



FOCUS – ARE YOU DISTRACTED?

My spiritual teacher recently shared a story in his recent talk. Bill Gates and Warren Buffet were having dinner together and Bill's father asked them a question. You are among the richest men in the world, what made you successful? They both wrote down a word individually and yes you guessed it right, they both wrote, "Focus." Not surprising, but that is what it takes.

Have you driven through peak hour traffic and surprised how you got to your destination while you were busy in your head? Are there narratives running in your brain while you are in a meeting or even talking to your child when you got back home? A constant sense of busyness without accomplishing much business. Does it feel like you? Technology is often blamed and is indeed a big culprit in this century. So quietly and tactfully it floats and intrudes into every aspect of life. Distractions come packaged in so many ways that it may not be worthwhile to even dwell upon various forms, the list is multiplying. Anything that prevents you from accomplishing what you wish to achieve is a clear and present danger in your lives.

Multi-Tasking was another fashionable myth until it was found that it is nothing but doing two tasks badly at the same time. In the HBR article "Train your Brain to focus," Paul Hammerness and Margaret Moore share that multitasking makes us more prone to mistakes, more likely to miss important information and cues, and less likely to retain information in working memory, which impairs problem-solving and creativity.

So how can we train our Focus muscle?

Introducing a short five- minute meditation could be a good start point. Researchers at Columbia University Medical Centre found that meditation can change the structure and function of the brain through relaxation, which can reduce stress, anxiety and depression, increase focus and concentration, improve memory and attention span, build stronger immune system and greater physiological /psychological resilience and allow better sleep.

As a meditator, I notice my mind flying away with thoughts and distractions during my meditations. I need to bring it back into focus using techniques such as watching the breath. It is natural to be distracted away but what helps most is I catch myself sooner over the years and bring it back to focus. It helps me notice my mind and it's distractions even outside meditation and has been a big win.

Creating a To-Do List and more importantly a Not-To-Do list is key. This helps you stay focused on what you must accomplish. Also consciously planning time for the items on your list and spending that time with discipline on the tasks chosen will boost productivity significantly. Is Focus something you want to bring to every aspect of your life?