

Strategies for Managing Your Attention

Studies show working from home to be highly productive for employees, however, they did not take into account entire households (spouse and children) working from home at the same time. The COVID-19 pandemic presents us this very challenge. **Attention is limited**, so we must be intentional about managing it. Here are a few proven strategies to help more effectively manage your attention.



WIN – What’s Important Now – At the end of each day, prioritize a To Do list for the next day. As you work, if something distracting pops into your mind that doesn’t need to go to the “parking lot”, ask yourself, “What’s Important Now?”, and resume your task. Acknowledge the distraction and focus back on **WIN**.



Parking Lot – For those thoughts that pop into your head, make a “parking lot” to jot them down, then get back to your task. You can deal with these ideas once your important tasks are completed. This will free your mind to focus on the immediate or more important activities.



Create a Routine – Prepare yourself as if going to work, get dressed, eat breakfast, plan ahead for lunches, check your daily schedule, make a To Do list. The more tasks you can automate, the less mental energy you have to spend on thinking “ok, what now”.



Minimize Distractions – Schedule time during the day for checking email or Skype, for helping the kids with their schoolwork, and for completing your important work-related tasks. Establish “signals” with your family that let everyone know when an individual needs to be left alone to work. Coordinating schedules throughout the household keeps everyone alert to each other’s work needs.



Take Breaks – Every 90 minutes, you should be getting up and moving around, like taking the dog for a walk, checking in with children, making a cup of coffee, stretching, etc.... Getting oxygen to your brain by moving around will stimulate creativity and help keep up productivity.