Emotions and Time Paradox

THE ARCHITECTURE OF HOW THE TIME IS FELT: HOW EMOTION SCULPTS EVERY SECOND

by Bralgei Shackry

Conclusion and spoiler:

TIME IS RELATIVE AND THE HUMAN BODY IS DIRECTLY IMPACTED PENDING THE EMOTION WE FEEL. YOU MAY ACCELERATE YOUR DECAY OR DELAY IT. BE CAREFUL WHAT TYPE OF EMOTION YOU CHOOSE. ALL IS A CHOICE. CHOOSE WISELY.
TIME IS SOMETHING YOU CAN NOT RECOVER, BUT YOU CAN MANAGE IT WISELY IF YOU UNDERSTAND HOW IT WORKS.

I HOPE THIS WILL MAKE YOU CURIOUS ENOUGH TO READ THE HOLE ARTICLE...YOUR LIFE AND YOUR TIME DEPENDS ON IT.

Preface: Time Is Not What You Think It Is

HOW WE PERCIVE TIME, HOW THE BODY INTERPRETS TIME IS DIVEN BY THE EMOTION RUN BY US. THIS IS NOT AN ABSTRACT, IS REAL SCIENCE...SO LET ME DIVE INTO THE CONUNDRUM.

There is a question that sounds simple until you really sit with it: *Who drove the car?*

You have probably experienced this. You are on a familiar route, deep in a phone conversation or lost in thought. You hang up. You look around. You are already home — or already three exits past where you meant to turn. The car did not drive itself. Every lane change was executed. Every stop sign was read and obeyed. Every pedestrian was avoided. Your hands turned the wheel. Your foot worked the pedals. Your eyes scanned the mirrors.

And yet you were not there.

This is not a flaw. This is not a glitch. This is the brain's implicit system — what neuroscientists call System 1, the rapid, automatic, unconscious architecture that handles learned behavior — running a fully operational background process while your conscious mind was elsewhere entirely. The basal ganglia and subcortical motor networks can execute complex, trained sequences without any input from the prefrontal cortex. Without your permission. Without leaving a memory trace.

This single fact contains a universe of implications for how we experience time.

Because if the brain can run the entire physical act of driving a car without leaving a single conscious memory — what else is it doing invisibly? And if memory is how we construct our sense of how long something lasted, then what happens to time when we are not present for our own lives?

This article is about that question. But it goes much deeper than the familiar complaint that "time flies." What follows is an attempt to map the full emotional spectrum of time — how different psychological states do not merely change our *mood* while time passes, but actually *construct different versions of time itself*.

Part One: The Brain Has No Clock

The first thing to understand is that time, as you feel it, is not measured. It is assembled.

There is no organ in the body dedicated to perceiving time the way the eye perceives light or the ear perceives sound. Instead, the brain pieces together a sense of duration from a combination of sources: memory density, emotional intensity, bodily signals, and the activity of the insular cortex — a region that serves as the brain's integration hub for interoception, the ongoing sensing of internal body states.

The neuroscientist Marc Wittmann, whose book *Felt Time* is among the most rigorous treatments of this subject, has spent decades mapping this territory. His conclusion is striking: subjective time emerges through ongoing and dynamically changing bodily sensations and related emotions. We feel time passage even when we close our eyes or use earplugs because the sense of the body always remains. Take away all external sensory input, and time still moves — because the body keeps broadcasting its internal state, and the brain keeps reading it.

This means that **emotion is not something that happens *inside* time. Emotion is the raw material from which time is built.**

Change the emotion. Change the time.

This is not metaphor. It is neurobiology. And the implications are radical.

Part Two: The Emotional Spectrum of Time

3.1 Acute Fear — The World Stops

Everyone who has been in a serious accident knows this feeling. The car begins to slide. The motorcycle enters in unstable form or tunnel vision because of speed. The kite enters in an uncontrolled kite-loop movement and drags you underwater in a very dangerous course. Life and death conditions are triggered. And then — somehow — everything slows. All these happened to me. Lived experience.

This is called tachypsychia, and it is one of the most consistently reported phenomena in extreme danger situations across cultures, across centuries, across disciplines. In the moment of acute, focused fear, time appears to stretch. Events that lasted perhaps three seconds feel as though they lasted thirty.

The mechanism is neurological and precise. The amygdala — the brain's threat-detection center — floods the system with adrenaline and norepinephrine. This surge dramatically increases the brain's state of alertness and sharpens attentional focus to a needle point. Simultaneously, the amygdala causes memories to be encoded at extraordinary depth and resolution. More detail is captured per unit of time. More neural pathways are activated and strengthened. More "frames" are written to memory.

When the brain later reconstructs what happened, it interprets the density of encoded experience as duration. Many frames mean a long event. And so three seconds of a motorcycle crash becomes a vivid, almost cinematic sequence — every sensation distinct, every detail sharp, the whole thing feeling impossibly long.

But here is what is crucial: this time-stretching effect is not just a side effect of fear. It is a survival mechanism of extraordinary precision. That subjective slowing creates space — cognitive space, motor space — in which the experienced, trained mind can intervene. The kiteboarder underwater can assess the lines. The driver can identify the escape path. The fighter can find the opening.

The brain, in its most extreme moments, buys time that physics does not provide.

3.2 Chronic Anxiety — The Years Disappear

Now consider what happens not in the single acute moment of terror, but in the months and years of low-grade, persistent worry that characterizes modern life.

This is where something far more insidious operates.

Acute fear slows time by increasing the resolution of experience. Chronic anxiety does the opposite — not by slowing everything down, but by making everything invisible. The anxious mind is a mind perpetually oriented toward a future that has not arrived, or a past that cannot be changed. It is never fully *here*. It is scanning, monitoring, rehearsing, bracing. The present moment is not experienced — it is transited.

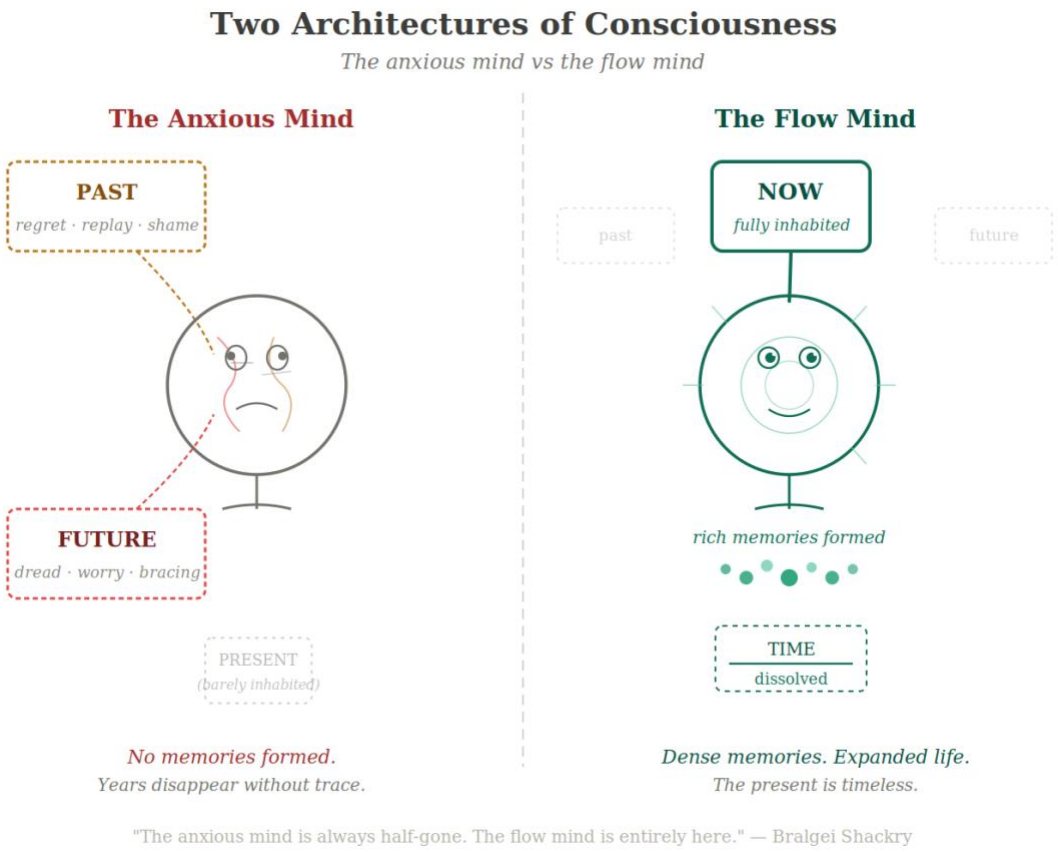
And what is not experienced is not encoded. What is not encoded leaves no memory. What leaves no memory produces no sense of duration.

Psychopathological conditions such as anxiety and depression are directly associated with altered time perception, reflecting disruptions in the interoceptive and affective processes through which the brain normally constructs felt duration. The transcript that inspired this article describes it vividly: Monday appears, and then before you know it, it is Monday again. Not because life is good and you are busy and absorbed. But because nothing landed. Nothing left a mark. The week evaporated without being inhabited.

Research confirms that the past two decades have created exactly this condition at civilizational scale — high levels of global and personal uncertainty, rapid news cycles, a constant low-frequency hum of threat. The result is a society that experiences time as accelerating, not because the calendar moves faster, but because fewer and fewer moments are fully lived. Adults in their forties wake up feeling that their twenties somehow vanished — not because they were asleep, but because anxiety had made them half-present for years at a time.

The tragedy here is not just lost time in the abstract. It is that the anxious mind, trying to protect against future suffering, ends up consuming the present — the only real thing that exists — and leaving behind a life that, in memory, feels shorter than it was.

3.3 Flow — The Present Expands Without Limit



Here is where the science becomes not just interesting but genuinely transformative.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi identified the flow state in the 1970s. Steven Kotler and Jamie Wheal of the Flow Genome Project (https://www.flowgenomeproject.com/) spent the following decades mapping its neurobiology and making it accessible to anyone willing to do the work. What they found — confirmed by peer-reviewed research including Kotler's 2022 paper in *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews* — is that flow is not a vague psychological mood. It is a specific, reproducible, measurable brain state with a precise neurochemical and structural signature.

In flow, the prefrontal cortex undergoes what is called transient hypofrontality — a temporary and dramatic reduction in activity. This matters enormously, because the prefrontal cortex is the brain region responsible for self-monitoring, inner criticism, rumination about past and future, and — critically — the conscious tracking of time.

When it goes quiet, the inner critic goes silent. The future stops pulling. The past stops haunting. And time, as a container, ceases to exist.

What fills the space is pure present-moment experience. The brain releases a cascade of six neurochemicals simultaneously: norepinephrine and dopamine tighten focus and sharpen pattern recognition; endorphins eliminate the sensation of physical discomfort; anandamide — the

molecule nicknamed the "bliss chemical" — promotes lateral thinking and, crucially, *reduces fear*; and serotonin delivers the afterglow of deep satisfaction. This neurochemical cocktail does not merely make you feel good. It rewires what is cognitively possible. Pattern recognition expands. Creative connections multiply. Physical performance exceeds what the conscious mind believes possible.

Kotler and Wheal describe four signature characteristics of this state, which they call ecstasies — the Greek term Plato used for the dissolution of ordinary consciousness. The four are Selflessness, Timelessness, Effortlessness, and Richness. Note that Timelessness is not accidental. It is structural. It follows inevitably from the prefrontal cortex going offline. Time is not being ignored in flow. The machinery that constructs time perception has been temporarily suspended.

And what remains is not a void. What remains is something that, for those who have genuinely experienced it, is almost impossible to describe to those who haven't. The best analogy might be this: ordinary consciousness is black-and-white, low-resolution, slightly blurry. Flow is 4K, sometimes 8K — every detail hyper-present, the sensory field somehow wider and sharper simultaneously, the world more real than it normally appears to be rather than less.

This is not hallucination. This is what the brain can do when its noise-generating, self-monitoring, past-haunting, future-fearing frontal machinery steps aside.

I have lived this FLOW STATE many times. Fortunately, compared with other people experiences, I have lived to tell the tale. In these situations, if flow state is not triggered you die, or get severe injured.

Is not something to play with but I am a biohacker and I push my limits.

3.4 Boredom and Novelty Deprivation — The Great Paradox

There is a fourth state worth examining, partly because it reveals something important about the mechanism underlying all the others.

Boredom feels slow. The watched pot. The waiting room. The long meeting. Time crawls.

And yet — bored years leave almost no trace in memory. The paradox is that boredom is subjectively interminable and retrospectively invisible. A boring afternoon feels endless while you are in it and leaves nothing behind once it passes.

The mechanism: novel and emotional experiences expand subjective duration in retrospect because they enhance memory formation. Novelty forces the brain to encode new information carefully — new schema, new patterns, new connections. More encoding means more memory density, which means a richer sense of having lived through something substantial.

Boredom, by contrast, triggers no such encoding. The brain recognizes familiar territory and runs on low power. As we grow older, and as the world increasingly delivers the same stimulation loops through the same devices, fewer novel events are experienced and memorized — and subjective time accelerates. The years compress not because they were bad, but because they were not sufficiently alive.

This is why travel expands time. Why learning a new skill makes a month feel like a year. Why falling in love makes a week feel like a season. The brain is writing richer records, and richer records feel, both in the living and in the remembering, like more time.

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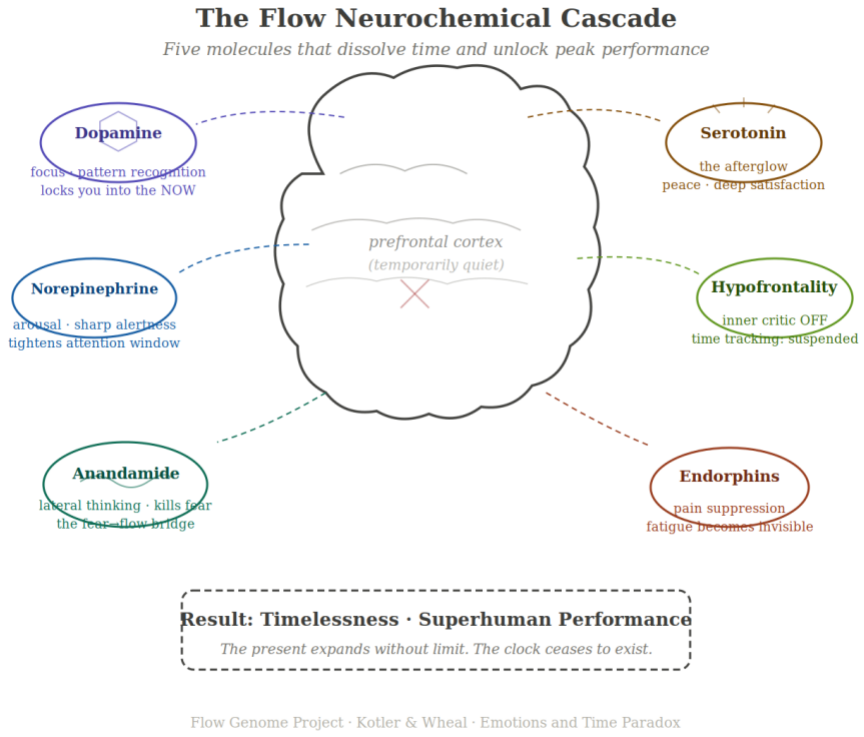
4 Part Three: The Neurochemistry — What Each Emotion Actually Does to the Brain

Understanding how emotions reshape time requires going one level deeper — into the actual chemistry of the brain during each emotional state. The differences are not subtle. They are the difference between a brain running on high-resolution fuel and one running on fumes.



The Flow Cocktail: Six Neurochemicals That Dissolve Time

In flow, the brain produces what Steven Kotler describes as a giant cascade of neurochemistry. To the five molecules Kotler names — norepinephrine, dopamine, anandamide, serotonin, and

endorphins — we must add the molecule that fires first and makes all the others possible: adrenaline. All six are performance-enhancing. All six alter the experience of time. But each does something different, and understanding their individual roles — and their precise order — reveals exactly why flow feels the way it does.

Adrenaline (epinephrine) is the ignition key — the first molecule to fire, and the one that makes everything else possible. Released almost instantly by the adrenal glands in response to real or perceived danger, it surges through the bloodstream within seconds, spiking the heart rate, dilating the airways, sharpening the senses, and flooding the muscles with glucose. It is the body's emergency activation signal. In the context of extreme sport and life-or-death situations — the kite-loop, the car that begins to slide, the motorcycle at 60 km/h losing grip — adrenaline is what fires first. It is the reason the whole system wakes up at all. Without this initial spike, the subsequent neurochemical cascade simply does not begin. This is why people who deliberately push to the edge of their physical and psychological limits tend to access flow states more reliably than those who do not: they have learned, consciously or not, to use the adrenaline trigger as a doorway rather than a dead end.

Norepinephrine and dopamine work together to sharpen focus and tighten the attention window. They direct the brain's resources toward the task in front of it and away from everything else — including the internal monologue that normally narrates the passage of time. This is precisely why flow feels so present, so *now*. When the brain is fully locked onto a single signal, there is no cognitive bandwidth left to register the clock. Time does not slow or accelerate. It simply ceases to be tracked.

Anandamide is the most unusual and least understood molecule in the cascade. Named from the Sanskrit word for bliss, it promotes lateral thinking — the ability to connect ideas that are far apart — and crucially, it *reduces fear*. This is the chemical bridge between the terror of extreme sport and the ecstasy of flow — and it explains something that should not be possible but is: that flow states frequently arise in high-risk situations that would normally produce paralyzing fear responses, yet somehow do not. Kotler's 2022 peer-reviewed paper in *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews* explicitly notes this paradox: no adverse affective memory responses have been associated with flow, yet the state frequently arises in exactly the kind of life-threatening conditions that should produce them. Anandamide is the likely reason. It converts the threat signal into fuel rather than brake.

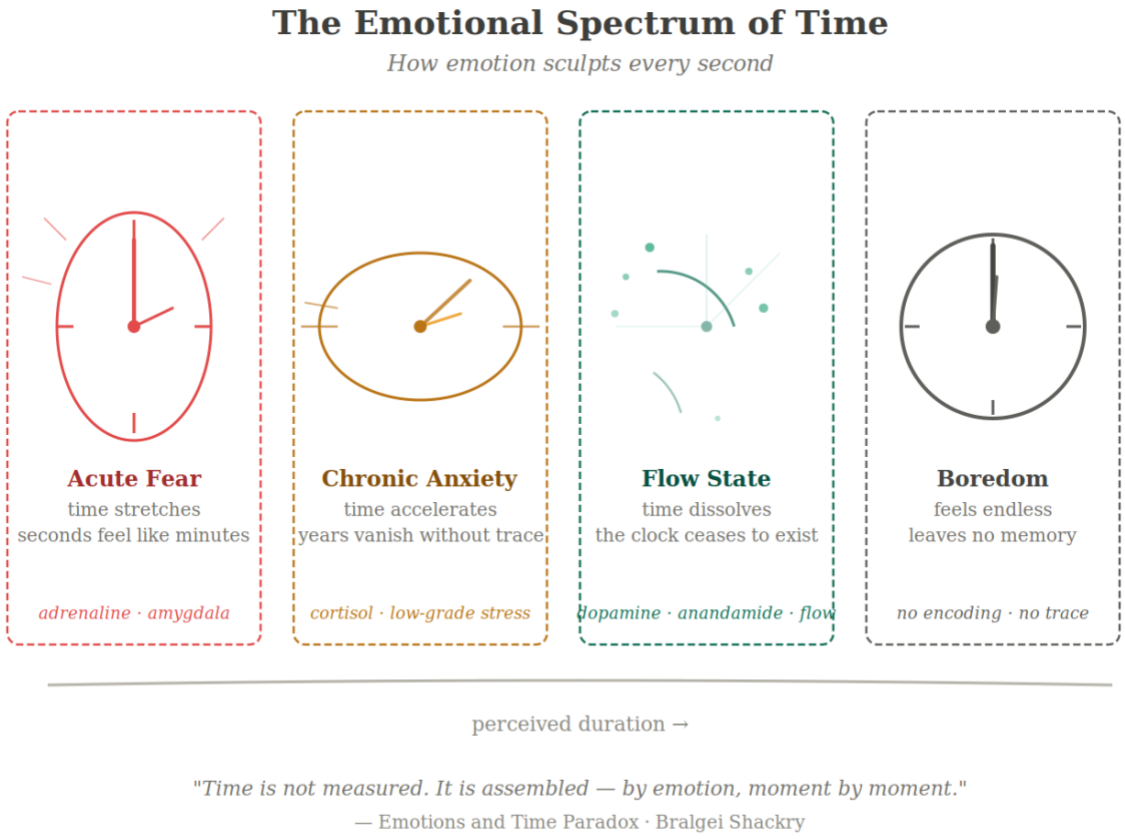
Endorphins suppress physical discomfort and fatigue. This is why a person in flow can sustain effort that would otherwise be unsustainable — the pain signals are chemically muted. And serotonin provides the afterglow: the deep, settling sense of satisfaction and peace that follows a genuine flow episode. If you have ever finished an extended period of total absorption and felt both profoundly tired and inexplicably content, that is serotonin doing its work.

Transient Hypofrontality: The Off Switch for the Inner Clock

Underlying all of this is a structural brain change first identified by neuroscientist Arne Dietrich: transient hypofrontality. During flow, activity in the prefrontal cortex — the brain's executive, analytical, self-monitoring center — temporarily and dramatically decreases. This is not a side

effect. It is the mechanism. The prefrontal cortex is specifically the region responsible for self-criticism, rumination about the past, projection into the future, and the conscious tracking of time. When it goes quiet, all of those functions go with it. The inner critic goes silent. The future stops pulling. The past stops haunting. And time, having lost its manufacturer, ceases to be produced.

The Anxiety Chemistry: The Opposite System



Now contrast this with the neurochemical profile of chronic anxiety. Where flow releases a coordinated, performance-amplifying cocktail, anxiety runs on a degraded version of the same ingredients. Cortisol and low-grade norepinephrine keep the system in permanent scanning mode — hypervigilant, future-oriented, never fully landing in the present. The prefrontal cortex, rather than quieting, remains overactive and overloaded. The inner critic never shuts up. Past regrets and future fears cycle continuously. And crucially, the brain never commits its full resources to any single present-moment experience — because it is perpetually braced for a threat that has not arrived yet.

This is the most energy-expensive cognitive mode the human brain can sustain. A mind split between past regret and future dread burns extraordinary resources while producing almost

nothing in the way of rich, present-moment memory. It drains you. And because it leaves no trace — no encoded experience, no memory density, no sense of having truly been somewhere — anxious years feel, in retrospect, like they never happened at all. Not because you were absent. Because the chemistry made it impossible to fully arrive.

The Edge: Where Fear Becomes Flow

The Flow Genome Project's core operational discovery — drawn from years of working with US Special Operations forces, Olympic athletes, and extreme sport practitioners — is that flow states are most reliably triggered at the edge: the precise point where challenge slightly exceeds skill, where stakes are real, where the body and mind have no room to drift. This is not coincidence. It is neurochemical logic.

Real danger triggers an initial norepinephrine spike and amygdala activation — the same opening sequence as acute fear. But when the person's skill level is sufficient and the training is deep enough, the system does not lock into panic. Instead, anandamide suppresses the fear response, the prefrontal cortex begins its hypofrontal quieting, and the full neurochemical cascade ignites. Bullet time — the stretched seconds of acute fear — transitions into something else: a state of total presence, expanded capacity, and the complete dissolution of time as a concern. Fear becomes timelessness. The edge becomes the doorway.

Part Four: The Fail-Safe — What the Body Knows

There is a deeper layer to all of this, and it connects the acute-fear state to the flow state in a way that most descriptions of both tend to miss.

IN THE MOMENT OF GENUINE EXTREME DANGER — NOT ANXIETY ABOUT DANGER, BUT *ACTUAL* DANGER, RIGHT NOW, MILLISECONDS AWAY — SOMETHING REMARKABLE SOMETIMES HAPPENS. THE FEAR-FREEZE RESPONSE DOES NOT ACTIVATE. INSTEAD, A DIFFERENT SYSTEM ENGAGES: THE BODY MOVES WITH A PRECISION AND SPEED THAT THE CONSCIOUS MIND COULD NOT HAVE PLANNED, EXECUTED WITH A FLUIDITY THAT FEELS, AFTERWARD, LIKE IT CAME FROM SOMEWHERE ELSE. **THE SUPER-HUMAN STATE.**

The kiteboarder dragged underwater finds the correct body position. The driver steers through a gap that opened for perhaps half a second. The fighter finds the move that was not consciously known.

This is not luck. This is the implicit motor system — the same system that drives the car while you are on the phone — but activated at maximum intensity, with the full neurochemical amplification of the acute stress cascade. The explicit, deliberating prefrontal cortex is too slow for these moments. It takes hundreds of milliseconds to generate a conscious decision. The danger does not wait. So, the brain bypasses it entirely, drops into the faster, deeper, automatic system, and executes.

What makes the difference between the person who freezes and the person who acts is, in large part, training and readiness. The implicit system can only execute what has been sufficiently practiced being automated. Flow Genome Project research confirmed this when Kotler and Wheal studied US Special Operations forces and extreme action sport athletes: the capacity for what might be called performance under impossible conditions is not a gift. It is the result of deliberately and repeatedly pushing the challenge-skill balance to its edge until edge-state responses become the new baseline.

The Universe pushes back when you push it to its limits. But what it pushes back with is your own latent capacity, unlocked.

Part Five: The Spirit Molecule and the Question of Perception's Ceiling

The researcher Rick Strassman proposed in his landmark work *DMT: The Spirit Molecule* that the brain may produce endogenous DMT — dimethyltryptamine, the most potent naturally occurring psychedelic — under conditions of extreme stress, and possibly at the boundaries of life itself. This theory remains scientifically contested. The pineal gland does produce melatonin reliably; whether it produces significant quantities of DMT in living humans under extreme conditions is still an open research question, with studies offering suggestive but not conclusive evidence.

What is not contested is that DMT is present in the human body. It has been found in blood, urine, and cerebrospinal fluid. A landmark 2019 study found levels in the rat brain's visual cortex comparable to other established neuroamines, with a measurable spike during cardiac arrest. The question is not whether it exists, but whether it reaches functionally significant concentrations under stress.

What is interesting about this, for the purposes of this article, is what it might explain phenomenologically. There are experiences, reported consistently across cultures and centuries, in which ordinary perceptual filters seem to lift — not through hallucination, but through a strange *increase* in clarity. The world does not become distorted. It becomes more present. More structured. More information-rich. The person is not high. They are, in some sense, more here than usual.

Whether this is endogenous DMT, a product of the full flow neurochemical cascade at its most extreme, or something else entirely remains genuinely unknown. What it points toward is the possibility that ordinary waking consciousness is itself a kind of filtered, reduced signal — and that under specific conditions of emotional and neurological alignment, the filter temporarily lifts and a wider bandwidth of experience becomes available.

The 4K versus black-and-white analogy is apt. Ordinary consciousness may not be the ceiling of human perception. It may be closer to the floor.

Part Six: The Choice

Here is where this all converges into something practical.

Anxiety steals time by preventing the present from being inhabited. It keeps the mind permanently displaced into a future that never actually arrives, burning energy and leaving no memories. Years pass like this.

Flow restores time by collapsing everything into the present. The past does not haunt. The future does not pull. There is only the activity, the body, the moment — and in that moment, everything is available.

The transcript that prompted this article ends with a simple prescription: take walks, reduce social media, choose peace. This is valid. But it is, in a sense, the defensive version of the insight. It is damage control — reducing the input of anxiety-producing noise. That is necessary. But it is not the full answer.

The full answer, suggested by decades of flow research and by the lived experience of anyone who has genuinely pushed to their limits and come back changed, is not merely to *avoid* anxiety-producing inputs. It is to cultivate the emotional and neurological conditions in which time stops being a problem.

When you are fully present — genuinely present, not performing presence — time is not going too fast. It is not going at all. There is no lack to fix.

The anxiety-driven mind asks constantly: *How do I stop time from running out?* The answer, it turns out, is to stop running.

Not away from life. Into it.

The moments that have stretched longest in your life were not the quiet ones. They were the terrifying ones, the ecstatic ones, the ones where everything was on the line and you were completely, irrevocably there. That expansion is not a gift reserved for extreme athletes or mystics. It is a neurological capacity — architecturally present in every human brain — that is activated by full emotional presence in whatever is actually happening.

The anxious mind is always half-gone. The flow mind is entirely here.

And entirely here, it turns out, is timeless.

Epilogue: A Note on What Time Actually Is

Physics has known something for over a century that human psychology is still absorbing: time is not a fixed backdrop against which events occur. It is a dimension that bends, stretches, and compresses depending on the conditions of the observer. Einstein showed this at the scale of mass and velocity. The neuroscience of emotion shows it at the scale of human experience.

There is a scene in the film *Lucy* in which the protagonist, asked what she feels as her cognitive capacity expands, says: "I can feel every living thing." And then, asked what time is, she says: **"Without time, we don't exist."**

Time, in this view, is not the prison we are trapped inside. It is the structure through which existence becomes legible to itself. It is the brain's way of sequencing the continuous into something that can be lived and remembered.

Which means: change the quality of your consciousness, and you change the structure of your time.

The monks and the mystics understood this. The extreme athletes feel it in their bodies. The neuroscientists are now mapping the mechanisms. They are all pointing at the same territory.

And the territory is always, only, now.

THERE IS NO TIME – IT IS THE SPEED OF THE PROCESES.

Sources

Sources draw on the Flow Genome Project research of Steven Kotler and Jamie Wheal, the time perception neuroscience of Marc Wittmann, peer-reviewed work on transient hypofrontality and flow neurodynamics (Kotler et al., Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews, 2022), endogenous DMT research (Strassman, Dean et al. 2019), and implicit motor control neuroscience (D'Ostilio & Garraux, Frontiers in Human Neuroscience, 2012).

THIS ARTICLE IS A RESPONSE TO A VIDEO THAT I HAVE MENTIONED AND TRANSLATED AS REFERENCE

About the perception of time

Account and source:

https://vm.tiktok.com/ZNRsQ2fFN/

Time is going by too fast and nobody's talking about it. Time is going really fast now, and I think this is something we can all feel. Time feels like it is accelerating, months and years feel faster, but nobody is actually talking about it, which is what makes it so scary.

I notice that it's Monday, and then before I know it, it's Monday again. It's like I went through a wormhole and travelled through time into the future. But stay with me here, because I think what's causing this is not what you think.

This isn't just about technology, it's not just about our phones, and it's not just about our age. Because of course, one year isn't going to seem that long when you've already lived 40 years, compared with a child who may be 10 years old, one year may feel like a long time. But I think there's something deeper going on, there's something more terrifying going on.

I remember when I was in my 20s, I was able to get a lot more done in the day, compared with what I'm able to get done now. I was going to the gym 6 days a week, doing fitness classes, yoga, and now I barely find time to go to the gym even just 3 or 4 days a week. I know I was younger back then, but every day felt like it was the length of about 3 of the days that I'm having right now.

And it has gotten significantly worse over the last 6 years, because we all know what happened around that time. But it has made me start thinking, what has happened over the last decade to cause this time shift? I know there's already some explanations for it. As we get older, it can make us feel like time is going faster.

That's true, and I'm 37. And people have also mentioned that it could be due to distraction with our phones and social media, which is definitely another big cause of this. But there's something more sinister going on here, something that the phone is feeding on.

Because when you feel intense fear, time feels like it's slowing down. The brain's adrenaline surge increases alertness, while the amygdala causes memories to be encoded more deeply, which can make events seem to last longer than they actually do. I remember when I was in Bohol in the Philippines last year, I got in 4 motorbike accidents.

After I was followed around and harassed by the local people there. In one of the accidents, I was driving at over 60kmph. And once I had lost control of the bike, time appeared to slow down significantly.

It felt like it went on forever. And then I crashed onto the concrete road, and I rolled over more times than I can remember. Because when you try to remember these types of events, it feels like it happens so fast that you can barely remember it.

But I was lucky, because I didn't have any broken bones. Only micro fractures, a sprained wrist, and a few cuts and bruises. But that bike accident felt so slow.

Because extreme fear makes time slow down. That's how our brain works. And it got me thinking, if extreme fear makes time slow down, what does chronic anxiety do? I did some research, and I discovered that it actually does the opposite.

It makes time feel like it's speeding up or slipping away. And then it all made sense. Because just think about the highly anxious world landscape of 2026.

The climate, economic, and security threats. Our attention is fragmented by rapid 24-7 news cycles. Things we can't predict, things we can't control, and we never know when the shoe is going to drop.

So it's like we just want things to hurry up. We just want to get it over with, so that we can finally relax. And that anxiety is stealing our time.

Neurologically, that stress and anxiety is accelerating your experience of time passing. So day by day, month by month, year by year, everything seems to be going faster. And that is why we all feel like time is flying by right now.

So it's not just your phone or your age. We are living in a different world than the one we lived in 15 or 20 years ago, back when time felt much slower. Several psychological and physiological findings report that chronic anxiety can distort time perception, making it feel like life is accelerating, while simultaneously many adults today feel significantly younger than their chronological age.

Research confirms that anxiety makes time fly. It confirms that the past two decades have been marked by high levels of global and personal uncertainty, which has created a persistent state of worry or anxiety. And the impact of this, as reported by the National Institute of Mental Health and Psychology today, is that when chronic anxiety accelerates the feeling of time passing, individuals may wake up in their 40s or 50s, feeling as though their 20s and 30s vanished in a flash.

And I know this is something that many of you may be experiencing right now, comment down below if you feel younger than your actual age, because PubMed Central has also reported that it is common for adults over 40 to feel 20% younger than their actual age. And this, combined with time acceleration from anxiety, creates a massive gap between chronological age and mental state, to where a 40-year-old could feel like their mental state is often in their late 20s. Due to the feeling that life is moving fast, but I haven't aged that much in sight, and during periods of high stress or rapid life changes, that feeling can drop even further, which can result in immature behavior, using humor or childlike pursuits as a coping mechanism for long-term stress, or even delayed development of the prefrontal cortex, which can affect long-term emotional regulation.

And it's because this world has become too anxious to live in slowly. So what do we do now that we have this information? I stopped trying to solve the world, and it's not because nothing matters. It's because I admitted to myself that I don't even know what's true anymore.

There's so much nonsense out there, and trying every waking second to figure it out isn't staying up to date or being aware. It's anxiety, our natural human response to stress, danger, pressure, to where we experience feelings of fear, dread, or unease. And when you have been dealing with extreme, inescapable, and uncontrollable anxiety for years, where you're just constantly in survival mode, it can cause profound long-term changes to both your mental and physical health.

When an unsolvable problem persists, the brain's fight-or-flight response remains perpetually active, which can lead to chronic stress, physical illness, and significant mental fatigue. And you just become burned out, to the point where even rest can't fix it. It eventually progresses to depression, yet at the same time, you may feel constantly on edge or on guard, which can lead to outbursts of anger or persistent irritability.

You may experience mental clutter, trouble focusing, memory problems, and difficulty making decisions. And you may feel caught in an endless loop of worry, where you feel paralyzed, because the brain perceives the problem as a life-or-death threat. And eventually, the depression deepens to the point where even if the situation changed, you would still feel unable to respond.

And I think that's where many of us are at right now. We are experiencing pain and symptoms that we don't fully understand. Things that are unexplained.

Things that nobody has an answer for. Because it gets to a point, once you've endured this over a long period of time, where even a neuroscientist might struggle to figure it out. But what we do know is that we are products of our environment.

People are significantly shaped by their surroundings. So if you want to understand yourself, your anxiety, depression, you haven't got to look too far. Know the people around you.

Know your surroundings. And you will know yourself. And that's just it.

If you look around, you will see that many people are struggling. They are in helpless situations, experiencing a sense of inadequacy. So they are in no position to help us.

And that's how all we can really do is help them. All we can really do is do things for them. So if there is something that we can do, and it's nothing too extreme or too demanding of our time or energy, then we should do it.

But what we shouldn't do is keep absorbing the chaos that we can't control. So now, I take walks. I take care of myself.

And I'm not spending that much time on social media anymore. Not because I'm hiding. But because it is toxic.

And no matter how anxious I get, it's not going to fix anything that's going on in the world. It just destroys my peace, my health, and my time. So we must choose our peace.

Because it is a choice for ourselves. Thank you all for joining me today. Subscribe to be notified for when I upload a new video.

And if you'd like to have another deep discussion, check out these videos next.