



# Writing in Flow: Keys to Enhanced Creativity

By Susan K. Perry

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## Editorial Review

### Amazon.com Review

In *Writing in Flow*, Susan K. Perry applies the theories of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (*Flow*) about the concept of "flow" to the writing process. A writer's being in flow is comparable to an athlete's being in a "zone." "You know you've been in flow," Perry says, "when time seems to have disappeared.... You become so deeply immersed ... that you forget yourself and your surroundings." For this book, Perry interviewed 76 authors--including T. Coraghessan Boyle, Sue Grafton, Donald Hall, and Jane Smiley--about their experiences with flow. How often do they experience it? What does it feel like? How does one encourage it? How does the writing that occurs during a flow state differ from that which is achieved in a more belabored manner? While the book often reads a little too much like the doctoral thesis it once was, Perry has culled some fascinating insights into the creative process from a terrific collection of writers.

Flow happens, Perry suggests, "when our mind or body is voluntarily stretched to its limit." How you experience flow depends on who you are. If you're a deep sleeper, for instance, you may also be more likely able to enter a deep flow state. For some writers, flow occurs during every writing session; for others, it is more elusive. There are those few who neither experience nor court it. "Nothing flows in my writing process," says John Irving. "My job is to make it flow for the reader, and that is a very deliberate, very slow, very unflowing process." But Irving is plainly in the minority. Most of the writers interviewed here cherish the flow state above all else. "It is the possibility of re-creating these moments," says Faye Moskowitz, "that keeps me going as a writer." Flow "seems to me the way life should always be," adds Lynne Sharon Schwartz, "freed from time and petty daily concerns and all forms of self-consciousness except the very deepest." --*Jane Steinberg*

### Review

Each chapter ends with a page or two of 'keys' that give readers suggestions... Because these tidbits are based on strategies used by real writers, they usually sound fresh, practical, and ingenious unlike the stale, mechanical advice of so many how-to books. Helpful as well as enjoyable to read. -- *Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Psychology and the Arts [newsletter of Division 10, American Psychological Association], Summer 1999*

I highly recommend WRITING IN FLOW. Perry uncovered how 76 published authors arrive at that wonderful place we have all been to, where writing seems automatic and time ceases. -- *Write! [Newsletter of Gulf Coast Chapter of the National Writers Association], July 1999*

If you are interested in other writers' takes on writing in flow, or would like to know how to enter this state more often, this is a must-read. -- *Mariska Stamenkovic, Keystrokes Magazine, Dec. 3, 1999*

The good news that Perry offers is that anyone can learn to enter flow more often and that there is not only one way to be in flow. By seeing all the myriad and quixotic ways that writers write, this book can help readers recognize the common elements of flow so they can learn to do and trust what works for them. If one is already motivated to write, Perry's book can help. -- *Foreword Magazine, July 1999*

This book inspires and explains. It is a must read for every writer, no matter whether you write poetry, articles, novels, or ad copy. -- *Dana Nourie, Writer's Guidelines Database, Aug. 9, 1999*

Unlike standard academic studies, Perry maintains a connection with the mysteries of creativity. She avoids

quantifying the life out of the writing experience, while presenting an objective study of subjective experience. It's a fine line, and she walks it with the grace of a high-wire artist. . . . If you find strength in the company of writers sharing experience and insight, WRITING IN FLOW is a necessary treasure. -- *Nessa Flax, Freelance Success, Dec. 1999*

What I like most about this book is Chapter 8, where I can compare my own experiences with those of the 'rich and famous.' WRITING IN FLOW explains, in glorious detail, the what and why of flow. It also offers a ton of 'insider info' on how you can develop your own method of getting into this highly productive state when you write. If you're interested in how the creative mind works, you'll like this book. -- *Writers' Exchange, Aug. 17, 1999*

Writers at any level of experience will benefit from Perry's insight into creativity and the mental process that occurs during the act of writing. This is not another 'how to' book that serves up a rehash of common do's and don'ts of how to be a writer. This book gets right into the heads of 76 regularly published, successful writers. Perry picks their brains, like a scientist with tweezers, extracting gems of wisdom from the gray matter. . . . The style is comfortable, warm, and very readable. . . . the feeling of relaxing over coffee with the author or eavesdropping on her conversation with all the best writers of the day. -- *J.B. Justice, RestStop Writers' Newsletter, Nov. 1999*

#### About the Author

Susan Perry holds a Ph.D. in social psychology and teaches psychology and writing at Woodbury University. She is the author of *Fun Time, Family Time* and the award-winning *Playing Smart*. Perry has also written more than 700 articles, mostly on psychology and child development, for publications such as *USA Today*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Parenting*, *Woman's World* and *Working World*. She lives in Los Angeles, California.

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