

DTD Episode 92 Show Notes

6 Strategies to Stop Interruptions and Find Your Focus

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Most in the workforce are being asked to produce more and more. In the mean time technology has kept us connected 24/7. Co-workers and clients expect quick turn around for their questions or issues whether big or small. I've heard it more than once, "how can I get any work done when all I do is go to meetings and deal with issues!"

The reality is, you need uninterrupted time to focus to do your best work! Here are a few strategies that have worked well for my clients over the years:

1. **Pay attention to the interruptions.** What do people need? Are there reoccurring questions? Create an FAQ or contact list. Let the past questions predict their future needs and provide the answers in another way. Get those answers out of your possession and accessible without your time.
2. **Inundated with emails?** Ask coworkers to adopt a subject line phrases to clue you in on the contents. Also ask that they include a deadline where appropriate. It will make prioritizing your emails much easier.
 - a. FYI
 - b. Deadline
 - c. Decision
 - d. Discussion
3. **Feel Like You are Always in Meetings?** When you first started working it probably felt like a privilege to be included in a meeting. The farther you travel up the ladder the

more your time is monopolized by them. Start asking what the purpose of the meeting is ahead of time. Do you really need to be there? Is there another way to get the update? Are the topics they will be discussing relevant to you? Do they need you for a decision? What value can you add? If you aren't adding value or someone else can go in your place don't go. Keep that time for more important things.

If you're the one calling the meeting listen to episode 91 if you haven't already. Evaluate whether you need to keep having the meeting.

4. **Carve out Focus Time Each Week.** Put it in your calendar and hold it sacred. Create some sort of visible cue for your co-workers to let them know they cannot interrupt you unless there is a true emergency. I've had clients make signs for their doors placed a flag on the side of a cubicle if they were working in an open work environment.
5. **Schedule Time for Emails and Voicemails:** If possible answer emails and voicemails at certain times rather than letting it punctuate every moment of every day. There are some roles that won't lend themselves to this, I get it, but, if you can, check emails 2 or 3 times per day. You can let people know that that's what you'll be doing so they know not to expect an immediate response. Most people understand that you are doing it to create focus.
6. **Create specific office hours for ad hoc questions.** If you've made yourself 100% convenient people will just pop in at all hours of the day with their questions. Often they are not urgent issues it's just something they need to discuss. By creating office hours for questions and conversations you will train people to hold the non-urgent matters to those specific times. You'll enjoy more focus time!

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