Create Focused Time

Written by Steve Marr
Monday, 07 November 2016 14:35

When I was a student I tended to want background noise to help me study. For some reason I thought music or the television would enhance my productivity. While my grades were okay, in retrospect I see this was a major mistake. Today I am unable to function effectively without quiet time. I intentionally shut out distractions including emails, phone calls, and other noisemakers. I make a choice either to cut out distractions or suffer unproductive time.

Most mornings I am at my desk around 5 am to start with scripture reading and prayer time. I am currently reading and studying one chapter out of Romans. Then, I move to my structured prayer list where take my circumstances and the situations others are facing to the Lord. During this time I do not allow interruptions.

Unless I have scheduled phone appointments, I use the 5:30-8:00 am time for focused work including writing. After a breakfast break I manage my telephone appointments, follow-ups and other work until around 4 pm. Even when I work later, I make sure there are no distractions.

I have an advantage because I work out of a home office. I can walk into my work area, shut the door, and shut out other distractions. When I held a corporate position, I tried to arrive at 6 am and not allow any distractions until 7:15-7:30 am. This gave me some focused time. I would leave my door slightly ajar as a sign to my administrative assistant that she could disturb me only for very urgent cases. While I tried to minimize these no-interruption periods, there were occasions I needed focused time.

Establishing quiet, focused time is a key to reducing stress. When I work with clients who struggle against hurdles, frequently one of the reasons is their inability to set focused time to work on major issues. I believe those who are interrupted will experience higher levels of stress, mental effort and pressure. While this may not be avoidable always, it should be your goal to manage interruptions and improve productivity to limit your stress.

I've seen studies that demonstrate how interrupted work may require an average of 23 minutes to get back on task. I can understand this because when I'm really focused and experience an interruption, before I return to my work I have to ask myself where am I now? It takes me 20 minutes or more to get back my focus. This represents a significant consumer of time and productivity.

Fast Company provides an excellent article on this topic. It is worth reading and available on this link: http://bit.ly/2eOBtyN

King David experienced distractions. He wrote, "Give heed to me and answer me; I am restless in my complaint and am surely distracted." (Psalm 55:2, NASB) Work to create time without distractions in your work day. This is crucial to executing your job. Write this time in your planner. Protect it. You will begin to see significant improvement in your work performance.

Create Focused Time

Written by Steve Marr
Monday, 07 November 2016 14:35

Subscribe to the free Business Proverbs e-mail here: http://bit.ly/ncixc1

Subscribe to the free Business Proverbs e-mail here: http://bit.ly/ncixc1