Rhythm, the beat, the flow, the feel, time, tempo. These are all terms we may think of when talking about rhythm. The truth is, rhythm is easy to witness but tricky to define. We see rhythm in nature, the regular cycle of the seasons, earth's rotation through sunrise and sunset, the planets orbiting around the sun. These are all repeating patterns in time. Nature's rhythm. Your heartbeat is probably the best example of rhythm inside of you. It beats at a steady pace usually, but it can speed up when you're excited or slow down when you're mellow, however, the beat is constant.

When it comes to music, the meaning of rhythm gets a little more complicated. Rhythm has several elements: the beat, the tempo, and the feel. The beat is a pattern of pulses. Our simplest example is our heartbeat or a steady clap as we count. One, two, three, four.(clapping) If I clap a different beat. (clapping) That changes the rhythm.

The tempo is the pace or speed of the beat. (clapping) That's fast, but you can slow it down.(clapping) The third aspect of rhythm, feel, has to do with whether individual pulses within a beat are emphasized or not. A simple example of this is if I accent the one and three in our one, two, three, four clap. (clapping) This changes the feel of the rhythm. Rhythm connects the beat and feel with the tempo. When you're in rhythm or in time with someone else, both of you are keeping a consistent beat at a tempo that is felt by both people. You're in the flow together, and when you're writing songs and making music, you usually want all the musical parts to be flowing together with rhythms that complement each other in beat, tempo, and feel.