

Has Trouble Concentrating and Focusing on a Learning Task

(Choosing Concentration)

1. Attention Quiz

The following activities will help your child improve his concentration skills. Ask him if he has ever found himself daydreaming in class. Give him the following quiz to test his concentration.

1. When you fold your arms (Don't do it yet!), one hand is tucked in and one is on top. Which one do you put on top?



2. Think about the telephone you use at home. Can you locate JKL and OPER on the diagram?

3. True or False. Lincoln's head on a penny faces right.

4. True or False. The buttonholes on a man's shirt (Don't look down!) point up and down.

5. On traffic lights, which color is on top?

6. How many sides does a stop sign have?

7. When you cross your legs, which leg do you generally put on top?

8. Describe the room you are sitting in without looking around. What objects are in the room?

9. Without looking up, how many windows are in the room you are sitting in?

2. Be Here Now

Have you ever found yourself daydreaming in class? Have you ever been reading a book and realized that you read the whole page and you do not remember a word it said? Have you ever been called on by your teacher and realized you did not even hear the question?

“Be here now” is a concept to help you with your concentration. Being right here, right now, is such a simple idea. It sounds obvious. Where can you be but where you are? The answer is you can be somewhere else at any time — in your head. It is human nature to live in your head. When you do, you miss what is happening in the rest of the world.

“Be here now” means DO what you are doing when you are doing it, and BE where you are when you are there. Focus your attention on the HERE AND NOW.

Close your eyes for 10 seconds and pay attention to what is going on in your head. What happened? Did your head say, “I wonder when 10 seconds is up,” or “This is dumb,” or “I did not hear any voice”?

When you are not speaking, you have to see where your mind is and what you are thinking. Inside your head are voices that tell you different things. Sometimes these voices stop you from concentrating. You need to evaluate what you are thinking and bring yourself back if you are not “here now.”

Close your eyes for 10 seconds and try not to think of an elephant. It is a persistent image, isn't it? During class you might find yourself thinking about a party planned for the weekend or what you want to have for lunch. Do not try to force these thoughts out. Instead, when you notice a thought that seems to be interfering with the focus of your attention, just notice it. Accept it, and then tell yourself, “There's that thought again,” and gently return your attention to be here now.

STOP! Write down what you were just thinking. Are you here now?

You can use this power process to keep yourself pointed toward your goals. Even though they seem in the future, the best way to reach goals is to work on them today.

So what does all of this mean? When you listen to a lecture, really listen to the lecture. When you read a book, read a book. **BE HERE NOW!**

3. Self-Monitoring

Explain the concept of self-monitoring. Your child uses it to evaluate his attitudes and habits. While self-monitoring, your child should ask himself: Am I on task and working towards the goal being pursued? Do I need to make any changes in my behavior, thoughts, or attitudes? Have your child practice self-monitoring by reading while you pop popcorn. Is he thinking about what he is reading or about the smell and sound of the popcorn?

Some of the self-monitoring questions your child can ask himself are:

- Am I on task or am I daydreaming?
- Am I working on the things I need to be doing right now?
- Do I need to change my behavior?
- Are my thoughts what they should be?
- How is my attitude today?

4. Practice

Help your child practice choosing concentration by giving him an assignment or task to complete. It can be a chore around the house or homework. Review how he can “be here” right now. Have him practice first for five minutes and then check to see how he did. Then have him practice concentrating for 7 or 8 minutes and then self-check. Praise him for his effort and success.