



## 8 Useful Insights About Distraction That Can Help You Understand And Deal With It Effectively

**1. Distraction is anything that takes our attention and focus away from something that we want to do.** Indistractable author Nir Eyal posits traction as the opposite of distraction. Both come from the Latin root "trahere" meaning "pull". So if traction is pulling towards what you want, distraction is pulling in the opposite direction, towards things you don't want or intend to do.

**2. Note that both traction and distraction end in "action".** Distraction is not something that happens to you; it is a behavior, something you do. Your phone may have rung in the middle of your research, but you chose to pick it up and indulge in chitchat about your neighbor's cat. Like any behavior, distraction can become a habit, something you want to avoid.

**3. Most distraction starts from within.** All human behavior is prompted by the desire to escape one thing: discomfort. We respond to cold by bundling up; when we're hungry, we eat. The same goes for psychological discomfort. When we're lonely, uncertain or bored, we turn to Facebook, Google or YouTube. Recognizing our negative feelings and managing our responses is one major key to avoiding distraction.

**4. Who are your residual benefactors?** The residual benefactors in your life are the people, relationships, matters that are getting the leftover scraps of your time and attention after everything else you do. Is this your family? Your friendships? Your health? Managing distraction is a big step towards making them your proper priorities.

**5. A to-do list isn't enough.** There's a myth about the to-do list - that if you put something on it, it's magically going to get done. A to-do list is actually output; your time is the input. So unless a task has a time and duration on your calendar, it's not going to get done. This goes for family and recreational time as well.

**6. It's not the technology.** Given, tech companies have myriad ways of getting and keeping our attention. We have options, however. We can modify notification settings, allot time for browsing, decide what tech triggers are useful to us, and so on.

**7. A dysfunctional work culture is distracting.** Slack is one company where distraction is not a problem, because a healthy work culture keeps internal and external triggers in check. A workplace where people feel psychologically safe, where they can discuss their problems, where leadership gives people full attention and reasonable work hours, creates minimal distraction.



**8. Why are our kids distracted?** When kids are unfocused at school or at home, when they spend more time on devices than bonding with other children or their parents, who's to blame? Distraction in kids as in adults usually has internal causes. It falls to us to understand what discomfort they're trying to escape and to help them deal positively with what they're feeling. Technology and media, provided they're age-appropriate and not overused, have not been shown by themselves to have negative effects on children.

For a more detailed guide to dealing with distraction, check out [this resource from Nir Eyal](#)

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