

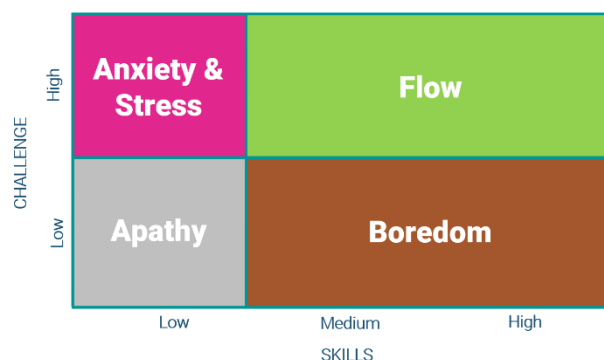
# Engagement

# Self-Coaching Guide

**PERMA** states that **Engagement** contributes to our wellbeing and brings us happiness. [See SCG – ‘How can I improve my wellbeing?’ for more about PERMA.] Engagement is often referred to as being ‘in the flow’. The distinct and varied characteristics of experiencing flow, when in a situation, task, or project, are: it’s challenging but achievable, the goals are clear, feedback is immediate, it’s completely absorbing, intrinsically rewarding, we feel in control and unselfconscious, and it causes us to lose track of time. The activities which cause flow are personal to us, e.g. sport, music, reading, gardening, other hobbies. Experiencing flow produces positive emotions and leads to personal growth.

## How can I become more engaged?

To experience flow, an activity needs to have the correct balance of challenge to skill. If an activity is too challenging for your current level of skill then this can cause anxiety and stress (i.e. overchallenged). If an activity is not challenging enough then this can cause you to be apathetic and bored (i.e. over skilled). To experience flow, you need to have sufficient challenge for your current level of skill. This is summarised in the diagram opposite.



If you are overchallenged, you can experience flow by reducing the level of challenge and/or increasing your current level of skill. The level of challenge could be reduced by breaking the activity down into more achievable parts. You could increase your current level of skill through training and practice. Also, you could discover what other skills and strengths you have in another area of your life and apply them to this activity. [See SCG – ‘How can I play to my strengths?’]

If you are over skilled, you can experience flow by making the activity more challenging, thus requiring an increased level of skill. With some creativity, it’s possible to make the most boring activity more interesting and challenging by changing the activity somehow. Some examples are:

- **Time** – do it more quickly, against the clock, before a specific event occurs
- **Order** – do it in a different order or work pattern, with or without breaks
- **Participation** – do it just by yourself or as part of a team
- **Competition** – do it challenging yourself or others
- **Gamification** – turn it into a game and play it yourself or with others

Any activity, even domestic chores, can be made challenging and fun, so you get more flow in your life.

Remember, often it’s only after experiencing flow that you feel the benefit, and you realise how much happiness a particular activity has brought you.

*“The happiest people spend much time in a state 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.” Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi*

## More Information

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