



The Focus Files

Tips and Tricks to Improve Focus
for Increased Productivity and Success

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<http://homeschoolingpro.com>

Introduction

The day ends, and you still haven't gotten anything done.

No, that's not entirely true. You've gotten things done, just not the important things. It might well be you accomplished quite a bit, in fact. Unfortunately, none of those things were what you likely *needed* to do. Hence the lost, unfulfilled feeling as you prepare for bed come nightfall.



Typically, these emotions are coupled with a sense of frustration and even self-blame. You ask yourself why it's so hard to get things done. What it all boils down to is one word. Focus.

We don't always think about just how important the ability to concentrate fully on something is until we lack the ability to do it.

Think about this:

- Without focus, we jump from task to task without actually accomplishing much of anything at all.

- Without focus, we don't know where to concentrate our efforts and frequently wind up working on the wrong thing altogether.
- Without focus, we waste time and energy and end our days in precisely the way outlined at the beginning of this article: frustrated and angry at having experienced one more wasted day.



So, What Went Wrong?

You Lost the Day in Someone Else's Life

It's so easy to get caught up in the drama of those around us. The problem is this little soap opera comes at a price. You can't focus if you're too busy wondering what the people around you are doing. Sadly, with the advent of social media, it's all too easy to get caught up in the lives of those around us, to the point where we forget to focus on living our own.



You were Playing it Safe

Forward progress never comes without risk but stalling out guarantees defeat. You're not going to get anywhere at all if you're standing still.

You Got Stuck on Failure

Nothing stings quite like falling flat on your face. By focusing on the disaster that just happened, it quickly becomes impossible to find forward movement again.



You Rushed the Process

You couldn't wait to get there, so you started looking for shortcuts. Or worse, you skipped steps altogether. Now you're not even sure where you are, much less where your focus is.

You Were Disorganized

One of the easiest ways to lose your focus is to disregard your lack of organization. How attentive can you be to a complex task when you can't find the tools or file you need to complete it? You waste valuable time searching, all the while losing your cool and stressing out. Not only have you lost your focus, but being disorganized could mean you overlook important details, forget steps in the process or be unable to complete the project on time.



You Procrastinated

We are all tempted to procrastinate tasks that we dread completing or that feel overwhelming. But those who frequently lose their focus tend to do this all too often. When you procrastinate, it's easy to end up rushing at the last minute to finish a vital task because you put it off too long.

You are a Multi-tasker

Even though we now know that multi-tasking only stalls our focus and productivity, many people still do it. Studies prove that when we try to do too many things, we overload our frontal cortex. This means we feel scattered and can make silly mistakes. Mistakes that could cost us achieving a goal or getting that promotion.



You Started to Worry What Other People were Thinking or Doing

When you misplace your focus onto what someone else might be thinking of you, or worse, start concentrating on their progress over your own, how are you supposed to move forward? You start bogging yourself down, thinking you're not good enough. You might even begin to question your self-worth if you feel you're not accomplishing what you ought to.

You Were Asking Too Much

Without proper focus, it's impossible to gauge just how long something is going to take, or even the outcome of the experience. It becomes very easy to oversell the situation. You start thinking you can get things done faster or better than you're actually able to do. You lose sight of reality. Then you get down about your lack of progress, which just leads to less focus on the task.



You Said 'Yes' to Everything

Without focus, it's easy to fill your plate with too many responsibilities. This is because you no longer have a clear vision of what time you have to spend on new projects. Worse, you lose sight of whether these commitments will be right for you in the long run. As a result, you've bogged yourself down with extraneous items that give you no real benefit.



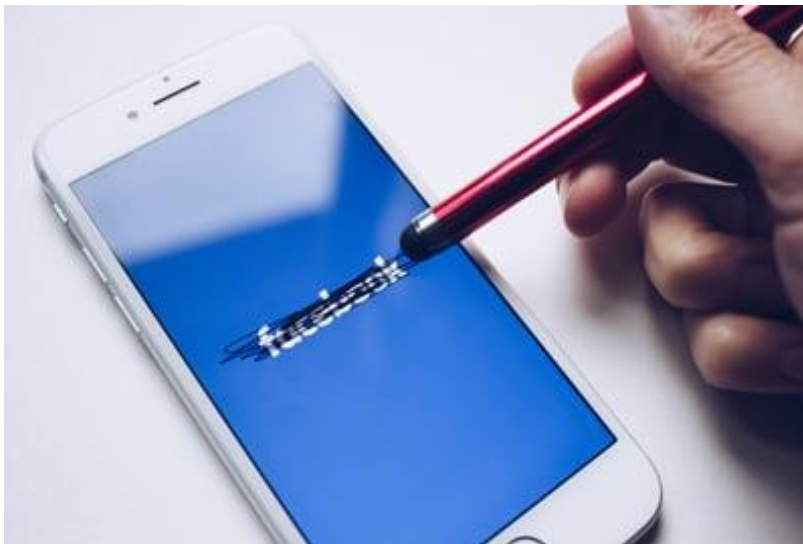
You Gave Up

In the end, everything just became too much, and you saw no point in going on. Without focus, the way out became impossible to see, and it became easier to quit than to struggle for another minute.

How do We Change this Scenario?

Shut Down the Drama

If you're spending too much time on social media, the answer is fairly simple: turn off your phone, close your browser, and refuse to play into everyone else's drama. Focus demands you concentrate on one thing only: You. Everything else is just a distraction.



Single-Task

Focus requires you to hone in on one thing at a time. Ask yourself what the next most crucial thing is that you should be doing and concentrate fully on that one thing until it's done. Still, having trouble with secondary tasks creeping into your workspace despite your best efforts? Keep a to-do list handy and add items as you think of them, so you can come back to them later when you have time.

Get it Done

Focus, by definition, involves a "Do it now" mentality. Don't put off something just because the next item on your list is unpleasant. Instead, dig in and get it out of the way immediately, so you don't have to think about it later.

NOW OR NEVER
NOW OR NEVER
NOW OR NEVER

Learn to Tune Out the World

Distractions will always be everywhere. Focus teaches you to ignore them and press on regardless of what's going on around you. When you need to concentrate, silence your phone and put in your earbuds, if possible.

Look to Your Own Growth

Instead of focusing on what you think others would want you to do, put your concentration squarely on what's going to give you the most growth and development as an individual. Ask what's going to get *you* ahead in life.



Clean Up Your Act

Focus loves neat spaces, free from distraction. Take time to sort out your workspace to keep it free from clutter.

Recognize You'll Never be Ready

Perfect timing is a myth and becomes just another way to procrastinate. Focus requires you to jump in where you are. Sure, things might seem messy, and the mood might be escaping you, but you'll be surprised at how quickly things shift for the better once you simply start moving.

Become a (Calculated) Risk Taker

Never be afraid of taking a leap of faith. Focus helps you to take the time to consider all the angles and shows you the best place to make that jump.



Pick Yourself Up

Sure, you might fail from time to time, but by focusing on your failure, you will gain valuable lessons and insights you'd never attain otherwise.

Follow the Steps

Focus not only keeps your eyes on the goal but on the path ahead. By concentrating on the next logical stage of development, you will discover steady progress designed to get you where you want to go.



Be Yourself

Focus on your progress, on your momentum, and on what you're doing to further your own goals. Remember, you're a unique individual. There's no one-size-fits-all formula for success. The right way is what works for *you*.

Check Your Expectations

Focus enables you to see the outcome clearly. You have a better idea of what deadlines you can meet and which you can't. You also gain the ability to see what the end result is likely to become, so there are no surprises.

Say "No"

Focus means honing in on what you want to do next. If something doesn't benefit your overall goal or create new opportunities or growth, you need to learn to say 'no.' This single word becomes your protector as you move forward toward your eventual success.



Dig In

To a person who can focus, there's never any reason to quit. They never stop looking for the solutions, even when things seem nearly impossible. That's because they know how to use laser-like concentration to see past the obstacles to find the way through.

In the end, focus is all about learning to manage your energy and expectations to optimize your life to your best advantage. Without it, you're guaranteed failure. With it, the world becomes a wildly fascinating place full of possibilities.

Success is yours for the taking. With that in mind, isn't it time you figured out what you want to focus on most today?

