Take Control of Your Time: 
The Power of Focus

How often do you feel like there’s not enough time to get everything done? If we’re honest with ourselves, we’ll admit there’s plenty of time, but we’re giving our focus to other things. Maximizing your time is a matter of managing your focus.

What is time, really? We treat it like a limited resource, but if something is important enough, we make time for it. How do we manage to make more of this thing that there’s never enough of? We change our measure of time by assigning different meaning to what we do. That’s why we say time flies when we’re having fun, or when we’re doing something we hate, a minute can feel like an eternity. Time is emotion.

Emotion also drives our focus. We only focus on the things that give us the greatest pleasure or pain. That’s why poor time management can feel so stressful. It forces us to focus our attention on the areas that cause the most pain.

When we procrastinate, the activity may give us some pleasure, but in the back of our mind, we’re really thinking about the painful thing we have to do later. Taking more active control of your focus from the beginning will change the meaning of each activity.

Think about making dinner. What do you focus on? Are you picturing the hassle and the mess, getting the slime from raw chicken on your hands, burning the sauce, and then scrubbing the dishes afterward? Or are you picturing the delicious dinner you just cooked yourself? The thing you choose to focus on will affect the meaning of the activity. The difference is whether you focus on the results or the steps you take to get there.

Usually it’s better to focus on the results. Human beings are great deletion creatures. When we perform everyday activities, we don’t think about every small part of the process. Walking down the street doesn’t require us to think about every muscle movement it takes to do that. We delete the small stuff.

Sometimes, thinking a task through to the end can overwhelm us. We feel like we’re taking on the entire weight of a project all at once, and it’s too much to bear. That’s why you have to chunk your focus into separate aspects of the activity, and build your confidence by knocking out each in succession.

Change is always a matter of motivation, not ability. Control your focus, and you’ll be motivated to accomplish anything.

“People who fail focus on what they will have to go through; people who succeed focus on what it will feel like at the end.”
—Tony Robbins

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