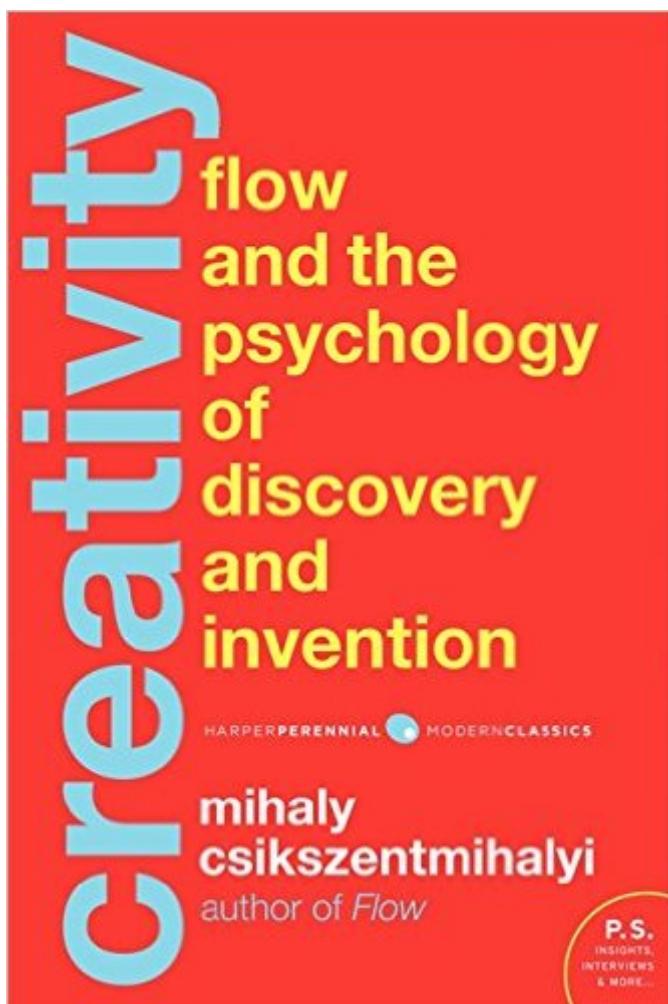


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# Creativity: Flow And The Psychology Of Discovery And Invention



## Synopsis

The classic study of the creative process from the national bestselling author of *Flow*creativity is about capturing those moments that make life worth living. Legendary psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi reveals what leads to these moments—be it the excitement of the artist at the easel or the scientist in the lab—so that this knowledge can be used to enrich people's lives. Drawing on nearly one hundred interviews with exceptional people, from biologists and physicists, to politicians and business leaders, to poets and artists, as well as his thirty years of research on the subject, Csikszentmihalyi uses his famous flow theory to explore the creative process. He discusses such ideas as why creative individuals are often seen as selfish and arrogant, and why the "tortured genius" is largely a myth. Most important, he explains why creativity needs to be cultivated and is necessary for the future of our country, if not the world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Based on interviews with 91 internationally recognized creative people-among them Nobel physicist John Bardeen, arts administrator-performer Kitty Carlisle Hart, writer Denise Levertov, jazz musician Oscar Peterson, electronics executive Robert Galvin-this book offers a highly readable anatomy of creativity. As Csikzentmihalyi (*Flow*) argues, creativity requires not only unusual individuals, but a culture and field of experts that can foster and validate such work. Most creative people, the author suggests, have dialectic personalities: smart yet naive, both extroverted and introverted, etc.

Expanding on his previous book, Csikszentmihalyi suggests that complex and challenging work exemplifies fully engaged "flow." Synthesizing study results, he reports that none of the interviewees

was popular during adolescence; while they were not necessarily more brilliant than their college peers, they displayed more "concentrated attention." Later, they kept a consistent focus on future work. The author reminds us that while individuals can make their own opportunities, a supportive society offering resources and rewards can foster creativity. His advice may sound like homilies—"Try to be surprised by something every day"—but is often worthy. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the MP3 CD edition.

Bringing together 30 years of research, Csikszentmihalyi (psychology, Univ. of Chicago) describes this book as "an effort to make more understandable the mysterious process by which men and women come up with new ideas and new things." Utilizing the interviews garnered from 91 respondents (ranging from philosopher Mortimer Adler to biologist Edward O. Wilson to politician Eugene McCarthy), the author of the best-selling *Flow* (LJ 3/15/90) demonstrates the processes that these acknowledged creative thinkers and doers go through and the characteristics that make them stand out. He deals with what makes them and others like them "creative"?which he defines as "a process by which a symbolic domain in the culture is changed"?and how the conduct of their professional and personal lives illustrates these traits. Csikszentmihalyi also deals with creativity and aging and ways to enhance one's own personal creativity. Although the benefits of this study to scholars are obvious, this thought-provoking mixture of the scholarly and colloquial will enlighten inquisitive general readers, too. A welcome addition to both academic and public libraries.?David M. Turkalo, Suffolk Univ. Law Sch. Lib., BostonCopyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the MP3 CD edition.

Wonderful and Inspiring! I bought this book because I was interested in learning about the findings from the author's team on creativity, which was all very informative, as expected and advertised. What I found to my great delight, however, in the latter chapters of the book, were numerous inspiring examples of creative people, many famous individuals from many fields of work, their stories, their approaches and habits, and their ongoing creative activities into the later years of their lives. It seems that the older we get, the better we get at doing synthesizing or systems-based work - and thus, make meaningful contributions!

I use "Creativity" as a textbook in a class that I teach about the creative process. It does a great job of exploding the myth that creativity is some kind of mystical experience, abundant outpouring of talent, innate genius, or uncontrollable impulse. Everyone is creative; everyone can increase their

creativity. This is worth knowing because being creativity benefits every profession. It's not just for poets and painters: think about the way that thinking-outside-the-box is the key to success for business start-ups, technology, law, science, and politics. Csikszentmihalyi can be a bit dry, but the substantial content of this book and the practical implications of his research are PRICELESS. Diana Glyer is the author of The Company They Keep: C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien as Writers in Community

Used for research. Pretty helpful

great

I really admire Csikszentmihalyi, and the conceptual work he did here is great, with one exception--the "changed the world forever" level of creativity that he engages with here isn't all that useful. How many of us interact with that level of "genius?" As a researcher looking into creativity, I would have liked to see more engagement with small-c creativity. All that said--what great stories!

Good book! Very interesting!

Loved this book! It was an inspiring, uplifting read. Additionally, it was a wonderful continuation of his previous book(s) on Flow psychology!

Creativity is important to me. I am in the second half of life and enjoying photography and expressing my love of beauty through this medium. This book helps me understand creative people, how to be creative, and where creativity comes from. This is an easy read, interesting, and very helpful. I highly recommend it.

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