

EXPLORE YOUR ENTHUSIASM

EPISODE 67: FOCUS: HOW TO GET IT, HOW TO KEEP IT

Welcome to Explore your Enthusiasm, episode 67: Focus - how to get it and how to keep it. Today we'll cover how to get focused on your work, avoid distractions, and keep your focus until you get a project done. This is vital for productivity and making progress in your business and so many of us struggle with it. If you'd like to learn more about getting stuff done, join my upcoming class with CreativeLIVE. It's totally free to watch live on August 19th, and you can sign up for reminders (and get a cool Holiday Sales Forecasting Calculator) [here](#).

Now, before we get into this, I gotta keep it real. I started writing this episode by opening up 750words.com and writing out the title ... and promptly clicking away. This document was open for a full hour before I clicked back into it and got back to writing. What kept me from focusing? I have Asana, our task management software sending me notifications on my phone, and as Jay was working, I got notified everytime he had a question or got a new one done. And I would go over and click and look at what he made. And then I had to tweet how ironic it was that I GOT DISTRACTED WRITING ABOUT FOCUS. And then I realized my Buffer queue was almost empty, so I clicked around and read a few posts and added the ones I liked to my queue. And then I clicked in Spotify trying to decide what playlist I wanted to write to.

So now (as I write this) it's 1:45 (I started writing this after I had already marked some things off my to-do list this morning ... which is another problem - I work best earlier in the day, so anything I start after noon tends to take longer) and the Starship chat starts in 15 minutes. So of course I'm FINALLY buckling down.

WHO AM I TO TALK ABOUT FOCUS?

Well, for starters, I'm just like you, just like the students who ask me how they can focus - I get distracted! I lose focus!

And at the same time, I get a lot done. Each week, I write + record a podcast, write + send a new email lesson to subscribers, and a new lesson to Starship. I hold a 1-2 hour live chat and follow all the conversations in a community with over 75 members. I answer all my emails within 2 days. I write, produce and launch 2-3 brand new classes per year, and 2-3 articles for magazines, and teach live about once a month.

Each of those things requires me to have moments of intense focus and getting stuff done on deadline.

HOW? HOW DO YOU FOCUS TO GET SOMETHING DONE?

First, let's acknowledge that you need two kinds of focus in your business: You need to focus on the RIGHT kind of work, and then you need minute-by-minute focus. We're going to talk about how to focus on the RIGHT kind of work in the CreativeLIVE class, so today I want to talk about how you keep your focus moment by moment.

I've got 3 tips!

1. Know what you need to work on and why

Lately it seems everyone is complaining of not having focus - in the Starship, in my Mastermind, and on Periscope Q+As. It might be because it's summer and we'd all rather be outside, but when I ask people, "So what do you have a hard time focusing on?" the reply I get is, "Well, I don't know. I just can't seem to work on anything." Ok! Well, there we go! The very first step of focusing on something is knowing WHAT you want to be spending your focus on. What needs to be done?

If you know what you need to work on and you just seem to be avoiding it, ask yourself WHY?

First of all: WHY do you want to do this thing? "Because I have to" isn't very motivating.

What bigger dream or vision does this move you closer to? Why do you care about it?

Second: Why are you avoiding it? Are you afraid of messing it up? Are you afraid of it going well? Is it that you don't know where to start? Get crystal clear on why you're avoiding it, and you may uncover some stuff you can work through, that will allow you to work on it easily.

For example, my WHY of this podcast is that yes, it's due and my whole team relies on me getting the podcast written so they can edit and lay out the transcript. But my bigger WHY of the podcast is that it connects with you, and that I know YOU are out there waiting for it, and that you like it. If I think of it as talking to you, suddenly I'm much more motivated, not just to work on it, but to make it as useful as possible!

Bam! Focus is easier!

2. Set your environment (but don't let this distract you)

The best thing you can do for your focus is to recognize where and how you work best.

In the morning?

In the evening?

With music?

In silence?

Coffee shop?

Kitchen Table?

How do you figure this out? Pay attention! At the end of each work session, for a week or two, pay attention to where and when you got your BEST work done. Write down all the qualities of that session ... and look for similarities among work sessions. I've learned that I always find it easier to focus and write if a particular playlist is going.

Now, it's easy to turn this into an internal rule (which we'll talk more about in the class), so don't get too hung up on things. Instead of worrying about everything being PERFECT, focus on making one quick change that will improve your focus.

3. Get rid of distractions

Here's the thing - NO ONE can focus with distractions. No one. But I talk to so many makers that just think they should be able to do it. They should be able to work while their toddler talks to them. They should be able to ignore open tabs and just work. But no, the key to focus is to make it as easy as possible for yourself. So hire a babysitter (or close the door), close the other tabs, and remove all distractions.

Now, when I say get rid of all distractions, this includes notifications on your computer and phone ... and yet no one ever does this. So I'm telling you - TURN OFF YOUR NOTIFICATIONS. No pop-ups when you get an email, no noise when someone replies to your tweet, or Facebook post, or likes an image on Instagram.

This may be setting off your alarm bells, because you think you HAVE to know as soon as someone emails or replies to you, but take a deep breath. Think about it like this: everyone I know with a huge following or over 6 figures in sales, they don't get notified. If they did, their phone would be blowing up constantly. Instead, they have to set aside times to reply to things and answer emails. If they didn't, they'd never make or create anything and they'd soon lose their audience. So you aren't IMPROVING your business by being immediately responsive; you're holding yourself back and staying small. Instead, treat your business (and yourself) like you would if you had 1 million readers/followers/likers. Set aside a time for interaction and replying, and set aside for focusing on a new creation (or just doing your admin stuff).

Seriously, TURN OFF NOTIFICATIONS right now.

And then let me know about it on Instagram (not that I'll be immediately notified, but I check in every few days!) - use the hashtag #exploreyoureenthusiasm.

I'll be sharing even more tips for keeping your focus and having a productive day in my new course with CreativeLIVE, which you can sign up for, FOR FREE, at taraswiger.com/time. It'll be free to watch it live on August 19th, so be sure to sign up before then!

Have a focused day!