**Distractions**

**In an age of distraction, nothing can feel more luxurious than paying attention. *(Pico Iyer, in The Art of Stillness)***

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**Americans received a record-breaking 3.4 billion robocalls in April, according to YouMail, which collects and analyzes calls through its blocking service. That's nearly 900 million a month more than in April, 2017. *(Businessinsider.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, May 18, 2018)***

**Americans received more than 4.6 billion robocalls in February, up 15 percent from January, according to YouMail, a robocall-prevention service. *(CNN.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 19, 2021)***

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**The average auto insurance premium hit $926 a year in 2016, according to the Insurance Information Institute, up 16 percent from 2011. Insurers say drivers distracted by smartphones are causing more accidents, and filing more claims, forcing them to raise rates. *(The Wall Street Journal, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 10, 2017)***

**This leads to a point that is interestingly made in a story that comes out of the lore of the Island of Java. A young man spied a beautiful girl on the high road and followed her for a mile. Finally she turned and demanded, “Why do you dog my footsteps?” He declared feverishly, “Because you are the loveliest thing I have ever seen and I have fallen madly in love with you at sight. Be mine!” The girl replied, “But you have merely to look behind you to see my young sister who is ten times more beautiful than I am.” The gallant swain wheeled about and his gaze fell on as homely a girl as could be found in Java. “What mockery is this?” he demanded of the girl. “You lied to me!” “So did you,” she replied. “If you were so madly in love with me, why did you turn around?” *(Eric Butterworth, in Discover The Power Within You, p. 125)***

**Alexander Graham Bell (1847-1922) inventor of the telephone, refused to keep one in his study because the ringing distracted him from his thoughts. *(Ripley's Believe It or Not!: Weird Inventions and Discoveries, p. 27)***

**A session of bridge, or even one deal, will have its ups and downs. A player must guard against what I call the euphoria effect: If he gets too high or low over good fortune or bad, he may lose focus. I know from experience. *(Frank Stewart, in The Denver Post)***

**Eight out of 10 car accidents involve drivers who are either drowsy or distracted by such activities as chatting on cell phones, eating, and applying makeup, a new government study found. *(The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, May 5, 2006)***

**If cavemen had Twitter, we would still not have fire. *(@BorowitzReport)***

**If you chase two rabbits, you catch none. *(Confucius)***

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**DISTRACTED DRIVING: Hands-free cell phone conversations while driving are as safe -- or as risky -- as talking to a passenger. A complex mental workload can reduce a driver's ability to detect visual targets by as much as 30 percent. Distracted drivers also are less able to discriminate between visual targets and select a response. *(Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied, 2003)***

**“Distracted driving” as a result of cell phone use and texting behind the wheel led to 5,474 deaths last year – one in six of all traffic fatalities, the federal government said. Auto accidents caused by cell phones and texting also led to 448,000 injuries. *(Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, October 8, 2010)***

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**Bad week for: Social networking, after two girls, ages 10 and 12, trapped in a storm drain in South Australia, decided to seek help by using their cell phones to update their Facebook statuses, rather than calling Australia's equivalent of 911. Officials said the youngsters' fixation on Facebook delayed their rescue by hours. *(The Week magazine, September 18, 2009)***

**Doctor: "Do you ever find it hard to concentrate?" Patient: "Could you repeat the question?" *(Chris Browne, in Raising Duncan comic strip)***

**Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal. *(Henry Ford)***

**Honolulu has become the first major U.S. city to pass legislation aimed at reducing injuries and deaths from "distracted walking" by "smartphone zombies." Starting October 25, Honolulu pedestrians can be fined between $15 and $99 for looking at their phone or tablet while crossing the street. *(Reuters, as it appeared in The Week magazine, August 11, 2017)***

**If you can keep your head while all about you are losing theirs, you're probably not paying attention. *(Franklin P. Jones, in Quote magazine)***

**When you are away from modern Civilizations' distractions, new voices can be heard and understood. *(Margaret Mead)***

**A THOUGHT TO REMEMBER: If your mind wanders, don't worry ... it may be too weak to go very far. *(Reminisce magazine)***

**More than 75 percent of offices have open layouts, and some companies are responding by trying to carve out space where employees can get away from their colleagues. Studies show it takes 23 minutes to refocus on a task after being interrupted. *(Fast Company, as it appeared in The Week magazine, October 23, 2015)***

**Nine out of 10 car crackups wouldn’t happen if drivers could step on the brakes one second sooner. So claims Mercedes-Benz President Karl Heinz Faber. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Quaker Oats, the food company, branched out into selling toys and restaurants. Once they expanded into new areas, they lost their dominance in the food business. *(Joe Griffith, in Speaker's Library of Business, p. 142)***

**Running around in circles won't make ends meet. *(Graffiti, McNaught Syndicate, Inc.)***

**I try to see all sides of the question -- perhaps that's why my eyes get so tired. *(Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot-Shots)***

**Smartphone distraction: People who incessantly check their smartphones and surf the web are more likely to be forgetful, have trouble focusing, and lack awareness of their surroundings -- even when they aren't fixated on the internet, a new study finds. Constantly staring at a mobile device or obsessively trolling social media sites may usurp precious brain resources necessary for performing routine tasks, resulting in these "cognitive failures," British researchers say. Their study involved 210 men and women between 18 and 65 who spent an average of 23 hours online each week. The more participants browsed the web, reports HuffingtonPost.com, the more likely they were to make a range of blunders -- bumping into things, for example, or forgetting why they'd walked from one room to another. These findings don't prove that smartphones themselves cause attention lapses, but people prone to distraction may do well to take a technology time-out and fight the urge to check Facebook, Tinder, or their email. "The internet is great, mobile phones are great," says the study's lead author, Lee Hadlington. "But there is a point at which we need to sit back, log off, and really start to think about how technology is impacting on our capacity to focus." *(The Week magazine, September 11, 2015)***

**A 16- or 17-year-old driver doubles his chances of having an accident by taking two teen passengers in the car, insurance statistics show. He quadruples them by having three or more teen passengers. *(The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, February 4, 2005)***

**For many of us, media -- by which I mean use of any device with a screen -- is the oxygen we breathe. We need it everywhere. We can't work, play, or relax without it. "Digital natives," born and raised in the internet era, don't even recognize it as a problem. It's just life. Grownups these days can't concentrate, either. A Canadian study showed that while the average human attention span was 12 seconds in 2000, nearly 20 years of internet influence has pushed that down to eight seconds. We are all losing our ability to sustain concentration. We've all gone voluntarily down this path. *(Matthew Hennessey, in NationalReview.com)***

**When distractions kill: Thousands of teenage drivers die each year because of the distractions of cell phones, radios, and other passengers, says a new study. By and large, teens are heeding warnings about drinking and driving, with a 35 percent decline in drinking-related fatal accidents involving teens since 1990. But car accidents remain the No. 1 killer of teens, and a new survey of 5,600 young drivers says a major reason is that they are extremely distractible. Nine out of 10 teens admitted they’d seen a friend talking or dialing a cell phone while they were driving. Half said they’d seen peers typing text messages or fooling around with hand-held games, or MP3 players. On top of that, kids often jump into cars when they are very tired from lack of sleep, or flooded with strong emotions over school problems, fights with friends, and conflict with parents, insurance researcher Laurette Stiles tells the Associated Press. “They’re trying to manage all of that while trying to navigate the vehicle at the same time,” says Stiles. “And they’re pretty inexperienced at that.” *(The Week magazine, February 16, 2007)***

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