



History of EvaluationLive!®

The concept of **EvaluationLive!**® originated when co-creators Melanie Hwalek and Mary Grich Williams noticed that occasionally, during their separate encounters with clients, they would experience what Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, the father of positive psychology, called “flow.” Csikszentmihalyi defines flow as “a state of heightened focus and immersion in activities such as art, play and work.”¹ In the world of work, Csikszentmihalyi defines flow to include “something that helps others and at the same time makes you happy...doing your best and having fun while you are working.”²

Hwalek and Williams met regularly for about three years sharing flow experiences they’ve had during meetings with clients or colleagues in an effort to define the gestalt of the evaluation experience that engendered the sense of flow for both the evaluators and stakeholders. They searched the evaluation literature and found synergies between **EvaluationLive!**® and frameworks such as empowerment evaluation, utilization-focused evaluation, and evaluation capacity building. During their discussions and deliberations, Hwalek and Williams eventually defined the **EvaluationLive!**® essential elements.

¹ Quote taken from the TED talks webpage “Speakers - Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi: Positive Psychology” viewed on March 6, 2011 at http://www.ted.com/speakers/mihaly_csikszentmihalyi.html.

² Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2004, February). *Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi: Flow, the secret of happiness*. [Video file] Retrieved from TED Talk website at http://www.ted.com/talks/mihaly_csikszentmihalyi_on_flow.html.

