

A short analysis of Flow: Happiness in Super Focus by Nerdwriter

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Flow: Happiness in Super Focus is a 4:46 minute short vlog-style documentary by the YouTuber Nerdwriter about the psychological phenomenon of *Flow*. Published in July 2014, this video notes the pre-adolescent period of YouTube, but remaining smart enough to honor Nerdwriter the title of the 'Renaissance man of YouTube'.

Sequence Outline of the Film

Music: Very light music in the background almost throughout the film, with occasional gaps to emphasize the point

Visuals:

Nerdwriter intro screen

Evan Pushchak(Nerdwriter) talking to camera from an angle, close up, very much vlog-style selfie-ish shot

Screen blurs: the words *INTRINSIC VALUE* appears on screen in huge bold sans serif white font with shadows

Closer up of the narrator

Quick insert of the Nerdwriter intro without the music

Evan on his editing table, mid shot

Over the Shoulder of Evan editing

Clock transition which cuts from day to night

Close up of Evan

The word *FLOW* appears on screen in same typography

Still of Mihály Csíkszentmihályi

Close up of Evan

A quote from Mihály's book

Bruce Lee's photo in the background blurred, his book in focus in the center

Close up of Evan

Presentation style list of conditions for Flow

Animated and interactive Flow diagram on screen

Funny still of a frustrated kid

Insert of a music note

Slow motion video of several professional athletes

Close up of Evan

Flow diagram again

Writing on a blank document screen

Close up of Evan

Extreme close up

Close up

END

Theme/ Subject of the Documentary

The video is an entertaining, straightforward and elementary introduction all about the concept of *Flow* in positive psychology.

Narrative Style/ Approach

As mentioned before, this video is primarily a vlog, and hence it adheres to the norms of early-vlogs. For most of the video, the narrator talks straight to the camera, the cinematography is nothing extraordinary, and most of the subject is explained using still photos, quotes, diagrams, and other on-screen non-human elements. The voiceover continues throughout the video, with minimal pauses and each moment the visuals complement the VO. The screen is not cluttered (which is typical for many science/ idea vloggers) and the video uses time and space mindfully.

The voiceover of the narrator can be broken down into the following sections:

An appetizer about why he still creates stuff though at the end of time everything is meaningless

Which gives an entry point to the idea of Intrinsic Value

He talks about doing things for the sake of doing things

Helps us relate to the idea by his example

Introduces the concept of Flow

Talks about the research on Flow

Explains how this is an ancient concept in human history with examples

Notes down more details about Flow

Explains more nuances via the interactive diagram

More examples of athletes, himself drawing or writing fiction - for each part of the flow diagram

Concluding remarks

Effectiveness of Techniques Used

The primary audience for this video is the English speaking YouTube population, which is a very vast general audience with various degrees of education and interest. Taking into account the notoriety of diminishing attention in the age of internet-media, five minute is a perfect length for such an introductory video.

The vlog is indigenous to YouTube, and as Evan Pushchak started as a vlogger only, this video is at the core of its heart, a vlog. And it adheres to the essence of the genre, without being cliché, or garbage.

The editing is very economic and impactful. It gives the viewer to reflect and time to breathe while still maintaining a high flow of information and entertainment. The insert shots, stills, interactive diagram are all very appropriately placed. The voiceover at every moment matches with the stuff being presented on screen.

The music hides well in the background, is very compatible and is minimal. The narrator's delivery, voice modulation, choice of words, and eloquence is perfect.