

ATTENTION MANAGEMENT



WORKBOOK

ATTENTION MANAGEMENT: WORKBOOK ©

[URL OR BRANDING]

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INTRODUCTION

Have you tried any time-management techniques? How did they go?

What if I told you that you could ignore time altogether and still get the results you want – the results you deserve – out of life?

While it might sound like I am about to sell you some snake oil, rest assured that what I am about to say is legit and common sense.

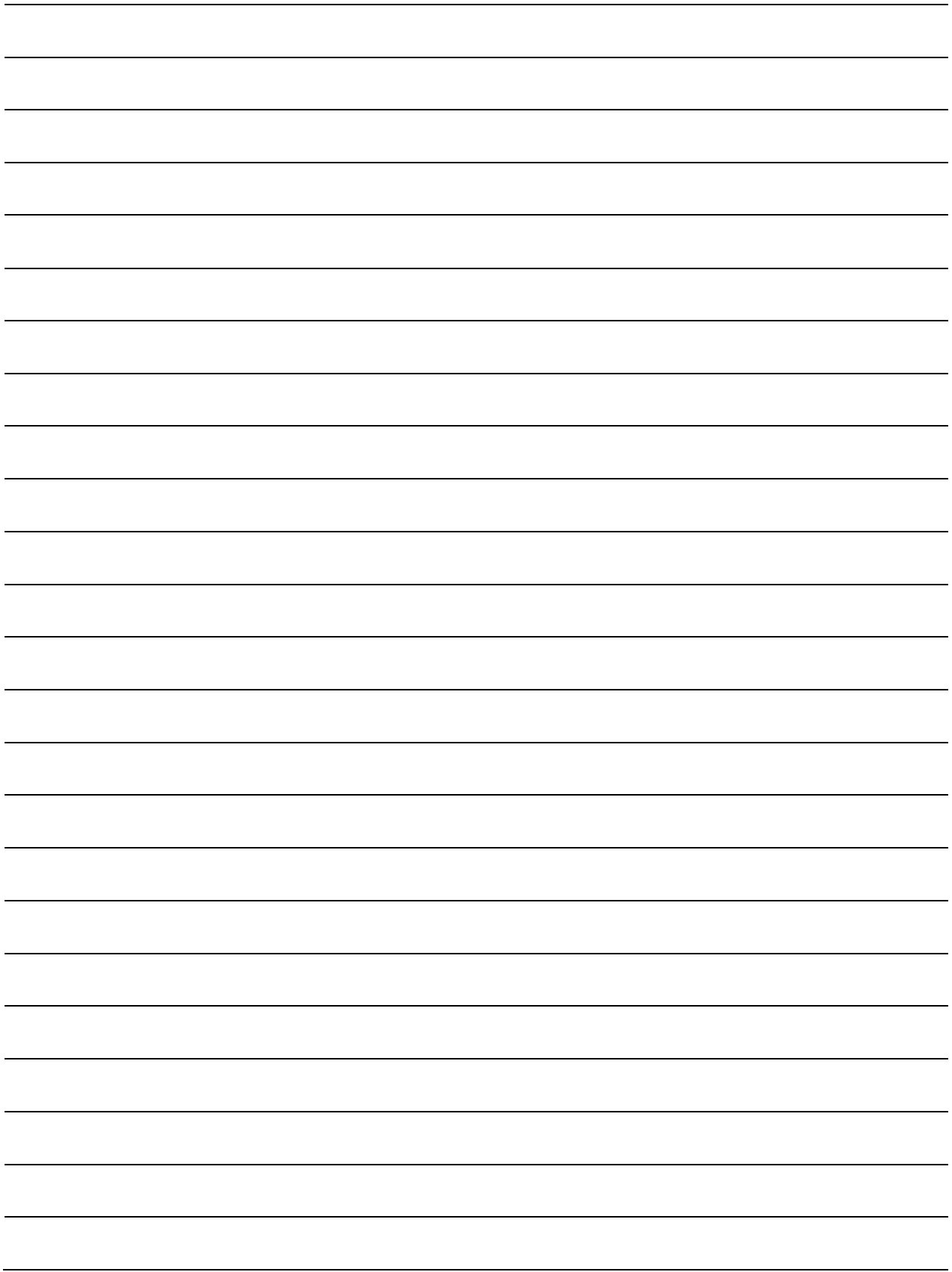
Instead of trying to **manage your time**, why **not manage your attention**? When you can direct your attention to the things that matter in life, you will get more done in less time. You won't ever worry about a lack of time because you will be so productive you will create more free time.

Attention Management is about knowing where to direct your attention and how to stay present, focused, and in the flow.

The goal of this workbook is to help you start paying attention in a way that can change your life.

Keep in mind; this workbook is a companion piece to our Attention Management guide (available in print and audio). While technically both books could stand on their own, they are at their most powerful when used in tandem.

Let's begin.



The Important-Urgent Matrix

Now that you have a better idea of everything you need to do and want to accomplish, it is time to prioritize them.

The easiest way to do this is to use the **Important-Urgent Matrix**.

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	<p>DO IT!</p> <p>These tasks often pop up out of nowhere or are due to procrastination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your client has an emergency• You have a last-minute deadline• There's an emergency at home	<p>SCHEDULE IT</p> <p>These tasks might not even have a deadline, but they are important to your overall vision or goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planning long- or short-term goals• Self-Care• Learning or improving skills
NOT IMPORTANT	<p>DELEGATE</p> <p>This is busy work. Tasks that need to be done daily but don't progress you towards your goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Household chores• Responding to emails• Some meetings or calls with colleagues/clients	<p>DELETE</p> <p>These are the things that you do daily that need to be cut out or down on.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certain bad habits• Social media obsessions• Excessive TV watching

The idea here is that important *and* urgent tasks should be at the top of your list.

You might be asking yourself what's the difference between important and urgent. For this exercise, urgency is purely time-based. These are things with specific deadlines, due dates, and milestones.

It can be hard to distinguish what is important but consider your overall goals and aspirations. **Ask yourself questions like:**

- Which tasks propel me towards my goals?
- Which tasks honor my personal preferences and desires?
- Which tasks will hurt me the most if I don't finish them?
- Which tasks require my input the most?

When it comes to this exercise, the idea of importance is very personal. You need to spend some serious time thinking about what matters to you.

On the following page, organize your tasks into the **Important Urgent Matrix**.

Note: The Delete and Delegate sections are very important. By delegating important tasks and dropping unimportant tasks, you force your attention towards only the things that matter.

We have included a couple of blank matrices since you may need to adjust and change your priorities as you grow and change.

URGENT

NOT URGENT

Do This!

Schedule It

IMPORTANT

Delegate It

Delete It

NOT IMPORTANT

URGENT

NOT URGENT

IMPORTANT

Do This!

Schedule It

NOT IMPORTANT

Delegate It

Delete It

URGENT

NOT URGENT

IMPORTANT

Do This!

Schedule It

NOT IMPORTANT

Delegate It

Delete It

URGENT

NOT URGENT

Do This!

Schedule It

IMPORTANT

Delegate It

Delete It

NOT IMPORTANT

CONTROL DISTRACTIONS

Dealing With the Distractions in Your Life

Now that you have a better idea of where you should direct your attention, it is time to figure out ways to maximize and manage it.

One of the most important steps you can take is to control your distractions.

Distractions come in two main forms. **External distractions** originate outside of you. These are the most common distractions. These would be things like your phone or outside noise. **Internal distractions** are your thoughts and emotions.

In the next exercise, you will simply list any potential distractions that might be causing your attention to waver. We have included some room below, but please feel free to use a notebook if you run out of space.

Distractions In Your Life

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

16.

17.

18.

19.

20.

It's a good idea to track your distractions for a little while, as well. You might be surprised by what distractions you forgot when brainstorming.

Now that you have a list of distractions think of ways to deal with them. For example, if email is a distraction for you, figure out a way to only check it 2x a day.

Distraction	How to Deal With It

BE PRESENT

How to Stay Present in The Moment

Being present is means that you are aware and active in the present moment.

You may have heard it referred to as "living mindfully" or mindfulness before. Essentially it means that your mind is where your body is. It isn't drifting off thinking about past regrets. It isn't thinking about something else.

This is a key aspect of **attention management** because you need to direct your attention to matters at hand and in the moment.

Mindfulness isn't something that can be captured in a workbook, but here is a simple breathing exercise you can use any time to ground yourself in the present.

Mindful Breathing

- 1. Find a comfortable place to sit.** A spot in a nice park is ideal, but if you are stuck in the office, that is OK too.
- 2. Start breathing normally.** There is no need to manipulate your breathing at all; just continue breathing as you normally would sitting in your comfortable spot.
- 3. Focus on your breathing.** This sounds simple, but it can be difficult. Try to focus on nothing but your breathing. If you find your mind wandering, catch it and direct it back to your breathing.
- 4. Try to stay focused for 3-5 minutes.** If you are having a tough time staying focused on nothing but your breathing, pay closer attention. Note the sounds of inhaling and exhaling. Watch your torso rise and fall with each breath. Feel your chest and lungs expand and contract.

5. That's It. That is all it takes – it might not seem like groundbreaking advice, but this mindful breathing exercise can:

- Eliminate distractions
- Regulate emotions
- Improve self-awareness
- Quiet a racing mind
- Fight fear

Becoming mindful and living in the moment is something you have to work at every day. Mindful breathing is a great activity to start with, but here are a few other techniques you can use:

- Meditation
- Journaling
- Nature Walks
- Taking notice of the world around you
- Do a mindful body scan
- Visualize your day's goals each morning.

MAXIMIZE FOCUS

Exercises to Help Teach You How to Focus

Maximizing (or maintaining) your focus is another huge part of attention management. After all, the textbook definition of focus (at least as we are using it) is: *"pay particular attention to."*

The good news is you have already prioritized your tasks and have addressed (or are in the process of) your distractions. These are key steps to maximizing your focus.

Another important step is to ensure you create the right atmosphere for focus. The next section will help you define what that means for you.

A Focus-Friendly Environment

Where Do You Get Your Best Work Done? (Think of physical locations like your home, office, or a local coffee shop).

What Physical Items Do You Need to Work? (Do you need a laptop? Your phone? A standing desk?)

Anyone You Need to Set Boundaries With? (Is there anyone in your life - family, colleagues, etc.- that you need to let know that you need some quiet time)

What Time of Day Do You Get Your Best Work Done? (Some people find they are most productive at night, others prefer morning).

Break Your Task Down (Think about the next task you need to conquer. Why is it important? Can you break it down into smaller steps? Use these smaller steps as your action plan.

The Next Task You Want to Accomplish Is:

It Is Important Because:

Note: Include times for breaks in your plans!

"...Deactivating and reactivating your goals allows you to stay focused," he said. "From a practical standpoint, our research suggests that, when faced with long tasks (such as studying before a final exam or doing your taxes), it is best to impose brief breaks on yourself. Brief mental breaks will help you stay focused on your task!"

-Alejandro Lleras

Other research has shown that regular breaks also help you retain information.

When it comes to attention management, breaks also give you a chance to step back and reflect on your current goals. Is this task the best use of your attention right now?

FINDING THE FLOW

Putting Yourself in The Best Position to Get Into a Flow State

Getting into the flow is quite similar to focus. One of the biggest differences between focus and flow is our ability (or inability) to call upon them. When we need to focus, we can take steps to focus. However, we can't guarantee to reach a flow state. We can only put ourselves in the best position and hope for the best.

Reaching a Flow State is the ultimate expression of Attention Management.

Essentially, everything you have done in this workbook is helping you to reach a flow state.

Tips to Keep in Mind

- **Your Physical Needs Should Be Met** – You don't want to have to worry about things like hunger, thirst, or fatigue holding you back from or interrupting your flow state.
- **Mental Needs Must Be Met** – A flow state is most easily reached when you feel some sort of harmony in your life. Not everything has to be too rosy, but you should be generally calm, relaxed, and positive.
- **Need to Be in the Right Environment** – Like focus, you need to find the right environment to get into the flow. For most people, this means a comfortable, tidy, and quiet spot.
- **The Task Needs to Matter** – It's hard to get into the flow if you don't care about what you are doing. The more important the task is, the better. The task should also honor your core values. It's hard to get into the flow if you are doing something you don't care about.

CONCLUSION

Are you paying attention?

More importantly, what are you paying attention to?

If you want better results in your life, you should be paying attention to the things that matter.

Now that you have worked through this guide, you are well on your way.

- **You prioritized**, so you know what's important.
- **You control your distractions** so that you can pay attention without interruptions.
- **You know how to live in the moment.** Your attention should be focused on the things you need to do *now*.
- **You can focus.** You know what you need to focus on important tasks properly.
- **You are in the flow.** Putting this all gives you the best chance at reaching *Attention Management Nirvana: The Flow State*.

When you commit to attention management, it can -and will- change your life.

Good luck on your journey, although, with your new skills, you likely won't need it.