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Hidden Cost of Multitasking

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Busy! Busy! Busy! Everyone is busy! What is the solution? Many people believe that multitasking is the answer. I agree, if you are a computer. Computers are masters of multitasking.

What is multitasking? It is the ability to execute more than one task at the same time, a task being a program. We are talking computers here folks.

The computer switches from one program to another so quickly that it gives the appearance of executing all of the programs at the same time. The key word is, of course, appearance.

Unfortunately, many people use the theory of multitasking to arrange their lives. I frequently encounter people who believe that they are capable of performing several tasks at the same time. They aren't! Multitasking has become the problem.

Consider the cost you will experience, in both your personal and professional lives, when multitasking and attempting to communicate.

How many mistakes have you made because you didn't really hear what the other person was telling you? If the person is a client or a prospect, this can be very costly. If the person is your spouse or significant other, it can be even more costly!

Multitasking is a barrier to effective communication. It is necessary to focus, especially when you are listening. Because I have a profound hearing loss, I know that I have to pay attention to the person who is speaking. I am a better listener because I am hard of hearing.

Since I cannot hear you if your back is turned to me, I believe you cannot hear me. If you turn away, to shuffle your papers or look around at other people, I stop talking. Do you know how many times people have said, “go on ... keep talking ... I am listening”.

No you are not! I don't usually say that our loud -- but I do think it. Are your clients in the same position? It is not possible to engage in meaningful conversation with the person in front of you, to answer the phone, and to interact with other people in the near vicinity. However, how many try to do that in their office every day?

What is the solution? You must determine what is essential. You must focus on what is important. You must do one task at a time.

Remember, the computer is able to switch from one program to another so quickly that it gives the appearance of executing all of the programs at the same time. You are not a computer.

Recognize the cost you will experience, in both your personal and professional lives, when multitasking and attempting to communicate.

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