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Nota di contenuto Introduction -- Part I. Theoretical Contributions -- 1. Does Being

Human Matter? One Some Interpretive Problems of Comparative Ludology; Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi -- 2. The Development of the Person: An Experiential Perspective on the Ontogenesis of Psychological

Complexity; Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Kevin Rathunde -- 3. Life Themes: A Theoretical and Empirical Exploration of their Origins and Effects; Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Olga V. Beattie -- 4. The Role of Emotions in the Development of Wisdom; Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Jeanne Nakamura -- 5. The Costs and Benefits of Consuming; Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi -- 6. Flow and Education; Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi -- 7. Learning Flow and Happiness; Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi -- 8. Intrinsic

Motivation and Effective Teaching: A Flow Analysis; Mihaly

Csikszentmihalyi -- 9. The Social Context of Middle School: Teachers,

Friends, and Activities in Montessori and Traditional School

Environments; Kevin Rathunde and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi -- 10. Do

Students Care about Learning: A Conversation with Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi; Marge Scherer -- 11. Flow: The Joy of Reading: Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi -- Part II. Empirical Studies -- 12. The Ecology of Adolescent Activity and Experience; Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Reed Larson and Suzanne Prescott -- 13. Experiential Correlates of Time Alone in Adolescence; Reed Larson and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi -- 14. Intrinsic Rewards in School Crime; Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Reed Larson -- 15. Mood Variability and the Psychosocial Adjustment of Adolescents: Reed Larson, Mihaly Csikszentmihalvi and Ronald Graef --16. Affiliation Motivation and Daily Experience: Some Issues on Gender Differences: Maria Mei-ha Wong and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi -- 17. Relations between Identity in Young Adulthood and Intimacy at Midlife: Stephen Kahn, Gary Zimmerman, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Jacob W. Getzels -- 18. The Quality of Experience of Asian American Adolescents in Activities Related to Future Goals: Kiyoshi Asakawa and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi -- 19. Adolescent Happiness and Family Interaction; Kevin Rathunde and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi -- 20. Individual and Situational Factors Related to the Experience of Flow in Adolescence: A Multilevel Approach; Jennifer A. Schmidt, David J. Shernoff and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi -- 21. A Longitudinal Study of the Self-Concept and Experiential Components of Self-Worth and Affect across Adolescence; Giovanni B. Moneta, Barbara Schneider and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi -- 22. Motivation and Academic Achievement: The Effects of Personality Traits and the Quality of Experience; Maria Mei-ha Wong and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi -- 23. The Experience of Leisure in Adolescence; Douglas Kleiber, Reed Larson and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi -- 24. Student Engagement in High School Classrooms from the Perspective of Flow Theory; David J. Shernoff, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Barbara Schneider and Elisa Steele Shernoff.

Sommario/riassunto

The third volume of the collected works of Mihaly Csikszentmihalvi covers his work on the application of flow in areas that go beyond the field of leisure where the concept was first applied. Based on his personal experience with schooling and learning, as well as that of many others, and contrary to what Cicero claimed, Csikszentmihalyi arrived at the conclusion that instead of taking pride in making the roots of knowledge as bitter as possible, we should try to make them sweeter. Just as flow became a popular and useful concept in voluntary activities, it could likewise be applied in education with the end result of young people being more likely to continue learning not just because they have to but because they want to. This volume brings together a number of articles in which Csikszentmihalvi develops ideas about how to make education, and more generally the process of learning to live a good life, more enjoyable. Since theory is the mother of good practice, the first eleven chapters are devoted to theoretical reflections. Some are general and explore what it means to be a human being, what it means to be a person, when we look at life from the perspective of flow. Others are more narrowly focused on such topics as consumption, education, teaching, and learning. They help laypeople reflect how they can arrange their lives in such a way as to leave a small ecological footprint while getting the most enjoyment. The second section of the volume contains a dozen empirical articles on similar topics. They deal with the development of identity and self-worth; with the formation of goals and motivation; with loneliness and family life.