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EFFECTIVE GOAL SETTING

Overcoming The Challenges of Goal Setting

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What challenges have you previously encountered in achieving your goals?

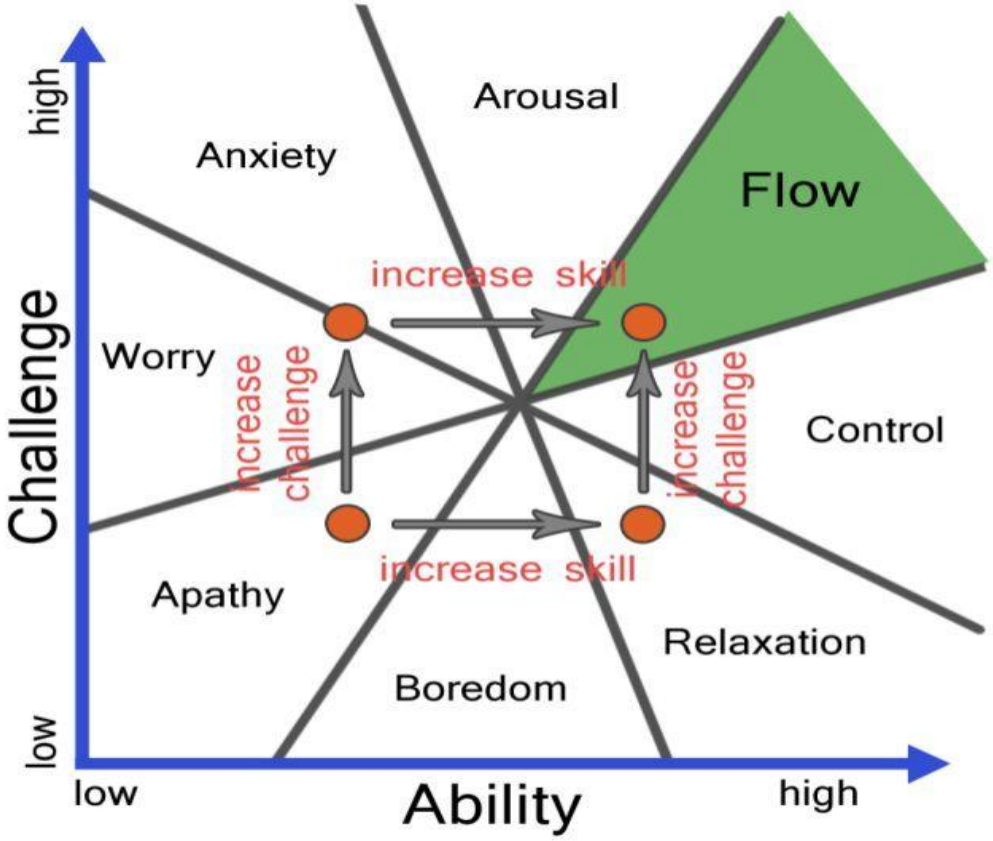
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Common Challenges

- Time Management/ Competing Tasks
- Fear of failure
- Lack of resources
- Seeking perfectionism/Making Excuses
- Lack of tracking progress
- Un-supportive habits



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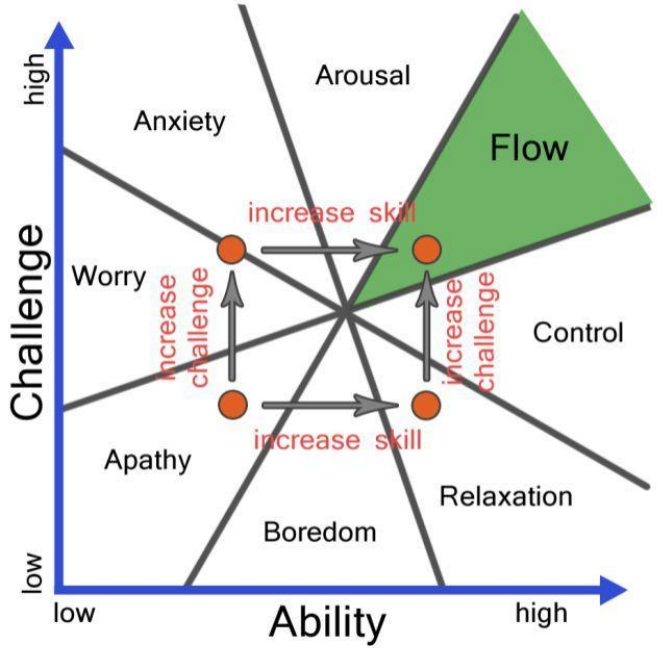
Source: Bill Carrier

"Flow Channel" model, originally developed by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi.

It is a 2x2 matrix that maps your **Challenge Level** (y-axis) against your **Skill/Ability Level** (x-axis) to predict your emotional and mental state while pursuing a goal.

The Challenge Vs Ability Matrix

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This chart is incredibly powerful because it tells you **why you quit** and **how to stay engaged**.

If a goal is too hard for your current skills, you get anxious and give up.

If a goal is too easy, you get bored and give up.

The Flow is the sweet spot of deep enjoyment and peak productivity—only happens when challenges are perfectly balanced with your abilities.

The 6 Emotional States (What you feel during a goal) Stages 1-3

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Aparthy (Low Challenge + Low Ability)	You have no skin in the game. The goal requires zero effort, but you also lack the skills to care about it. You feel completely disconnected and unmotivated. **Example:** You set a goal to "learn Excel," but you only commit to opening the program once a week for 2 minutes, and you don't know how to type. You feel nothing because neither the task nor your skill moves the needle.
Boredom (Low Challenge + Moderate Ability)	You are highly skilled, but the goal is too repetitive and easy. You are coasting, but your brain is under-stimulated, leading to disengagement and a desire to quit. **Example:** You are a professional graphic designer, but your goal is to "design 100 basic business cards with the same template." You can do it in your sleep, so you procrastinate out of sheer monotony.
Relaxation (Low Challenge + Moderate Ability)	You have mastered a skill and are using it in a low-stakes way. This is a pleasant recovery state, but it does not push you toward growth or major achievements. **Example:** You are a marathon runner, but your weekly goal is just to "go for a slow, flat 2-mile jog." You feel calm and peaceful, but you aren't improving your race times. .

The 6 Emotional States (What you feel during a goal) Stages 4-6

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Anxiety (High Challenge + Low Ability)	You have set an ambitious goal, but you lack the training or knowledge to meet it. This triggers stress, overwhelm, and often causes people to abandon the goal entirely. **Example:** You set a goal to "build a fully functioning e-commerce website from scratch," but you have only written one line of HTML in your life. You stare at the screen, panicking.
Arousal (High Challenge + Medium Ability)	You are slightly out of your depth, but not drowning. This is an exciting, "edge-of-your-seat" state. It is a *precursor* to Flow; you are engaged, but you need a slight skill boost to tip over into total immersion. **Example:** You set a goal to cook a complex Beef Wellington for Christmas dinner. You know how to cook basic meats and pastries, but this is harder. You are alert, excited, and a little nervous..
Flow (High Challenge + High Ability)	This is the ultimate goal-setting sweet spot. The challenge is maximized, and your skills are equally maximized to meet it. Time disappears, self-consciousness fades, and you perform at your absolute peak. **Example:** You are a competitive chess player in a tournament against a rival of equal rank. Every move requires your full strategic brainpower, and you execute flawlessly. You lose track of time for 3 hours and feel utterly alive.

Summary- How to Fix The Challenge Vs Ability Trap

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- Let's say your big goal is **"Become fluent in Spanish in 6 months."**
- **Starting Point (Apathy):** You download Duolingo but don't open it. You have zero ability and zero challenge. **Action:** You **increase skill** by learning 5 common verbs and **increase challenge** by setting a goal to have a 1-minute conversation with a native speaker.
- **Trap 1 (Anxiety):** You skip the basics and try to read a complex Spanish newspaper. You feel overwhelmed and want to cry. **Solution:** You **increase skill** by stepping back to practice basic sentence structure for a week, lowering the anxiety back toward the Flow channel.
- **Trap 2 (Boredom):** You have mastered 500 words, but your goal is still just "do 5 minutes of flashcards daily." You are zoned out. **Solution:** You **increase challenge** by changing your goal to "watch a 20-minute Spanish TV show without subtitles," forcing your brain to work hard again.
- **Sweet Spot (Flow):** You set a goal to have a 15-minute Zoom call with a Spanish tutor. The conversation is fast, you have to recall words instantly (high challenge), and your months of practice allow you to keep up (high ability). You lose track of time, enjoy every second, and your fluency skyrockets.

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Poor Time Management & How to Fix It



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Lack of Goal Tracking



How will you track your goal?



How often will you track your goal?



How will you measure progress?

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Un-supportive habits



4. Lack of Accountability Partner

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An accountability partner is **someone who supports you to keep a commitment to a desired goal**.

An accountable person has to be someone who **can <u>support</u>** and **<u>keep you committed and accountable</u>** towards this goal. This person is often a trusted friend or acquaintance who will check in with you about your progress in a particular area.



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Practical Exercise: Goal Mapping

Goal	Area of Life	Rationale	Timeline	Required Activities	Required Resources	Possible Challenges	Accountability Partner	Reward

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REMINDER

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MEN'S FORUM

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SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Learn, Practice, Master

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