

COACHING TIP

From Rex C. Houze

TIPS FOR STAYING IN THE MOMENT

Focus and concentration are critical to success in most undertakings and it is especially critical in human relationships. When you “Multi-task,” i.e. thinking about something else, checking your email, reading a report, or doing anything else while you are conversing with someone in person or by phone is not focusing or concentrating. Two things can happen and neither is good: 1. The other person will sense it and could feel devalued and/or 2. You might miss something crucial to the relationship or issue being discussed.

Either of these outcomes can hamper productivity, lower the quality of work, and damage an important relationship. Listed below are 16 tips for staying in the moment. Pick one or more that might be an issue for you and make a concentrated effort to improve. Then, pick another and continue the process until you are a master at staying in the moment.

1. Focus on what the other person is saying.
 - a. Pay attention to tone, inflection, phrasing, speed, volume, etc.; try to match the other person without being obvious.
2. Use the other person's name; this can help you concentrate.
3. Paraphrase (helps you concentrate & clarifies understanding).
4. Make eye contact.
5. Face the other person squarely; avoid turning your shoulders as if you're trying to leave, looking at your watch, etc.
6. Eliminate distractions.
7. Ask questions; pause and let the other person answer.
8. Talk less; don't interrupt.
9. Avoid being judgmental or thinking about what you'll say next; if you pause after someone speaks or asks a question, it will appear that you are giving the person's thought or question careful consideration and, at the same time, it will give you time to think of a response.
10. Acknowledge key points with nods and/or phrases (“I see,” “I understand,” “Right,” “Makes sense,” etc.).
11. Resist jumping to conclusions or pre-judging.
12. Ask relevant, open-end questions, e.g. “What do you mean by that?” “When you say...” “Tell me more.” “Tell me about it.”
13. Act like the other person is the most important person in the world; at this moment, he or she is.
14. Set a goal to learn something from everyone you meet.
15. Help people be right.
16. Take notes; have a mindset that you will need to send the other person a recap of what he or she said even if you won't.