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Mindful distraction – a means to micro mindfulness

In the world where we are connected 24/7 and being distracted regularly, can we use these distractions to our advantage?

by Dr. Narjes Gorjizadeh, PhD

TECHNOLOGY – BLESSING OR A CURSE?

We are living in a digital communication world. Social media, smart phones, emails, etc., enable us to communicate in many ways. But being connected 24/7 through digital devices reduces our connection with ourselves and quality in personal communication with others. This is not to mention all the constant distraction that they create for us if not used wisely.

All the beeps, dings, rings, and buzzes that come from our smart phones are distractions, and they have an impact in our performance and our life. Experts say when we hear these noises, it produces mental and physical reaction in us. Our heart rate goes up and if we don't check the device to see what's going on, our anxiety response is going to remain until we check what the notification was for. This gradually creates a habit in us, the habit of self-

distraction and checking our phone frequently, even when it is not beeping.

Distraction is a natural quality of an untrained mind. However, this new age of digital communication provides more distraction for our mind to a level that it affects our life. Here is the main downfall: being constantly distracted decreases our focus and lowers our productivity. It is not possible to finish a task efficiently and effortlessly when we are distracted frequently. This adds to our stress.

It goes even deeper than this. Research shows that our ability to remain focused shapes our happiness. This implies that our not being able to manage how to use technology to our advantage to get the benefit from it, without facing the downside of it, can cost us our happiness. Who thought the simple beep of a device could have such a significant impact in the quality of our life?

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MICRO MINDFULNESS IS POWERFUL

It's important that we manage our usage of technology and don't let device-based communications impact our life negatively.

The good news is that there are simple things that we can do to remain in control of our mind, our usage of technology and the quality of our life. Mindfulness is one of the most effective ways. Mindfulness is a mental discipline that trains our mind to learn to remain in the present moment. There are thousands of research studies that confirm the positive benefits of mindfulness in our health, well-being and our life. Increased focus, reduced stress, enhanced immune system, better sleep and enhanced happiness are amongst the many benefits of mindfulness.

It's due to these amazing benefits that mindfulness has become trendy in the past few years.

Having a daily mindfulness routine is an efficient way to keep your mind calm and slow down the endless traffic of thoughts in your mind.

However, if you think you are too busy to practise mindfulness or you are not quite sure if you've got it right, you are not to worry. You can add micro mindfulness doses to your daily routine and reap the benefits of being present and pump up your energy and focus during the day.

Whether you practise mindfulness every day or not, you can use this micro mindfulness practice during the day to bring back your awareness to the present moment and connect with yourself.

MINDFUL DISTRACTIONS

Here is a great way to remember to add micro mindfulness doses to your day. This is a technique to use the distractions you face during the day to your advantage and add a positive component to it.

When you hear your phone beep, before you reach out for your phone, pause for a moment and take a mindful breath and breathe with full attention. For one inhale and one exhale, focus on your breath completely, as if the whole world disappears for you for this moment and only you and your breath exist. Give it your full attention.

These mini-pauses during the day are effective ways to stop for a moment and disconnect from the digital world and consciously connect with yourself. It takes only 2-4 seconds to do, yet it is very effective. It puts a pause in the constant array of thoughts in your mind several times during the day.

If you make a habit of taking one breath with full attention and be mindful for a moment every time your phone beeps or before you reach out for your phone, you could be doing it 60-80 times a day, as this is how many times adults check their phones every day. It will be quite an amazing achievement if you consciously become mindful of the present moment for this amount of time every day.

Since distractions are happening frequently in this modern world where we are connected 24/7, it can be regarded as a good reminder to prompt us to stop for a moment and disconnect before connect through our phones and take a mindful breath and rejuvenate yourself. ●

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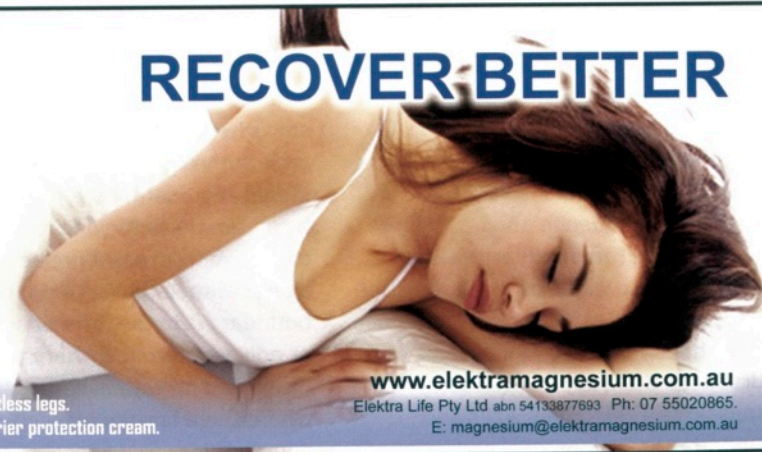
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