Where Is My Attention Going?
And How Do I Get It Back?

A practical exercise for the moments when your body is doing one thing, but your mind is busy handling five others.

WHY THIS MATTERS

You can be making dinner while replaying a conversation, predicting tomorrow's problem and checking whether someone is upset with you. None of those thoughts needs to be wrong to occupy your attention. The question is whether they are helping you do something useful.

WHAT YOU WILL DISCOVER

By the end, you will have mapped one real moment, found the demands competing for your attention, and chosen what needs action now, later or not at all.

HOW TO USE THIS WORKSHEET

1. Read the completed example on page 2. It shows what specific, ordinary answers look like.
2. Choose one moment from your own day and complete the map on page 3.
3. Use page 4 to make one decision and check what happens next.

BEFORE YOU START

You do not need to monitor every thought or force yourself to be calm. Pick one moment when your mind kept wandering back to something. Five honest minutes are more useful than an hour of trying to get the answers perfect.

Based on the article: 7 Hidden Ways You Drain Your Energy Without Realising It

Read the original article: discoveryoursoulself.com/hidden-ways-you-drain-your-energy/

A very ordinary moment

Imagine you are cooking dinner. You are stirring a pot, but you keep checking your phone because someone has not replied. You are also mentally preparing what to say if they turn out to be annoyed.

WHAT I AM ACTUALLY DOING

Cooking dinner and getting ready to eat.

WHERE MY ATTENTION KEEPS GOING

“Why haven't they replied?” “Did I say something wrong?” “What will I say if they are annoyed?”

WHAT I KNOW, NOT WHAT I AM GUESSING

I sent a message. They have not replied yet. I do not know why.

THE IMPORTANT DISTINCTION

The unanswered message is real. The imagined argument is a prediction. Checking the phone another ten times will not tell me what the other person is thinking. I can make dinner and leave the message alone for now.

THE NEXT USEFUL MOVE

Now: Finish dinner without checking the phone every few minutes.
Later: If I genuinely need an answer, send one clear follow-up when appropriate.
Release: Stop rehearsing an argument that has not happened.

WHY THIS IS DIFFERENT FROM “JUST STOP THINKING”

The aim is not to ban the thought. It is to notice that your attention has left what is happening, decide whether the issue needs action, and give yourself permission to return. If the thought comes back, you can make the same choice again.

Where did your attention go?

Choose one recent moment. Perhaps you were working, having coffee, watching a show or talking to someone while your mind was elsewhere. Write what happened in ordinary words, not what you think you “should” have felt.

1 WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN FRONT OF ME?

Describe the real activity. Example: “I was folding washing after lunch.”

2 WHERE DID MY MIND KEEP GOING?

Write the thoughts that pulled your attention away. More than one is fine.

3 WHAT WAS I TRYING TO SOLVE OR PREVENT?

Was I looking for an answer, avoiding disappointment, preparing for conflict, replaying a mistake, or noticing an unmet need?

4 WHAT DO I ACTUALLY KNOW?

Separate the facts from the stories or predictions. Example: “They have not replied” is a fact; “They are angry” is an interpretation.

What deserves my attention now?

Looking at the moment you mapped, ask: “Does this need something from me, or have I just been mentally carrying it?” There is no perfect response. Choose one useful next move.

5 SORT IT INTO ONE OF THESE THREE PATHS

ACT NOW

There is something specific and realistic I can do. Example: ask for the information I need, eat lunch or take a break.

PLAN FOR LATER

It matters, but it cannot be solved right this minute. Example: put time aside tomorrow to have the conversation.

STOP FEEDING THE LOOP

I have no new information and no useful action right now. Example: stop replaying what somebody might have meant.

6 MY NEXT MOVE

What will I do when this thought returns? Make it small and specific, such as “finish the tea and check the message after dinner.”

7 CHECK BACK AFTERWARDS

Did anything actually need my attention? Did something new happen, or was I repeating the same worry? What did I notice when I chose differently?

Remember: Returning your attention is a choice you can practise, not another performance you must get right.