

The benefits of flow at work

Achieving flow at work contributes to personal well-being and improves performance, as Alberto Ribera and Lucía Ceja explain. The key to achieving this gratifying state is to face attainable challenges that stretch our capacities without stressing us out.



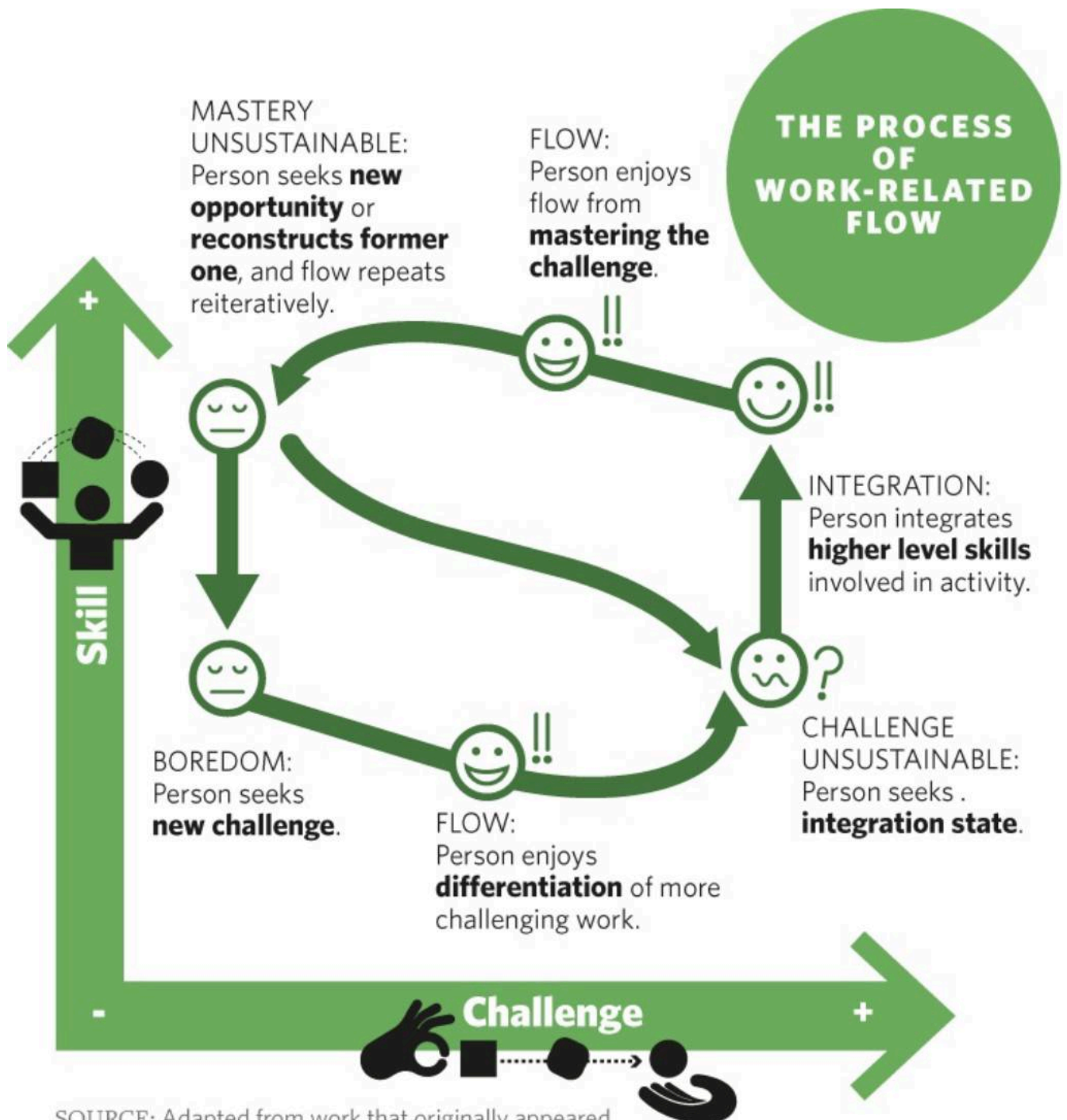
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Every job has repetitive tasks that can feel limiting. To remedy this, we need activities that stretch our abilities and capacities. The key is to find the right balance: if the challenge is too much, we get stressed; too little, and we get bored. Ideally, we will experience *flow* — a gratifying state when individuals perceive they have adequate abilities to cope with greater challenges.

IESE's [**Alberto Ribera**](#) and Lucia Ceja [add to the body of literature on flow](#). Flow has been shown to have a positive impact on personal happiness and well-being. When applied to work, it can result in better performance.

The authors present a framework depicting how it works. The goal is to move people through these phases, capitalizing on the prime moments of flow and knowing when to pivot before the benefits get lost. This process will depend on the personal characteristics and capacities of each person.

There's virtually no job that couldn't benefit from this model. From answering the phone to cleaning hotel rooms to designing marketing plans, what seems mundane for some can become energizing, provided that people are enabled and supported to transform their daily tasks into new opportunities for growing and reaching their full potential.



SOURCE: Adapted from work that originally appeared in "Suddenly I Get Into the Zone: Examining Discontinuities and Nonlinear Changes in Flow Experiences at Work" by L. Ceja and J. Navarro (*Human Relations* journal, vol. 65, no. 9).

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