

SEPTEMBER 2014 - TO MULTITASK OR NOT TO MULTITASK...

I've been doing a bit of research recently to see how I can boost my productivity and be more effective with my use of time as I *am* prone to getting distracted at times, as I'm sure some of you reading this might be too.

You see, what's interesting is that most of us confuse distraction with multitasking, which got me thinking that this might be a good topic to zero in on this month.

Isn't it interesting that the popularity of multitasking has risen in line with the proliferation of technology?

I know for a fact that the seductive pings, dings and flashing icons from the multitude of devices surrounding me often has me wondering whether or not I should be applying for a juggling scholarship at the University of Life!

So, what may we *feel* that we're being more productive when we multitask, what does science have to say on the topic?

The facts are revealing...

- Research suggests that only 2% of people (otherwise known as Supertaskers with highly evolved brains) can multitask effectively, which suggests that I as one of the remaining 98% cannot. Message to self...DO NOT MULTITASK!
- Focusing on more than one thing decreases productivity by 40 % and lowers IQ by 10 points (John Medina - Brain Rules). As such, it takes 50% longer to accomplish a single task and 50% more errors are made, which they reckon is the equivalent of losing a night's sleep & twice the effect of smoking marijuana.
- When we multitask all day, the scattered habits we we develop literally change the neurology of our brains, and whilst our brains are plastic, they're not elastic (hence the inability to focus and concentrate).
- According to studies carried out with workers at Google, it takes up to 15 minutes to return to prior levels of productivity when interrupted by a text or incoming email. Other studies however suggest anything up to 25 minutes.
- For all you office people out there using a computer for work, the chances are you'll be distracted once every 10.5 minutes and the average number of hours you'll lose in a work day to distractions is 1.2 hours.
- Now with regard to driving a vehicle and using a mobile phone (hands free or handheld), apart from copping a big fine if you're caught, your reactions will be delayed by as much as having a blood alcohol level of .08%. Now that's something to seriously think about in terms of being a danger on the road.
- To add insult to injury, multitasking, or attempting to do so, can drastically increase stress levels and we all know the negative impact stress can have on our lives and health, don't we?

- What's more, if your colleagues, family members or friends are trying to talk to you and become aware on a regular basis that they don't have your full attention, it could cause problems in your personal relationships.
- The list goes on.....

At the risk of your getting distracted if I prattle on ad nauseum, I'd best shut up shop here and leave off with a final word...

The overwhelming message from science is to GIVE IT UP!