

Take a “Time-out” From Your Mind

When I was growing up my father would often help me with my homework, as parents often do. When faced with difficult math problems or deciding on a topic for an English paper, I would become very frustrated. The more frustrated I got the worse the situation became. My dad had an interesting way of coaching me through this. Instead of forcing me to concentrate more, he advised me to step away from the table, go in the other room or take a walk outside to clear my head. He assured me that upon my return to the problem at hand I would have my answer. This much needed “mind time-out” was usually all it took to overcome the current challenge.

Our minds enjoy thinking of past and future events, especially in business. We are constantly planning for the future and reflecting on the past to prevent future mistakes. This process works well, but many times it can overshadow the significant benefits a brief “mind time-out” can reap. Taking a break from the continuous “mind chatter” can help to propel us forward with less struggle.

Quiet your mind.

How often do you just rest your mind? Can you sit for several minutes with a quiet mind or do your thoughts continue to race— thinking of what you need to do the rest of the day, tomorrow, or next week?

Try this test. Sit comfortably and close your eyes. Take a slow deep breath in, hold for 4 seconds and exhale slowly. Try not to think. When a thought comes in, visualize it in a bubble floating up and out of your mind. Continue putting thoughts in bubbles until your mind can remain quiet for a few minutes at a time.

With practice, you will be able to remain quiet for longer and longer stretches. At first, practice this exercise for a couple of minutes every morning. A great place for beginners is in the shower (that’s where this newsletter topic came to me one morning). As you are able to quiet your mind on command, you will benefit from being better able to overcome challenging, stressful situations as they arise.

Keywords: patience, relax, frustration, overcome challenges

Doreen holds an MBA and has spent over 18 years working at major corporations and small business in finance and marketing. As a certified professional development coach at Way to Goal! www.waytogoal.com Doreen specializes in helping committed professionals find careers that are both personally and financially rewarding. Copyright 2008 Doreen Amatelli. All Rights Reserved.