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CALM THE CHAOS

For Busy Professionals



***Calm the Chaos
for
Busy Professionals***



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Calm The Chaos

NOTES



DISTRACTED ATTENTION

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BUSINESS-AS-USUAL & WILDLY SUCCESSFUL

Today, more than ever, trouble focusing, missed deadlines, overwhelm & chronic stress are symptoms of poor attention. Leveraging your attention as a leader is *The Key* to productivity and effectiveness. It involves paying attention to your attention, noting quality, intensity & depth.

Pragmatic Practices for Leaders

Three attitudes towards practice support developing a good relationship with your attention: **Increasing Awareness, Actively Choosing & Committing to Action.**

Apply these to each of the Five Pragmatic Practices below.

Pause:

Start your day & end your day by pausing to be in the moment, acknowledging what's occurring within & around you.

Presence:

Orient yourself to your *Core Presence™* each morning, starting with the Pause. Spend 3-5 minutes allowing yourself to deepen your awareness with a **Sitting Practice** (See Page 9).

Use the *Calm the Chaos Daily Planner* to assist you to start your day off right by pausing & reflecting on your mindset & mood, your energy, your plans & priorities. Ask yourself 'what's important? Plan for 10-15 minutes as a jump start to your day.



DISTRACTED ATTENTION

CONTINUED

Priorities:

Set up & use daily Attention strategies to reduce mental exertion & having to 'switch gears' every few minutes. You're cultivating new practices that will become routine & serve to save time & energy.

- **Time Blocks** - set up blocks of related activities in your weekly schedule with similar activities grouped.
- **Do One Thing at a Time** - as a practice instead of multitasking.
- **Turn off notifications** on all your devices.
- Set up **email filters** to organize your inbox for easier access & focus.
- Create a **Weekly Focusing Meeting** with yourself. Treat these appointments as sacred, as you would with your most valuable client.

Planning:

In your **Weekly Focusing Meeting** with yourself (30-60 mins), review your *Calm the Chaos Daily Planner* notes from the week. Allow yourself to spend a few moments in reflection before you move into planning for the week ahead.

Don't forget to set up short breaks for the day: midday, mid-afternoon & 15 minutes to wrap up your day before leaving. Complete your **Evening Mindset** either before you leave work or later in the evening. And, don't forget to plan some energy renewing activities for your weekend.

Guidelines for Goals - Create H.A.R.D. Goals

Research reveals that H.A.R.D. goals increase a growth mindset because they focus attention, mobilize efforts & increase persistence.

- **Heart-felt** -- you have an emotional connection to it.
- **Animated** -- you can 'see' it moving forward.
- **Required** -- there's a sense of urgency, you must achieve it.
- **Difficult** -- it pushes you outside your comfort zone.



DISTRACTED ATTENTION

CONTINUED

Guidelines for Mindful Meetings

- Allow for generous prep-time, it's a gift to you and the people in the meeting.
- Set an agenda that's time-bound, 50-minute meetings recommended.
- Wrap, review & close with next steps & a one-word check out.

Producing:

In your **Weekly Focusing Meeting**, honestly review your week so you can make shifts.

- Assess your progress toward your goals using a 1-10 system, 1= low 10= high.
- Celebrate your wins!!!
- Determine your Next Steps.
- Share with a trusted colleague or coach, and ask for support if you need it.

Reactive vs. Responsive

Training attention is a key skill of effective leaders. Being able to put your attention where it needs to be, *on purpose*, allows you to be adaptable and responsive. By intentionally putting into place structures to support you, you'll be moving from a *reactive stance* to a *responsive stance* in your leadership. This is an important attribute of leaders that people admire and respect.

Reactive	Responsive
Distracted	Focused
Multitasking	Singletasking
Addicted to devices	Chooses devices selectively
Last minute cancellations	Timely cancellations
Unscheduled meetings & calls	Schedule meetings & call
Automatically says 'yes' to requests	Chooses to say 'yes' & 'no' to requests
Last minute meetings	Structured & rhythmic meetings



Focus: Leveraging Your Attention: Identify Your Distractions & Learn How to Work with Them

Paying attention and being present are two keys to becoming a conscious, resilient leader that others want to follow; actually crave to follow. Yet nearly 50% of the time, our minds are somewhere other than on the situation or task at hand.

Arriving Practice: Follow along with the practice. Use this space to note what you observed in terms of your sensations, feelings & thoughts--whatever came up for you in this short time.

Take a quick tally. Be honest. How many times today have you checked your email, logged into a social network, texted someone, or surfed the web during time you'd allotted to another conversation, activity or task?

How much of your valuable time was lost to distraction? Use the space to bullet list the particular distractions that get in your way, including technology in all its varieties. Also, note any time you might've spent worrying or being "anywhere but here."

Calculate, or guesstimate, how much your distractions are costing you in terms of time & energy. Write in a number that seems accurate to you.



When you notice you're distracted, what physical sensations, thoughts & emotions come up? Note what's most predominant for you below. No judgment, simply observing.

List 3 people or activities, or both, that you'd like to give more of your time, effort, energy & attention to. Notice what happens in your body as you reflect on your choices.

Name the **Pragmatic Practices** you've learned for working with attention below. Circle the top 2-3 that you believe would be the most helpful to you to practice in the next month. Why did you choose these?

Which **one Pragmatic Practice** will you commit to putting into action this week? How will you implement and track it? What/whom can support you?



SITTING PRACTICE

A Sitting Practice is a commitment to becoming more aware—of yourself, of your mental & emotional life, and of your immediate surroundings.

What It Is

Sitting is simple & because of that can be difficult to do. Start with 3-5 minutes.

Sitting is a practice in observation, in acceptance, in compassion, in stillness. It's about discovering our true nature as human beings.

It is *impossible to do wrong*—if done with sincerity. It's very tempting to continually assess ourselves & berate ourselves, so acknowledge this as a human fact and choose to let it go. You're learning to engage in a new skill with this practice. You're a beginner. Beginners don't have to 'get it right,' 'do it correctly,' or 'be the best.'

You do not have to believe anything particular to sit—it does not include or exclude any philosophy or religion. It's about attending to the life flowing through you, your biology.

How to Do It

1. Sit up straight in a chair with your feet flat on the floor. Set a timer for the time you plan to sit.
2. Either close your eyes or with a soft gaze focus on a spot on the floor 6-8 feet in front of you.
3. Bring awareness to your breath—either in your abdomen, which rises and falls as you breathe, or at the tip of your nostrils where the air enters and leaves your nose.

Notice where your breath is most vibrant for you & put your attention there: your lips, chest, deep in your belly. Don't try to change your breathing, simply begin to observe it flowing through you.

4. Say quietly to yourself 'in' on an inhalation & 'out' on an exhalation. Between breaths, bring your attention to the points of contact where your body touches the chair, where your feet touch the floor, hands rest in your lap.
5. Your primary focus of attention is on your breath. If you find your attention wandering (*and it will*), simply say 'thought' to acknowledge your thoughts & bring your attention back to your breathing.
6. You can acknowledge any sensations in your body by saying 'sensation' and returning your attention to your breathing. And do the same with any 'emotions' or 'feelings' that may arise as well, returning your attention to your breath.



PRIORITIZE TO BE PRESENT

8 MINDFUL MOMENTS

Conscious Leadership involves growing yourself as a leader--mind, body, and spirit--so you can be present to and serve others. Prioritize these practices to grow yourself.

Pause to be Present. Be fully attentive to each moment. Give others your full attention. You'll send a powerful message: *"When I'm with you, I'm listening and I care."*

Reflect on your unique potential. It will help you identify what you're meant to do and how you're meant to make your biggest impact in this world.

Energy follows attention. What you focus on expands. What fires together, wires together.

Practice makes it all possible. Remember, what's your myelin growing?

Choose wisely. Life continues to bring us some wild circumstances and experiences. Each moment opens up new possibilities for responding. What will you choose?

Learn to let things go. Focus on your passion and purpose, not the massive list of interruptions. *What really deserves your attention, effort, time, and energy?*

Mindset matters. What mindset will help you bounce back and grow with each challenge? Triggers and setbacks may actually be doors opening, not catastrophes.

