

Hope

Definition Of Hope

- A dictionary definition of hope is “a desire and the confident expectation of its fulfillment”.
- In the 17th century, a Dutch philosopher and theologian, Baruch de Spinoza, defined hope as a joy that comes from past or future images when something is in doubt. (The encyclopedia of positive psychology 2009)

- Hope is defined as “the process of thinking about one’s goals, along with the motivation to move towards those goals (agency) and the ways to achieve those goals (pathways)” (Snyder, 1995).
- Hope in positive psychology is **an overall perception that goals can be attained with beliefs and efforts**. To hope means to have the agency and the pathways to go after the desired goals. Positive psychology sees hope in terms of positive future expectations.

What is Hope?

- According to Snyder et al. (1991) **hope** is a positive cognitive state based on a sense of successful goal-directed determination and planning to meet these goals.
- In other words, hope is like a snap-shot of a person's current goal-directed thinking, highlighting the motivated pursuit of goals and the expectation that those goals can be achieved.

According to Snyder (2000) hope has 3 necessary ingredients

- **1. *Goal-oriented Thoughts***
 - **2. *Pathways to Achievement***
 - **3. *Agency Thoughts***
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- **Goals Thinking** – the clear conceptualization of valuable goals.
 - **Pathways Thinking** – the capacity to develop specific strategies to reach those goals.
 - **Agency Thinking** – the ability to initiate and sustain the motivation for using those strategies.

- Hope does not necessarily fade in the face of adversity; in fact hope often endures despite poverty, war and famine. While no one is exempt from experiencing challenging life events, hope fosters an orientation to life that allows a grounded and optimistic outlook even in the most challenging of circumstances.
- There are some examples of hope which are as follows
- **1. Realistic Hope**

Example of hope continue..

- **2. Utopian Hope**
- **3. Chosen Hope**
- **4. Transcendent Hope**
- According to Eaves, Nichter, and Ritenbaugh (2016), transcendent hope encompasses three types of hope, namely:
 - *Patient Hope* – a hope that everything will work out well in the end.
 - *Generalized Hope* – hope not directed toward a specific outcome.
 - *Universal Hope* – a general belief in the future and a defense against despair in the face of challenges.

- Also referred to as existential hope, transcendent hope describes a stance of general hopefulness not tied to a specific outcome or goal; put simply, it is the hope that something good can happen.

Flow

What is the Concept and Meaning of Flow?

- Psychological Flow captures the positive mental state of being completely absorbed, focused, and involved in your activities at a certain point in time, as well as deriving enjoyment from being engaged in that activity. Perhaps the Flow state, colloquially termed being 'in the zone', is best described by one of the participants interviewed in the earliest stages of 'Flow research' (Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi, 1988: 195):

[Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi](#), the positive psychologist credited with having popularized the concept of Flow, offers another definition for the mental state of being ‘in Flow’ in his interview with [Wired](#) magazine:

- *“...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.”*

- If it's something that sounds akin to other mental states, like those that meditation or yoga can facilitate, it may be interesting to note that similar ideas feature in Buddhist, Taoist, and Hindu literature. To put it succinctly, Flow can be thought of as (Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi, 1988: 36):

The Theory and Psychology of Flow

- Flow theory became of interest to positive psychology researchers Jacob Getzels and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi when they were studying the creative process during the '60s (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976).
- Watching an artist at work, Csikszentmihalyi became intrigued by their single-minded, unique focus, and persistence to continue with the painting, in spite of any discomfort, tiredness, or hunger. On finishing the painting, however, the artist entirely ceased showing any interest in the completed work.

- Csikszentmihalyi (1975) then took his research into other fields, looking at the circumstances and subjective nature of this enjoyment-related phenomenon in dancers and chess players, to name a few. It became apparent that the Flow state was brought about by at least two key things: goals and feedback.
- First, an optimal Flow state was created when people tackled challenges that they perceived to be at just the right level of 'stretch' for their skill sets. In other words, neither too tough nor too easy as to be boring.

- Second, they had unambiguous short-term goals and received instant feedback on their progress. This latter condition made them aware of their progress and let them change their goal-oriented actions accordingly.
- Throughout it all, people described being ‘in Flow’ as a highly pleasurable experience. They enjoyed being in control of the task-related largely to the ongoing feedback they received. Ultimately, they found whatever they were doing to be highly self-rewarding (Stavrou et al., 2015).

Flow and Positive Psychology

- Naturally, the next point of interest for positive psychologists became how Flow could be created, controlled, and understood in relation to other aspects of the self that allow us to flourish.
- Flow became fascinating to positive psychologists already looking at performance, goal orientation, creativity, attention, and of course, emotions. Only a little after that, the concept grew more popular with researchers such as Deci and Ryan (1985), who were interested in flow within intrinsic motivation.

- Most importantly, it's been considered a huge part of improving our human experience for its role in living a *meaningful life* (Seligman, 2002: 249). A life in which we use our virtues and strengths for 'something much larger' than we are, where we spend less time worrying about the inauthentic and the mundane. Where we're less annoyed by the boredom of the too-easy, or overwhelmed by the frustration of the too-challenging.

- Understanding how to enter the flow state, and maintain it, therefore, is seen as a great way to enjoy the activities we get engaged in.
- Csikszentmihalyi often describes Flow as an *autotelic* experience.
An *autotelic* experience quite simply describes an activity that's pleasant, enjoyable, and intrinsically motivating.

- It's perhaps a little easier to understand how Csikszentmihalyi's seminal work has impacted the field of positive psychology if we consider the nine different dimensions that comprise the concept.

- The universal factors of flow, per Csikszentmihalyi's studies (1990; Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi, 2002), include:
- Challenge-skill balance;
- Action-awareness merging;
- Clear goals;
- Unambiguous feedback;
- Concentration on the task at hand;
- A sense of control;
- Loss of self-consciousness;
- Transformation of time; and
- Autotelic experience.