

Distraction

“When there are thoughts, it is distraction: when there are no thoughts, it is meditation.”
Ramana Maharshi

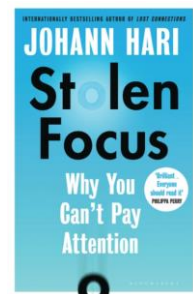
Dear Families,

A while ago a parent shared a podcast with me about lost focus and distraction. It was led by the folk at The Resilience Project, and they interviewed Johann Hari. They talked about how our attention span is continually challenged by the growing number of distractions we face daily, particularly the ones in the digital arena. I know as an adult that I struggle with distractions on my phone. I quickly pick it up to check the weather, and before I am even aware, I'm looking at things I had not planned to look at. And worse than that, when I notice this and put my phone away, I have forgotten to check the weather!

I would like to share this podcast with you. But please be warned that it does contain some language and areas of discussion that you may not wish to share with your kids. I suggest that you listen on your own if you choose to listen at all. I think that the overall message of the podcast outweighs the negative parts of it (but, please don't say I didn't warn you!).

<https://podcasts.apple.com/au/podcast/the-imperfects/id1476501557?i=1000554643616>

Following the podcast, I ordered a copy of 'Stolen Focus – Why you can't pay attention and how to think deeply again' by Johann Hari and am waiting for it to arrive. This might be my holiday read and I'm looking forward to it arriving in the post.



Following are a few ideas you could try at home to help promote focus:

- As a family, do some colouring in together in silence. Listen to the noises outside. Can you hear the pencils rubbing on the paper? What other noises do you notice? What body sensations do you feel?
- At night time, turn off all the lights and put on some relaxing music and listen.
- When you are having a meal together, choose one item of food from your plate. Look carefully at it before smelling it then slowly eating it. Talk about all the things that you notice before doing it again with another item of food.
- Download the free app 'Smiling Mind' and have a play with it. See what you discover.
- When you are brushing your teeth, notice all the sensations in your mouth. What do you taste? Can you smell anything? Focus on the movement of the toothbrush in your mouth. Discuss what you noticed with everyone else.

“The Internet is a big distraction.” Ray Bradbury

Have a great week, stay focused and notice when you are distracted.

Andy McNeilly
Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinator

