



WATCH & LEARN: ARTS & LIFESTYLE
HEALTH & WELLNESS: PEAK-PERFORMANCE
BEAT ANXIETY WITH "FLOW" (4:19 min)
VIDEO Script & Vocabulary (page 1 of 2 /v31489)

INTERMEDIATE (B1 - B2) AND ABOVE

- ◊ Read the script and note new vocabulary
- ◊ Write three sentences using new vocabulary
- ◊ Prepare for the discussion questions

Starting Off

We live in a world filled with risk. But the human brain is not good at thinking in terms of probabilities. Flow might be the answer. When we are in a state of flow, our brain is flooded with the neurotransmitters that are the key to a happy mind.

- 1 Read the **Video Script** below. The words in **bold** are defined in the **Vocabulary** section. Look up any new words in a dictionary.
- 2 Go to the **Your Turn** section at the end of this document. Practice using new words and expressions from the video script to prepare for your next class.
- 3 Look at the **Discussion Questions** and prepare your responses for the next class.

Discussion Questions:

- ◊ Are you familiar with the term "flow".
- ◊ What activities help you to reach a state of flow?
- ◊ Do you believe that engaging in flow as often as possible could be one key to a healthier, happier body & mind?

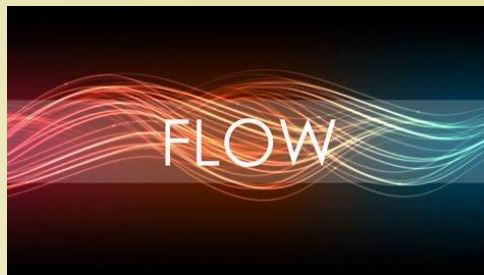
Vocabulary:

- **probabilistic** - the quality or state of being probable (likely to occur)
- **nose dive** - sharp and sudden decline
- **hyperreactive** - having or showing abnormally high sensitivity to stimuli
- **tune up** - general adjustment to ensure operation at peak efficiency
- **reach for** - to move one's hand in order to get or touch (someone or something)
- **psychopharmaceutical** - drug having an effect on the mental state of the user
- **underneath** - close under especially so as to be hidden
- **grateful** - appreciative of benefits received
- **point out** - direct someone's attention to (someone or something)
- **tilt** - to incline, tend, or become drawn toward an opinion, course of action, or one side of a controversy
- **novel** - new
- **trigger** - initiate, actuate, or set off
- **mindfulness** - meditation
- **cognitive** - of, relating to, being, or involving conscious intellectual activity (such as thinking, reasoning, or remembering)

Video Script:

Steven Kotler author, journalist and entrepreneur:

We live in a world where the threats that we face are **probabilistic**. Terrorists might attack. The economy might **nose dive**, right? These are 'probabilistic dangers.' The problem is, the brain's designed not to turn off the fear response until a danger is gone completely. But probabilistic dangers never are gone completely so we tend to be a little more **hyperreactive**. So how do you **tune up** the nervous system rather than having to **reach for psychopharmaceuticals**?



Peak Performance

I often define 'peak performance' as getting our biology to work for us rather than against us. What I'm really talking about are the systems **underneath** - what we call motivation, learning, creativity, and flow.

Gratitude

'Flow' is an **optimized state of consciousness where we feel our best and we perform our best**. The research says there are three tools you can **reach for**. Gratitude has really precise impacts on the brain and anxiety. I like to write down 10 things that I'm grateful for and I write down each one three times. Gratitude is literally...you're just **pointing out** to the brain things that have already happened that are good. And it **tilts** this ratio so we're taking in a lot less negative stuff. This, by the way, lets more **novel** stuff come through. Gratitude can work as a 'flow **trigger**' that way.

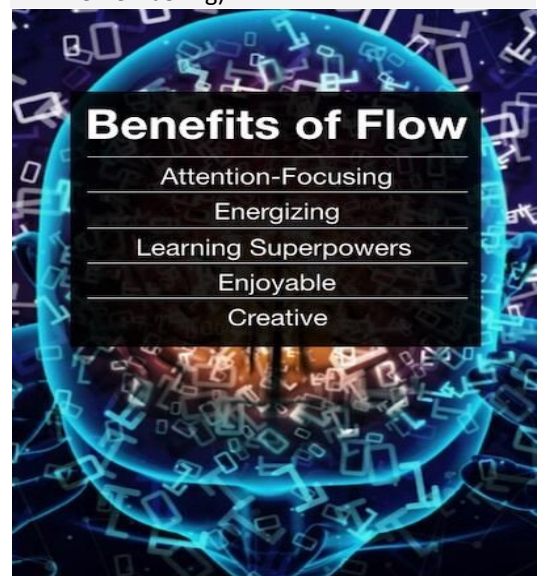
Mindfulness

The second one is mindfulness - 11 minutes a day of **mindfulness** practice. You know, follow your breath, focus meditation basically, is enough to really calm down your nervous system, make you less emotional-reactive.

Exercise

Your third option is exercise - 20 to 40 minutes worth of exercise is enough. And if you're exercising for mental hygiene, right, for **cognition**, and I wanna get into flow, you wanna exercise until basically the voice in your head gets really quiet and your lungs open up. Both things happen because there's a global release of nitric oxide, it's a gaseous, signaling molecule that's sort of everywhere in the body. One of the things it does is it **flushes** stress hormones out of your system. It'll reset the nervous system sort of back to baseline, back to zero.

Video Script continued on next page...





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Video Script continued...

Cognitive Literacy

When I talk about peak performance, we always emphasize 'cognitive literacy': **understanding what's going on in the brain and the body when we're performing at our very best.** Now this is difficult in the modern world because most of us tend to be a little hyper-anxious. Daily problems that we all **deal with** - anxiety, depression, right?

We now know, for example, that a 20-minute walk in the **woods** will outperform most antidepressants on the market. If you take a walk in a part of nature where you haven't been before, you're not only gonna get serotonin, that calming chemical, you're gonna get the dopamine from novelty and complexity and unpredictability. So you're gonna get some feel good, happy juice and some calm. And these are great **tools** to be able to reach for in times of stress rather than having to reach for psychopharmaceuticals.

Flow

On a certain level, we have a **drug store** in our brain, the neurochemicals that **show up** in flow: so dopamine, norepinephrine, anandamide, endorphins, and serotonin. If you were to try to **cocktail** the street drug version of that, right, you're trying to blend like heroin and speed and coke and acid and weed- and point is, you can't do it. It **turns out** the brain can cocktail all of 'em at once, which is why people will prefer flow to almost any experience on Earth. It's our favorite experience. It's the most addictive experience on Earth. Why? 'Cause it cocktails five or six of the largest pleasure drugs the brain can produce.

We're all capable of so much more than we know. That is a commonality **across the board**. That's the largest lesson that 30 years in studying peak performance has taught me. And one of the big reasons is we're all **hardwired** for flow and flow is a massive amplification of what's possible for ourselves.

Vocabulary continued...

- **deal with** - manage / address a problem
- **woods** - forest; wooded area
- **tools** - something used in performing an operation or necessary in the practice of a vocation or profession
- **drug store** - pharmacy
- **show up** - be plainly evident
- **cocktail** - blend together
- **turn out** - prove to be in the result or end
- **across the board** - embracing or affecting all classes or categories
- **hardwired** - implemented in the form of permanent electronic circuits; also connected or incorporated by or as if by permanent electrical connections (concepts of attractiveness may be universal and *hardwired* into the human brain)

Your Turn! Using new vocabulary is the best way to learn and remember it.

- 1 Choose three words or expressions from the video that are new to you and write a sentence using each one in the box below.
- 2 Try to use them in a context that is familiar to you to help you retain them.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

