

Why do people engage in intense, sometimes dangerous recreation activities?

Compensation theory?
To make up for boring, repetitive aspects of life

Competence/Effectance theory?
To optimize level of arousal
To generate interactions with our environment... sense of control or power, a feeling of competence

Why do people engage in intense, sometimes dangerous recreation activities?

Physiological reasons:
Endorphins
"runner's high"

Many social reasons:

- The activity provides a social context for interaction
- Investments of acquired equipment, developed skill
- Opportunity to test and exhibit ability

Flow Experiences

- **Flow** – "a state of experience that is engrossing, intrinsically rewarding and outside the parameters of boredom and worry"
(Csikszentmihalyi, 1991)
 - Flow is a total focus on the activity in which time and the external world seem to disappear. There is total concentration on the exercise of the skill in the face of the challenge. (loss of self-consciousness)
 - Flow is the skill response to a stimulus of challenge.

Flow Theory

Peak Experiences

- Participation is highly valued and extremely meaningful.
- An incident characterized by highest happiness and fulfillment

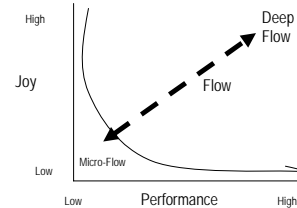
Peak Experiences

Characteristics of a peak experience in sport included:

- focusing on the present moment
- effortless merging of action and awareness
- loss of personal ego
- sense of control
- clear feedback
- an intrinsic reward system
- recalled as special moments

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Peak Experience, Peak Performance and Flow



Peak Performance:

- An episode of superior functioning
- Full use of human power

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Edgework

(Lyng, 1990)

- Activities that "involve a clearly observable threat to one's physical or mental well-being or one's sense of an ordered existence"
- Boundary between:
 - order and disorder
 - life and death
 - consciousness and unconsciousness
 - sanity and insanity



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Edgework



- Some characteristics of edgework:
 - The ability to maintain control over a situation that verges on complete chaos, a situation most people would regard as entirely uncontrollable.
 - The commitment to get as close as possible to the edge without going over it.
 - High regard for own abilities, but low regard for abilities of those outside

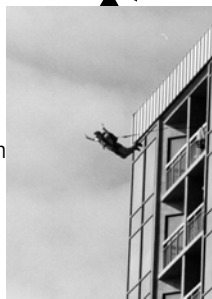


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Edgework

Sensations:

- Self realization, self actualization (peak/flow)
- Heightened sense of self
- Anticipatory fear
- Time passes faster or slower than usual
- Oneness with object or environment
- Hyper-reality



Implications

- How might peak/flow experiences or edgework affect natural resource management?
 - Special landscape features often = place attachment
 - Intensified demands on natural resources
 - Cause risk to others--belief of immortality (search & rescue)
 - Social impacts--attractive or distracting to others?
 - High skill levels required--mandatory regulation?
 - Personal investment often = greater demands on staff...
 - Media glamorizes it = attracts "amateurs"

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