

INTERRUPTIONS & DISTRACTIONS

As I mention in the book *Calling Bullsh*t on Busy*, until you tame interruptions, your ability to stay focused is always vulnerable and easily compromised.

And what makes interruptions so hard to stop is that they involve other people and require you to establish consistent and workable, meaning doable, boundaries.

Distractions, on the other hand, are completely within your control. You may enjoy diverting your attention at times as a way of “spicing up” the day, but when you consider the impact of those diversions on your productivity and efficiency, you may be willing to make a different choice.

INSTRUCTIONS

Set a timer for 5 minutes.

Review the list of Interruptions and Distractions and then list out all of the different ways you are interrupted during the day and how and when you distract yourself. No judgments, no shame, no accusations—just tell the truth so you know exactly where you are starting from.

PART I

COMMON INTERRUPTIONS

Ringling phone
Unexpected visitors
Supervisor/Colleagues
Family + pets
Emergencies
Fire drills—both kinds
Email prompts
Equipment malfunctions
Alarms, other ambient noise
Physical pain, headaches
Strong odors

COMMON DISTRACTIONS

Checking your cell phone
Streaming Media: Television/Radio/Music
Food/Hunger
Worrying
Seeking comfort with pets/family
Smoking
Grooming
Reading non-work stuff at work
Gossip/Eavesdropping
Reading + sending unimportant emails
Social Media, Suring the ‘Net

WORK INTERRUPTIONS

WORK DISTRACTIONS

HOME INTERRUPTIONS

HOME DISTRACTIONS

PART II

Set a timer for 10 minutes.

Now that you've identified different ways you're interrupted by things outside yourself and the ways you distract yourself, write out some ways to eliminate the distractions—it's easy to say, "I won't do them anymore," but human nature being what it is, your success lies in being specific.

Detail exactly HOW you will avoid the behaviors that don't serve you (Distractions) and exactly HOW you will shift the cultures at home and work that allow Interruptions to continue happening.

Remember, NO JUDGMENTS about where you find yourself today, and do not negate your ideas before you've even tried them. Self-talk like, "Oh, that would never work," stops you before you've even begun. Give yourself a break and write it all down, then prioritize the order in which you will implement the various steps.