



Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi: September 29, 1934–October 20, 2021

Robert A. C. Stewart¹, Sarah L. Krivan²

¹Editor-in-Chief, Scientific Journal Publishers Ltd., New Zealand

²Copyeditor, Scientific Journal Publishers Ltd., New Zealand

How to cite: Stewart, R. A. C., & Krivan, S. L. (2022). Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi: September 29, 1934–October 20, 2021. *Social Behavior and Personality: An international journal*, 50(1), e11549

We note, with sadness, the passing of Dr Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, pioneer of the concept of flow and known for his research on happiness, creativity, leadership, and motivation. He was a longtime member of the Board of Consulting Editors of *Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal*.

Keywords

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi;
obituary

We note, with sadness, the passing of Dr Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, pioneer of the concept of flow and known for his research on happiness, creativity, leadership, and motivation. He was a longtime member of the Board of Consulting Editors of *Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal*.

Born in Fiume, Kingdom of Italy, to parents of Hungarian descent, Dr Csikszentmihalyi became interested in psychology during a vacation in Switzerland, when he attended a lecture about the self-deceptions people practice to avoid confronting the truth of their existence, which was delivered by Carl Jung. He emigrated to the United States at age 22 to study at the University of Chicago, ultimately completing both a BA (1959) and a PhD (1965) there. He then taught at Lake Forest College for several years, before joining the faculty of the University of Chicago in 1969. In 1999 he transferred to Claremont Graduate University, where he helped to found the Quality of Life Research Center.

In 2000 he was described by Martin Seligman, then President of the American Psychological Association, as “the brains behind positive psychology” (Brain Channels, 2000), and further credited by Seligman as being a leading researcher in the field.

His most widely cited contribution to psychology research is the conceptualization of *flow*, which is defined as “a state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience is so enjoyable that people will continue to do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 4). In addition to the research efforts he dedicated to analyzing flow, he also studied happiness, creativity, leadership, and adolescent development, and in recent years focused in particular on examining motivation.

Dr Csikszentmihalyi authored and coauthored over 130 publications during his academic career, spanning journal articles, books, and chapters. Among these are *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience* (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), which has been translated into more than 20 languages; *The evolving self: A psychology for the third millennium* (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993); and *Finding flow: The psychology of engagement with everyday life* (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997).

He was a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and was also fluent in several languages, including Hungarian, Italian, German, and English.

Dr Csikszentmihalyi is survived by his wife, Isabella (Selega) Csikszentmihalyi; sons, Mark and Chris; and six grandchildren.

References

Brain Channels. (2000). *Thinker of the year award: Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi*. <https://bit.ly/3y18pJj>

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. Harper and Row.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1993). *The evolving self: A psychology for the third millennium*. Harper Collins.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1997). *Finding flow: The psychology of engagement with everyday life*. Basic Books.