Introducing Cameron Norsworthy

Across a range of fields, Cameron Norsworthy has been exploring, describing, understanding and promoting the concept of Flow, to help others understand how they too can integrate optimal experiences in their life. Starting out as an international athlete, playing three world championships and representing the UK in junior tennis, Cameron experienced some of the world’s best intensive training centres in America and the UK. Retiring from competition due to injury, Cameron went on to study Sports Psychology at postgraduate level and is focussing on Flow within his PhD whilst publishing multiple academic articles on Flow. Cameron is also a coach, Keynote and TEDx speaker and founder and CEO of The Flow Centre.

Top Takeaways from the ‘Get a Grip’ Blog with Cameron Norsworthy: Flow

1. Flow is a state of optimal experience, when the body is in internal harmony and synchronicity. It is experienced as effortless action and moving with intuitive drive. When in Flow we feel immersed, fully engaged, deeply involved in a meaningful task and left with a sense of fulfilment.

2. Mindfulness can help with finding Flow. Both Mindfulness and Flow reduce and even detach us from the significance of thoughts. Using a taxi metaphor, Cameron explains that if we think of thoughts like taxis and how they come into our mind like a taxi pulling up we have a choice. We can get in the taxi or let it pass. When we follow a thought and give it significance by paying attention to it, it is like getting in a taxi. That taxi now has us and can take us anywhere, perhaps into dangerous neighbourhoods. Similarly a thought like ‘I’m going to fail’ can capture our attention and take us into self-doubt, low mood, memories of past failures, anxiety and so on. In Mindfulness we notice the thoughts and choose not to follow them, instead staying in the present and bringing our attention back to our current experience. In Flow we are so immersed and engaged in our activity those thoughts don’t distract us, we are not constantly reacting to thoughts but reacting more from intuitive action. In this way Mindfulness can help us find Flow, but they are different as Flow will not have us being aware of letting the thoughts pass, but we will be doing this anyway.

3. Finding Flow can help us perform in situations that could be experienced as challenging and even stressful. By working in Flow we can enjoy the challenge, find it meaningful and experience it as an optimal experience instead of finding the task stressful. Cameron talks of being ‘in fear or in Flow’ or ‘in flight or in Flow’ It would be stressful to take on an important task full of fear of ‘what if’s’ and being in high alert, yet in a state of Flow action is effortless, performance is enhanced and the task is experienced as fulfilling.

4. Physiological and brain studies have shown that the state of Flow is a distinct bodily state.

5. A first step in helping ourselves and others reach a state of Flow is to start recognising when we or someone else is in a state of Flow. Parents and teachers can look out for when a child is in Flow, when they are completely immersed in a meaningful task and gaining a sense of fulfilment.

6. We may sometimes interrupt Flow, either by jumping in and rescuing a child when they seem to be having an initial difficulty, thereby disempowering them to work through a solution; or by the demands of life requiring us to stop an activity to keep with a schedule.
7. If we notice a child in Flow, we should consider whether we can be flexible with the schedule, recognising that in Flow a child will be having an experience which helps cultivate a desire to learn; promotes self-regulation and moves them into opportunities for creativity and innovation.

8. We can also encourage children to value the experience of doing something by asking them about their experiences. Instead of focusing on the outcome (e.g. How did you do? / What did you make? / How fast did you go?), ask questions about the experience (How was that experience?) This helps a child prioritise experience and recognise states of Flow and other experiences and it will help improve self-regulation.

9. When it comes to computer games, people can experience Flow when playing, however, Cameron reminds us that when playing computer games people can also check-out from life for a while and almost go into a trance like state and some screen time may not be adding value to the person’s life and excessive screen time will take away opportunities for more variety of activities.

10. For teachers, Cameron highlights that Flow is contagious and the more it is recognised and experienced the easier it becomes to get into Flow. He suggests that when a teacher is in a state of Flow while teaching then students will find it easier to achieve a state of Flow.

11. In advising schools Cameron emphasises the importance of the whole school approach in promoting Flow. In schools leaders and teachers can become more skilled at recognising Flow, appreciating the benefits and providing an environment and system which is more conducive Flow. Allowing students more autonomy is important and also asking students about their experience. For example, in some schools they have introduced a system whereby students can let their teacher know what level of Flow they have been experiencing.

12. In terms of working with talented young athletes, Cameron advises that understanding the intrinsic motivations of the child or young person is paramount to sustaining their performance in the sport and looking after their wellbeing. It is also very important to be aware of how they deal with success and failure. Can they see failure as a learning and growth opportunity or is it something painful to just get through? Finally, parents should always be helping to manage a balance, in terms of optimum training but not overtraining. This is important for physiological reasons but also the wider wellbeing. Parents can support by providing opportunities and adaptations to enable engagement in different aspects of life such as academics, sports, social life and so on.

Resources signposted

- The Flow Centre - [www.theflowcentre.com](http://www.theflowcentre.com)
- The Flow Library – found on [www.theflowcentre.com](http://www.theflowcentre.com), has a list of interesting research surrounding flow.
- New book coming out – Not titled yet! Keep checking at [www.theflowcentre.com](http://www.theflowcentre.com)
- Finding Flow: The Psychology of Engagement with Everyday Life by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

**To contact Cameron Norsworthy**

Don't hesitate to contact! Either go through [www.theflowcentre.com](http://www.theflowcentre.com) and complete a contact form or email directly cameron@theflowcentre. Cameron is based in Perth but often in the UK, happy to travel and is also accessible via technology.