

DISTRACTIONS ARE REAL. SO IS YOUR CHOICE.

Day after day, I hear the same thing from my clients. They are struggling to handle the sheer amount of distraction coming at them and their people.

Look at what leaders are carrying right now:

- The holiday season
- The company being sold
- Learning to use AI
- A reorganization
- End-of-year events
- Job searches and interviews
- Year-end evaluations, and bonuses that may or may not be handed out
- A culture that isn't fully integrated, where a select few standout above everyone else
- Family: school, sports, vacations

Any one of these can pull your focus. Most of you are juggling several at once. You can't make them go away. You can decide how you work inside them.

Here are a few ways you can stay focused and contribute great value to your company.

Align your purpose to your job

Know that what you're doing is an internal extension of why you're here. When the work connects to your purpose, the noise loses its pull.

Hang up a 5-year calendar

Put a five-year calendar on your wall and become conscious of each day. Live your life in the now. Don't take anything for granted. Maximize each moment of your day. At the end of it, X it out and feel good about what you achieved.

Accept the distraction you're facing

Keep it out in front of you. Hold an objective view of what is. Most times, you can't change the distraction. What you can change is you. It is what it is. Adopt the right mindset, then put the right behavior in place.

Start each day with my Daily VSE technique

At the top of a page, write: *What do I want my movie to be today?* Then write down the big goals you want to accomplish. They can be business and personal. For example:

- Have a great doctor's appointment
- Call the travel agent about the holiday vacation
- Spend 15 minutes reviewing the agenda and notes for my C-level presentation
- Keep moving Project A along
- Get approval for funding on Project Y

Then fill in your VSE for each part of the day. Here's what mine looks like.

AM (7 a.m. to noon)

- **V:** Stay present in the now.
- **S:** Keep focused on the people I'm interacting with.
- **E:** Say and do the right words and actions to make the highest-value impact.

PM (noon to 5 p.m.), filled in at noon

- **V:** Keep my mind on the outcome I want for each meeting.
- **S:** Let go and follow my instincts.
- **E:** Have fun. Enjoy each moment at a cellular level.

Evening+ (5 p.m. on), filled in at 5

- **V:** Enjoy the evening with my family.
- **S:** Let go of work and be present at my daughter's game.
- **E:** Relax, enjoy, smile, slow time down, take a deep breath.

Open a quote book every morning

Pick one of my Quote Books and ask yourself which one you need today: Celebrate, Inspire, Collaborate or Innovate. Open it and ask what each author's quote is telling you, and how it relates to the day you're starting.

Then relax for a few moments. Let your subconscious bring some I.R.S.A. (ideas, recommendations, solutions, actions) to your conscious mind. Write them down. Ask yourself: how can this help me today?

Make a 1-4-5 Achieve List instead of a to-do list

Keep a running list of everything you need to get done. Each day, pull your 1-4-5 from it. Write out your number one goal. Then your next four. Then your next five. The average 1-4-5 normally has 3 items to achieve (1-1, 2).

The 1-4-5 is telling you something: when you get these items done, feel great about your day.

The choice is yours

Keep in mind, none of these suggestions will stop the distractions. What they will do is help you stay focused, be productive and add value every day.

The distraction is real. You're awake and aware as it unfolds in your life. Recognize that you have a choice. Get swept up in it, or execute on one of these suggestions.

Use your available energy wisely. Direct it toward the people and activities that matter most.

Try it this week: Tomorrow morning, write your movie at the top of a page and fill in your morning VSE before you open your inbox.

Maximize the next two months of this calendar year. I know you can do it.

Life is what you make it.

Mark David