Something that will make a dent in the world.

In order to achieve this, you must be working on an important, significant task.

Step #1: Choose a challenging task

When choosing your task/goal, ask yourself these questions:

- What is my most important task right now?
- What one thing would make everything else in my life easier?
- What would make the most difference for me personally or professionally
- What will move the needle most for my business?

In the book, *The One Thing: The Surprisingly Simple Truth Behind Extraordinary Results*, Gary Keller recommends going small when choosing your goal.

In other words, choosing the ONE thing that will make the most difference when you accomplish it. He says: *"Going small" is ignoring all the things you could do and doing what you should do. It's recognizing that not all things matter equally and finding the things that matter most. It's a tighter way to connect what you do with what you want. It's realizing that extraordinary results are directly determined by how narrow you can make your focus."*

If you want to enter flow state, avoid trying to do everything.

Rather, pick a worthy goal that will stretch you and force you to fully engage with the task. Choose a task that will require your full attention.

Step #2: Set clear goals

This is coming at flow state from a slightly different angle than the previous point.

When seeking to enter flow state, it's important to be very specific about exactly what you're trying to accomplish during a specific period of time. You must set a time limit for yourself and then choose what you're going to accomplish during that time. Setting boundaries forces you to concentrate very quickly so that you don't waste time. For example, let's say that you want to complete the first section of a sales report that you've been putting off because you know it will be hard.

Give yourself one hour (or whatever is reasonable) to complete the first section. During that hour, focus intensely on completing your goal. Give all your attention to completing the sales report and avoid letting anything distract you.

- Avoid email, text messages, and apps like Skype or Slack.
- Commit yourself fully to completing the first section of the sales report.
- Don't let anything keep you from achieving your goal.

Do one thing and only one thing during your period of intense concentration.

Step #2: Set clear goals

You may want to consider using the Pomodoro method to help you enter flow state. Here's how the Pomodoro method works:

- Set a timer for 25 minutes and work intensely (no distractions!) for that 25-minute period.
- After 25 minutes, take a 5-minute break to let your brain rest. During those five minutes, you can do whatever you want.
- Then do another 25-minute session, followed by another 5-minute break.
- After four 25-minute sessions, take a 15-minute break.
- Repeat the process

By using the Pomodoro method, you force yourself to focus intensely for 25 minutes with no distractions. This allows you (even forces you) to enter flow state much more easily. You don't have the option of messing around on your phone or checking email. In order to accomplish your goal during the 25-minute sessions, you must ruthlessly focus. The result is flow state.

It's important to note that you need to give yourself enough time to get into flow state. For example, if you have to pick up your kids in 15 minutes from school, that's probably not a sufficient amount of time to fully immerse yourself in your task. Ideally, give yourself at least 25-30 minutes - more if possible. Your brain won't immediately snap into flow state the second you start. It takes some time for you to focus and tune out distractions.

Step #3: Cut out distraction

This is absolutely essential. If you're going to enter flow state, you must cut out all your distractions. As Ransom Patterson puts it: *You will never achieve flow if you are distracted. Your brain just can't handle it. Certainly, there are circumstances in which distractions are unavoidable. But much of the time, you can work to minimize or eliminate distractions.*" Try these steps to eliminate distractions.

- If you're hungry, get something to eat, so you won't be thinking about how hungry you are.
- Put your phone on silent or even airplane mode.
- Close your email, as well as all chat programs like Slack and Skype.
- Close all unnecessary tabs on your browser, especially distracting ones such as social media.
- Close your door. If you can't close your door, consider putting on headphones and listening to background music that won't distract you.

If you do all these steps and still find yourself getting distracted, you may need to take even more extreme measures. You may need to actively block social media sites using site blocking software. Apps like RescueTime won't allow you to use specified sites (like Facebook) once you activate the app. If you try to go to the site, it simply won't work. This can be a huge help if you find yourself still distracted by sites like Facebook or Reddit. Focus music can very helpful for blocking out background noise. Your goal is to clear away anything that might distract you from the task at hand. Remember, your goal is to give 100% of your attention to a single task!

Step #4: No Multitasking

Flow state only happens when you're working on a single task. If you want to enter flow state, it's absolutely essential that you eliminate all multitasking.

It can be tempting to try to work on multiple things at once but doing so will absolutely kill your flow. You must give all your focus, drive, and energy to one thing. You must become so immersed in one thing that all other things fade away. This simply can't happen if you're simultaneously trying to work on a sales report, talk to coworkers on Skype, respond to emails, and text your spouse about dinner.

There will be time to do all those other things, but for now, set them aside and work on the worthy goal that you've chosen. Avoid believing the lie that multitasking is more productive, because it's not.

And really, why would we want to multitask when we're trying to get our most important work done? Again, to quote Gary Keller: *"Why would we ever tolerate multitasking when we're doing our most important work? Just because our day job doesn't involve bypass surgery shouldn't make focus any less critical to our success or the success of others. Your work deserves no less respect."*

Do you respect the work you're doing? Do you want to do it with the excellence that inevitably comes from being in flow state? Then stop multitasking. Each time you switch tasks, it requires energy from your brain - energy that could have been devoted to accomplishing something truly magnificent.

Step #5: Strengthen Concentration

If you want to enter flow state, you absolutely must be able to concentrate fully. If your concentration is wandering, you'll find it difficult to give 100% of yourself to what's in front of you.

So how can you ensure that your concentration is at peak capacity? One of the primary ways is to ensure that you get enough sleep. These days, some people act like it's a badge of honor to survive on just a little sleep. They brag about how they're going to sleep when they're dead.

This is foolish.

High-performers know that sleep is absolutely essential to peak performance, and they ensure that they get enough sleep every night. They go to bed at a reasonable hour and ensure that they have good sleep habits.

If you need an extra jolt of concentration during the day, consider drinking a cup of coffee or tea a short time before you seek to enter flow state. The caffeine can aid your brain in concentrating.

Just be careful that you don't rely too heavily on caffeine or you'll find your energy levels crashing when you don't have enough caffeine in your system.

Step #6: Monitor Emotions

If you still find it difficult to enter flow state, take a step back and look at your emotions. Are you feeling angry? Frustrated? Worried? Overwhelmed?

If this is the case, you may need to do some work to calm down first before you try to enter flow state. After all, it's very difficult to concentrate if you're feeling extremely angry.

At times, your emotional state will govern whether or not you can enter flow state. Keep a close watch on your emotions as you seek to get in the flow.

Creating A Flow State Ritual

One thing that can be extremely helpful when seeking to enter flow state is creating a ritual or series of actions that you perform every single time when you're seeking to enter your flow state. When you begin this series of actions, it's a sign to your body that it's time to enter flow state. The ritual is a trigger – an indicator to your body and brain that something important is about to happen. The more you perform the ritual, the more your body interprets it as a sign to enter flow state and the easier it is to get into flow state. For example, your ritual might look like this:

- Make a cup of coffee.
- Take 10 deep, cleansing breaths.
- Say a brief productivity affirmation.
- Close your door.
- Close your email.
- Turn your phone on airplane mode.
- Mute all notifications on chat applications.
- Put on your headphones.
- Turn on Brain.fm to keep you from being distracted by sound.
- Begin.

Each time you want to enter flow state, follow this exact series of steps. In doing so, you're training both your body and your brain. Every time you follow these steps, your body picks up on them and realizes that you're preparing to enter flow state.

This, in turn, makes it easier for you to get into a state of optimal focus and productivity.

Are you ready to flow?

Now you know about the power of flow state. You know that it can:

- Significantly increase the quality of your life
- Cause your productivity to skyrocket
- Allow you to make progress on your most important tasks
- Stretch you and help you reach your full potential
- Increase your levels of focus and concentration
- Help you achieve your biggest goals

The question now is whether you will do the work necessary to get into flow state on a regular basis. It does require some work. You have to be completely dedicated to the task in front of you. There's no room for distractions. No room for a wandering mind. No room for other thoughts or worries. You may need to take extreme measures, such as:

- Physically cut yourself off from social media sites.
- Use specific types of music to drown out sound.
- Avoid conversations that you would normally participate in.

There's a time for distractions, conversations, emails, messages, and all the other things that come up during the day. But each day, you should have at least some time set aside to work in flow state. It's not necessarily easy to carve out this time, but it's worth it. You'll reach goals you never thought possible. You'll find yourself developing new skills and honing your existing ones. Your enjoyment of your job will significantly increase. And you'll make progress on the things that are most important to you. So don't wait for flow to come to you. If you wait for it to come to you, it won't.

Flow comes from within. You must create it. It's up to you.

Connect now!

Curious for more input on maximizing your professional healthy high performance despite the challenges in the VUCA world and all the new normal? I am happy to connect with you on our social channels or via

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