

In The Flow:

Flow is a mental state in which a person is completely immersed in what engages her or him. The individual feels focused, energized and totally involved. There is a merging of action with acute awareness. Featured prominently in many spiritual traditions, Flow is best represented by a sense of being at one with things. We can apply this concept to the flow of nerve impulses and chemicals in the brain and show how it affects our mind's focus and sense of attunement or FLOW.

In the nucleus of each neuron live our genes (the basic units of heredity) and DNA (the chemical basis of heredity). They incline us to develop particular traits such as physical features, attitudes, behavioral patterns, emotional responses, social roles, mannerisms, and what we call our personality. Neural pathways carry messages from our genes, via electrochemical impulses, to express our personality in the form of emotional responses and interests.

Raised by our parents and other caregivers whose attitudes, beliefs, and behavioral patterns we imitate, we begin using our mirror neurons at about age two. Between our gene coding and using mirror neurons, we develop our distinctive personalities to make what we call "me." Every thought, perception, sensation, cognition, and emotion that expresses this "me" has both an electrical impulse and a chemical component.

We wear our traits so closely that they are what and who we are. As we easily act out these traits over and over again, they become habitual; an electrochemical addiction. These chemicals act like any addictive substance and keep us locked into automatic emotional behaviors. It is like being constantly asleep to what is actually happening to us. Both the external stimulus and the internal reaction create physical-emotional responses that activate automatic thoughts that keep us reacting to life. This automatic pattern of our thoughts, emotions, and actions stops the brain flow and creates a kind of deadness in our lives. When the brain is in a natural flow, we are conscious of the automatic and habituated processes that all too often drive our lives and are poised to change them. Unconscious habituation can make us feel that life is meaningless, with little direct control. Without conscious thought or attention, we feel imposed on and often become a victim to what life brings us.

The modern term for this suffering is "stress," with which we have all become familiar. We are so engaged with stress that we hold tight to physical and emotional tension and its pain without even realizing it. More importantly, we generally don't know how to identify and then reduce or change our sources of stress. Conscious awareness that stress is controlling us is the first step into changing and ending our suffering.

Stress responses can create a negative loop in our body-mind interface that keeps repeating itself over and over. There are two ways the brain responds to our reactions: via the nervous system and via the endocrine system (chemical system). What is exciting is that our habitual emotional responses can be changed or transformed by a shift in how we use our mind. Neurofeedback is a tool available to utilize your neuroplasticity, and create new neuro-genesis toward better self-regulation and FLOW.

Training with neurofeedback creates a more flexible inner architecture and learned knowledge sources under-the-skin choice points where your new horizon picture becomes your present moment sense of personal, cellular de-stress.