

THE 5 THINGS

Distractions and multitasking account for about 2 hours of lost productivity each day for the average worker. Distraction can take many forms. It can be something simple, such as a phone call or a coworker that walks into your office, or it can be scrolling on social media. Research shows that it takes an average of 23 minutes to fully regain deep concentration after a distraction. Avoiding distraction requires practice and discipline, but first you need to know what is distracting you. This exercise will help you identify the things that may be happening without you realizing it. Have you ever heard the phrase "Where energy flows, focus goes."? This daily exercise will help you define your path for the day and stay on it.

Identify the 5 things you want to focus on today. Don't worry! You can change them whenever you need to. The point is to set a target for yourself. This is how you'll learn.

Next, create 2 columns. Title one TRACTION and name the other one DISTRACTION.

As you go through your day you will discover that you have become distracted or pulled off-topic. Make a note of what distracted you. (example: checked Facebook, texted friends about weekend plans, filled out my online grocery order). You will also discover that you stayed on track with many things. Make a note of the things that helped you be successful at staying on track. (example: updated my task list between meetings, closed the blinds so I couldn't see the people outside my office, skipped my 10:00 am coffee break that usually turns into socializing). At the end of the day review your 5 Things to see if these important things are what you spent your time on. If so, great! Do the notes in your traction list support your focus on those 5 Things? If not, why? Were you busy doing other things that weren't identified as a priority? Do you need to adjust your 5 Things? Do you need to adjust your focus? Don't shame yourself for being distracted. Use this info to learn. Next, take some time to think back through your day. Write down the 5 Things you ACTUALLY spent your time on. How did you do? Make a mental note of what you could do differently. Repeat this tomorrow, but do not change your 5 Things based on the activities you did throughout the day, change your activities throughout the day to make sure you stay on track for your 5 Things. Understanding the triggers that you get distracted will help.

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