

## Engaged

*To be engaged is to be caught up in your work, your pleasure, or your commitments. When you are engaged you tend not to be aware of yourself, but to go with the flow. There is no anxiety, there is no self-doubt, there is the full use of your ability in the situation that engages you.*

1

An engaged person often has an abstracted look, as though he or she is in a different place. When I am writing something that works I am totally absorbed in it. If you touch my shoulder I'll jump a mile. I have no awareness of my body. Where I am is hard to say. I am absorbed, but not self-absorbed. I am at my most conscious, but not self-conscious. This flow, as Csikszentmihaly calls it, is as near bliss as mortals get. It is a steady state condition, unlike orgasm or intense pain, but like those conditions it cannot be sustained for very long.

2

When engaged in conversation, I exist only as what I want to formulate for the other person, and, at the same time, as what I anticipate the person wanting to say to me in response. I am engaged in this mutually implicit interpersonal situation, which can in intense conversation be all absorbing. I had a friend with whom I frequently had absorbing conversations, in which I was all about expressing myself and anticipating what he was about to say, from his end. For him, I surmise the situation was the same; we were both engaged, rather than occupying a position. In fact there was no 'his end' or 'my end,' but rather the conversation had a life of its own, in which he and I *engaged*.