

THREE STEPS TO REGAINING FOCUS



Losing focus on the things we are working on can be because of something else dragging our attention away. It can be useful to Stop, Look, and Listen to what is going on for you. Here are the steps to help you get started.

STOP. When you first realize that you are putting off the task you had intended to do say “STOP” out loud. This allows you to halt your current course of action which is to stray away from the task and ask yourself some

important questions about what you want to do.

LOOK. Now that you have halted your impulse, look around your environment for things that might be contributing to your loss of focus.

- Is your environment cluttered? Many people have difficulty working in a cluttered environment.
- Are there sounds in your environment that might be distracting you? The TV? A dog barking? Conversations of other people? Traffic noise?
- Are you uncomfortable? Is it too hot or too cold? Is your chair comfortable? Are you hungry?
- Do you have everything you need to complete your task?

Literally look around your environment for anything that may be distracting you or for information that may be missing that is distracting you. After you have identified the distractors, do what you can to eliminate them. Tidy up, gather your tools, adjust the temperature, find a comfortable place to sit, etc.

LISTEN. Since behavior follows thoughts and thoughts are the things we are saying to ourselves, it pays to listen carefully to what you are telling yourself. You may be thinking self-sabotaging thoughts like, “there’s no way I can do this. I have no idea where to start”. Or “I’ll fail anyway, I always do”. You might also be giving yourself permission to procrastinate by thinking you will get to it later, but then later never comes.

We all think self-sabotaging thoughts from time to time, but it is worth the effort to capture the thought, cancel it, and then restate it. For instance if I tell myself “there is no way I can do this. I have no idea where to start”. I can stop, say “cancel that” and say to myself, “I can do this. All I have to do is break it down into small steps”. Or if I catch myself saying “I’ll do that later”, I can stop, say “cancel that” and say “it will only take a few minutes, I’ll take care of that now so I won’t forget it”.

So, begin today to Stop Look and Listen!