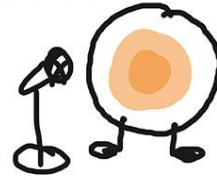


«It's the Purpose, Dear!»

**Generation Purpose
Podcast**
by **Steve Weisshaupt**
with Nadja Schnetzler
and Laurent Burst



It's the Purpose, Dear!

Transcript - Episode 4 - Finding Flow

Steve: [00:00:00] Hi, it's Steve and Welcome to «It's the Purpose, Dear!» If you're new here, I would highly recommend starting from the intro episode. If you're like me and cannot be bothered, here's what you should know: every episode, I guide you through a reflective journey about Purpose and collaboration thanks to the passion and knowledge of my friends and permanent guests Nadja and Laurent. They've been making purpose work for over thirty years with thousands of people and hundreds of teams at work and in their individual lives. If by the end of the episode you have any questions or feedback, you can always send me an e-mail! you'll find it in the episode's description. Now that we are up to date, enjoy! [00:00:42][42.3]

Steve: [00:00:49] Some tasks are just plain boring or overwhelming. But when you find a right middle between challenging and motivating, you enter what is called the zone. [00:00:58][9.7]

Pixar's Soul: [00:01:05] What is this place? You know how when you humans are really into something and it feels like you're in another place, feels like you're in the zone, right? Yeah. Well, this is the zone. It's the space between the physical and spiritual. [00:01:17][10.3]

Steve: [00:01:17] That's how it is described in Pixar's movie «Soul». But what is happening there? [00:01:23][5.3]

Nadja: [00:01:23] When we are in this zone, there is where the most things (are) happening. There we feel like we have agency. This is where we, you know, we learn to juggle and it starts working out. But it's difficult. But we keep doing it. [00:01:36][13.0]

Steve: [00:01:37] Although the zone or flow state was already discussed in Lao Tzu Daodejing in the fifth century before Christ. It's been theorized in psychology last century. [00:01:47][9.8]

Nadja: [00:01:47] It's actually based on some research by a researcher with a very long name. Steve, you will have to figure it out. [00:01:54][6.9]

Steve: [00:01:55] That researcher is Hungarian psychologist Mihály Csíkszentmihályi. According to flow theory, a mental state that facilitates productivity and predicts that the balance between a task difficulty and an individual ability to accomplish it, boosts motivation. We encountered that phenomenon with runners and what we call runner's high, but it can appear in a wide range of activities like playing music, doing artistic or creative work, playing games, or even solving problems. But I'm sure you've guessed it. We believe that flow isn't rocket science, and when the right methods are used, anybody can enter the zone. [00:02:37][42.3]

Nadja: [00:02:38] If we know what our purpose is, we can create more flow because we will not let the distractions into our process. We will not let things that are irrelevant to the purpose into our process. We will not let things that are not part of the purpose inside. We will design tasks or projects so they are in fit with the purpose which immediately creates more flow. Because purpose is something that comes from the inside and we want to be intrinsically motivated to do things and not extrinsic we motivated. [00:03:13][35.2]

Steve: [00:03:15] In neuroscience we would call purpose an intrinsic reward. It is a series of internal factors that motivates the completion of a task. So doing tasks that go in the direction of a purpose will engage someone to the highest level of reward. Purpose helps us getting rid of the distraction that will disengage us from doing what we do. When tasks are done with purpose it answers a deeper need beyond the tasks to do. Hence, we are rewarded. This internal rewarding can take different forms. [00:03:47][32.7]

Laurent: [00:03:48] I hate doing sandbox work. I could never be in a university and do things like theoretically. No, let's do it concretely. So experimenting every day is part of being in the flow. To know that we are learning something. And also to smile. Like to think of «Okay, how will that turn out? Will somebody smile with me like, just is there a element of surprise element of, you know, trying out something, not knowing if it will work?» And then it works and you're like «Wow, that was nice!» So that's part of being in the flow and for me, it's all about focus. So it really speaks to me to have a limitation and give all the energy within that limitation. And when I get distracted, like with phone calls or other interruptions, that's the opposite of flow. [00:04:39][50.8]

Nadja: [00:04:41] Fun, lots of laughter. I really need things to feel light. If they feel heavy, I completely fall out of my flow and I get very insecure. So it has to be fun. It has to be light. It has to make sense to me. If something I'm doing doesn't make sense to me, forget it. So I think these are the the things that create flow for me. [00:05:02][21.2]

Steve: [00:05:03] So before entering the realm of flow, it is important to understand what personally helps you enter that state. [00:05:08][5.3]

Laurent: [00:05:08] What do you need to be in flow and what takes you out of the flow zone is already so much revealing. We do that in the «My manual» workshops and everybody says «Oh my God, there was just a one hour workshop and why did I never ask myself the question about flow? Because I know everything and now I can tell it others and take care that this happens or doesn't happen so I'm more in the flow.» And one very important thing is like what takes you out of the flow zone? And it's very often all these meetings and asking others for permission and not having the agency to just do things. [00:05:44][35.9]

Steve: [00:05:45] Reflecting on your ways of working helps finding out points of entry and exit of the flow state. Questions such as «What makes me disengage from a task?» or «What do I need to be focused?» can help you coin your needs. Because if your answers are aligned with your purpose, you will undeniably work purposefully. [00:06:04][19.5]

Nadja: [00:06:05] Purpose helps us to find the flow again. It's very easy to lose the flow, even if you are good at thinking about these things and good at collaboration. Teams that are very good at creating flow can have very bad days where the flow gets lost or where we feel stuck or where we feel like nothing is progressing. Now, why isn't it progressing? And often it has to do with also not being in the purpose. [00:06:36][30.8]

Steve: [00:06:37] When flow is found, not only does it work on a personal level, but flow can also be integrated as a work process. [00:06:43][6.7]

Laurent: [00:06:44] If you think of collaboration and how big organizations function, there are so many aspects that stop you from from being in the flow. And one of them is to not have the autonomy or not to be empowered, to decide, not to know what are the criterias for decisions. So usually you have a meeting, then you work on something, then you have a meeting again, then you work. So it's always stop, go, stop, go, stop. [00:07:11][26.3]

Steve: [00:07:11] Interruptions are the pet peeves of flow. We know it's hard to avoid them. There's often something more urgent that comes and forces us to stop what we were doing. But interruptions can be managed. Nadja recalls what got her to find the right tool to make flow happen in any situation. [00:07:26][14.8]

Nadja: [00:07:27] The first time I got in touch with the idea of flow was probably, you know, 15 years ago or so when someone introduced Kanban to me. And it really struck me that in our culture we're very much concerned with efficiency, like how can we press as much as possible through like a very thin tube and make a lot happen under pressure, kind of. While the Japanese idea of Kanban is really about flow, it's about being concerned with how well stuff gets through the system. If it's elegant, if it feels good, if it is good quality, things like that. And what really struck me when I got more into this is that in the end this is also more efficient. So instead of looking for efficiency everywhere, let's be concerned with flow and build the beauty of flow and let's be concerned with the beauty of flow and not so much concerned with these ideas of efficiency and can you get more done in less time and productivity because these are all illusions. [00:08:41][74.7]

Steve: [00:08:42] And there are parameters to ensure that what go through this system is worth it. [00:08:47][4.5]

Laurent: [00:08:47] There is something we call firewall. So before you actually put something on a Kanban board, you ask yourself «Can it go through the firewall?» What are the criterias to even come onto the backlog of my Kanban board or our Kanban board. So it's really good to know what you want to do and what you don't want to do. Nadja said that it helps when you visualize your processes, like company is a visual tool. It also helps that you show to others what your priorities are. There is also the tool «Get-it-done-Session». So the team meets for 4 hours or 3 hours or 2 hours and gets things done. So the whole team and everybody individually is in the flow because everybody brings their tasks, what they would like to get done together or individually during this time. And there you really feel, feel flow because at the end of the 4 hours, so many things have been done and you learned a lot about the other people and about the other tasks. So it was a lot of fun, too. [00:09:48][61.2]

Steve: [00:09:48] The zone is a space open to anyone, but there are conditions. Challenges and opportunity for actions can stretch, but not overmatch your existing skills and clear goals with the ability to see and have feedback about your progress. When falling under those conditions, your actions and awareness will emerge and give you a sense of control because you'll know how to respond to

whatever happens next. A Kanban is a perfect tool to experience flow as a team. It allows people to decide what they really want to do and gives a clear view of their progress. And also fun ideas. Fun is key to enter a flow state. It doesn't mean one has to find everything fun. Rather, it means finding ways to make the work and collaboration fun. Certain bridge skills with the challenge to get the task done. The use of flow principles in everyday life sets obstacles aside because it acts as a buffer zone out of space and time. It builds on your interests and helps your skills grow with confidence. Having these parameters in place creates a positive experience that motivates you to persist and in return brings you closer to your purpose and all the fun and rewards along the way. [00:09:48][0.0]

[560.3]

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