

## **FLOW**

I've been reading a great little book called *The Power of Flow*. In my experience, the best way to become something, achieve something or have something is to begin by studying it. There have been many times in my life when I have experienced flow or synchronicity. I wanted to tap into that energy again so I'm reading this book. Around December 1st I began mulling over what I would write about in my January newsletter. I had turned a few ideas over in my mind. Then I happened to be on hold waiting for a customer service agent when I heard a story on the recording. Now I have my topic. Flow!

January is the time when people and organizations set goals if they set them at all. My mind moves to the goal process usually because I'm doing Treasure Board Workshops in December and January. 1998 is over, 1999 is beginning. 1998 achievements are in the past. 1999 is a clean slate. What do I want to write on it? What kind of year and achievements do I want for this New Year? Anyone who has studied performance work knows that peak performers and high achievers make timed, written goals. The well-formedness conditions of goals and outcomes have to be specific, be stated in positive language patterns, be an appropriate achievable chunk size, and initiated and maintained by self. To set goals, a person must be able to answer the question, "What do you want?"

There is a catch to this. Here's the story.

A company president asked one of his senior vice presidents what the V.P. expected to accomplish this coming year in sales. The V.P. replied, "Well, I know what my direct report managers are expecting to do. I'll have to ask their managers what they expect to do and I'll get back to you when I have a complete report. The president said emphatically, "NOOOOO!!! I don't care what people in your organization expect to do. I want to know what you want to accomplish [as the visionary of your organization]."

Setting goals and going for dreams are not accomplished by checking our resources, funds, people, and schedule, then setting the goal according to the limited parameters of our history. Setting goals, dreaming the dream, answering the question, "what do I want", comes first. Then we check resources, etc. to see what we need and plan the process.

When someone says to me, "I want to take your class, but I don't have the money in my budget." That may be true. I also know that taking the class is not a goal, because a true goal is set ("I want to take the class") first, then the budget can be planned to make allowances.

When I had the goal of climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro, I did not think, "Ok, let me first check to see if I have enough time, money, down parkas, wool socks, long underwear, hiking boots, first aid kits, rain gear". I set the goal; I had the dream and then followed it up with planning and made sure that I had what I needed to accomplish it. When President Kennedy set the goal to go to the moon, he didn't first check how many rocket boosters, astronauts, mission control people and Tang packets we had. He didn't say we can't go because Gore-Tex hadn't been developed. He said we're going to the moon and we're going to get there before the Russians. Everything else was part of the planning and

process. The goal or the dream goes first. Otherwise, we simply use our lack of resources as a reason not to start. In other words, to fail.

People will say to me, "If I set a goal and don't make it, then I'll fail." We will definitely fail if we don't set the goal. I once had a client who said that her "fear of failing" kept her from doing the things she needed to do to be successful. No. She was afraid of success. How could she be afraid of failing? She was already failing by her inaction.

I recently asked a friend of mine who was very stuck in a job situation, "What do you want to have happen?" Her reply was, "I don't know. I can't predict the future." Translation, "I refuse to take responsibility for what might happen to me because I'm the victim and I can blame the company or something else for my failure." By not predicting the future by setting goals, we are, indeed, predicting the future. We will now become the victim of our life like a boat cast about in a choice less sea of disaster, no aim or direction and our results will show it. My great mentor Christina Hall, has written in her training manual, "The best way to predict the future is to create it because you already are."

For those of you who know the well-formed outcome process, set your goals for 1999 and do an outcome process. Get clear and specific on what it is that you want regardless of the circumstances and chunk into manageable steps. The rest will Flow!

Flow by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. "Why are some people weakened by stress, while others gain strength from it? Basically the answer is simple: those who know how to transform a hopeless situation into a new flow activity that can be controlled will be able to enjoy themselves and emerge stronger from the ordeal. There are three main steps that seem to be involved in such transformations: 1. Unselfconscious self-assurance (the implicit belief that their destiny was in their hands). 2. Focusing attention on the world (spend very little time thinking about themselves). 3. The discovery of new solutions (remove obstacles in the way of a goal or change the goal to discover different solutions).

We will never become aware of other possibilities unless...we pay attention to what is happening around us, and evaluate events on the basis of their direct impact on how we feel, rather than evaluating them exclusively in terms of preconceived notions."

There is no better model of learning and growth to achieve the above than NLP. Using the definable tools of NLP, people have done things that they never had the nerve to do before studying NLP...like, put their marriage back together, start their own company, quadruple their income, move to a different company, change careers, learn to be happier, expand their business, find the perfect relationship, get themselves out of an unhealthy relationship. What would you like to do quickly, easily and with self assurance?