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| Product ReviewsMay 16, 2006See all 1 photosAs Americans we live in a society obsessed with horsepower. The more the better, right? Is anyone really going to use a 1,000 horsepower is the need to take precautionary steps to ensure your engine doesn't become the next "big bang." The Mazda RX-8, for example, is one vehicle that owners itch to modify for more power at the flywheel) takes away from its sports car heritage. Compared to the 350Z and G35, each generating nearly 300 horses at the flywheel, many RX-8 owners have felt a need for a performance bump. Some owners have resorted to turbocharging or supercharging to take up some of the performance products for the Wankel rotary engine. With over three decades of performance tuning experience, Racing Beat is one of the premier tuners for the rotary engine. Having worked closely with Mazda R&D, Racing Beat was one of the first companies to work on the Renesis rotary engine in the current-generation RX-8. Their research and development on the Renesis engine has resulted in the creation of an upgrade to the factory metering oil pump (MOP). For those of us who are not in touch with rotary engines, the metering oil pump, found in all rotary engines, unless removed, supplies oil through fittings in the rotor housing. The RX-8 Renesis engine MOP is controlled by the powertrain control module (PCM). The MOP flow is determined by various inputs by the PCM. Depending on rpm, load, and water temperature, the PCM can adjust the MOP to 60 different positions (steps) to determine the oil flow. The MOP oil flow at idle is almost non-existent, but when the engine is running under a heavy load and rpm the MOP distributes a significant amount of oil into the rotor housings for additional sealing and lubrication. Although one might think since the MOP is controlled by the PCM, additional oil flow can be added with a reflash of the PCM. Unfortunately, the MOP is already running at maximum flow at the high load/high rpm of the PCM map. Racing Beat has found the only way to increase the MOP flow is by modifying the internal components of the MOP. Racing Beat's method for modifying the stock MOP is by increasing the pixton capacity of the pump. The service takes about a week and the modified pump flows up to 31 percent more oil at the "60" step. Within the MOP there are two pistons-one small and one large. At idle and light throttle only the small piston is being used. However, under heavy load and high rpm the larger piston the additional 31 percent flow only becomes effective when the larger piston is engaged. This in turn means there is little or no change in oil consumption during cruising. The additional oil flow aids in lubrication and sealing of the apex seals. Racing Beat only recommends this modification for boosted engines or enthusiasts who plan to engage the vehicle under hard use (road racing, autocrossing, etc.). The MOP modification can only be performed on a good, working pump. In Racing Beat's extensive testing of the Renesis engine, the company has found performance is from the extra lubrication of the housing or the increased sealing. Whichever way you look at it, the extra oil is a little added insurance into protecting your precious baby. Share on Facebook Share on Twitter Earlier this week we talked about "flow" and how it can improve your professional life. Well, over at Ask Metafiler there is a great thread on achieving flow in everyday life that's worth a read. The concept of "flow" (a term coined by American psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi that means "a Read moreMy question is to those who might be familiar with his work and have incorporated it into their everyday life: How do you find 'Flow' in the more mundane, routine things of daily existence? Like a boring commute or doing the dishes, or household work. Anything that doesn't excite you but must be done again and again almost daily? How to structure them so that one can achieve 'optimal experiences' even from the most inane tasks? Finding flow in everyday life [Ask Metafilter via 43 Folders] The concept of "flow" (a term coined by American psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi that means "a condition of heightened focus, productivity, and happiness that we all intuitively understand and hunger for") can be a bit nebulous, but it's interesting and something that can be applied to everyday work and life. Fast Company has a nice peice on Flow. From the article:In the flow state, Csikszentmihalyi found, people engage so completely in what they are doing that they lose track of time. Hours pass in minutes. All sense of self recedes. At the same time, they are pushing beyond their limits and developing new abilities. Indeed, the best moments usually occur when a person's body or mind is stretched to capacity. People emerge from each flow experience more complex, Csikszentmihalyi found. The Art of Work [Fast Company] The pauses were excruciating. My parents and I stared across the room at my chemistry teacher and his wife. We smiled northern white Protestant smiles. We had nothing to say. I vowed that when I grew up, I would never settle for an awkward conversation. I was entirely wrong. Only the rude and the aggressive can blow through life without tripping into the occasional halting, awkward chat. I've learned three ways to revive a dying conversation when you can't just leave. Ask questions I'm friends with a podcast host you've heard of. He interviews people for a living, including people who at first seem boring. But he always finds something interesting to pursue. He's like that in real life too: Whatever you're saying, he listens intently, notices any hint of something interesting, and asks about it. You can't only use this trick, or else your conversations where I was constantly answering questions, and the other person didn't give me any material to ask them something back. Between your questions, you've got to:Give longer answers than strictly necessaryAsking a new question drives a conversation breathe. Follow someone's answer with your own, or point out where you agree or (genially) disagree. Find a bit of a tangent to go on. A common mistake is only giving the literal answer to a question: "Where are you from?" "Rochester, upstate." You're not filling out a form, you're making conversation, so make it. "Actually a tiny town south of Rochester with one street light. Called Lima, like the bean. They had a lima bean festival!"You can answer a different way every time. I don't want to talk about lima beans in every conversation. Sometimes I mention the hometown bar that claims "the world's biggest urinal," sometimes I talk about my tiny K-12 Baptist school, sometimes I mention the hometown bar that claims "the world's biggest urinal," sometimes my favorite coffeeshops in Rochester, sometimes I talk about my tiny K-12 Baptist school, sometimes I talk about my tiny K-12 Baptist school, sometimes I talk about my tiny K-12 Baptist school, sometimes I talk about my tiny K-12 Baptist school, sometimes I talk about my tiny K-12 Baptist school, sometimes I talk about my tiny K-12 Baptist school, sometimes I talk about my tiny K-12 Baptist school, sometimes I talk about my tiny K-12 Baptist school, sometimes I talk about my tiny K-12 Baptist school, sometimes I talk about my tiny K-12 Baptist school talk in the sc formative years and miss fiercely. No one's offended that I didn't stick to the strict answer, because we're not in a courtroom, we're in a bad surf bar in Hell's Kitchen. Get ready to pivotActually, I totally whiffed the conversation in that surf bar, just last week. Four of us were talking about New York neighborhoods, and how each one has gentrified. We'd think of a neighborhood, name a couple changes in it, agree that the city is gentrifying as a whole, and repeat. It's a common conversation in New York, and soon we ran out of steam. We forgot to prepare a pivot. A pivot is a change of topic. It isn't a leap—coming up with a new subject out of the blue. A leap is fine sometimes, but with people you don't know well, it can highlight your desperation to find a new topic. It's better to branch off of something someone previously mentioned. That's where long answers to questions really pay off. If someone's going on for more than two sentences, you should be pocketing some detail to ask more about later, or to use as an excuse to tell a new story, outside the current scope of the conversation. That's why I like to pivot from Lima and Rochester to the more famous San Francisco, where there are a million things I could go on about. (Or have yet another chat about gentrification.) It's better to pivot off what someone else said, rather than your own. I have a bad habit of monologuing, digressing, then picking up my various digressions. If you only pivot from things you brought up yourself, even if you give the other person a chance to talk, you can still end up too tightly controlling the direction of the conversation. So when you're looking to pivot, see if you can pivot selflessly. Always remember: Everyone has something they can be interesting about. Small talk is only boring until you find that thing.

