PLEASE NOTE: This is a machine transcription. Some punctuation and spelling weirdness are to be expected.

Last week I told you that I was going to give you a sneak peek into a new project that I'm working on, and I'm still going to do that. But this week, as I was talking to my coaching clients and six Figure Systems members, I realized that I am not the only one feeling incredibly distracted right now. And I thought, you know what i have tools that can help me be less distracted and that will help you be less distracted.

So I thought this week was a good time to bring those out and share them with you. This is episode 130 of the Tiny Course Empire podcast. And today I want to talk to you about distraction, and I'm going to give you 14 ideas you can use to deal with it if it's impacting your life or your work in a negative way.

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Hey, it's Cindy, and thank you for spending a few minutes of your day with me. You'll find the show notes and the recommended resources for this episode at TinyCourseEmpire.com/130. If you're new to the show, make sure to hit the

subscribe button. New episodes drop every Monday morning. And next week, I promise I will give you that sneak peek into my new project. But like I said, that's next week. This week we're going to take a short detour into the distraction zone, where I'm going to give you 14 ideas you can use to get your focus back.

It occurred to me as I was researching this episode that most people who talk about distractions talk about a particular type of distraction. They will tell you that the answer to overcoming distraction is to put your phone in the other room, to close your office door, to put your phone on do not disturb, to stop taking phone calls all of those things. Those ideas work and I'm going to talk a little bit about some of them in a minute, but they work for a particular type of distraction. I see distractions as coming in kind of two flavors. There's the small distractions and the big distractions. Small distractions tend to be chronic and they are long term.

So these are things like spending too much time on social media or maybe allowing texts and phone calls to interrupt your work day, or maybe allowing appointments or home repairs or car repairs to infiltrate your your daily work schedule so if you're doing things like scheduling a car repair on a day that you should be working, that's kind of a chronic distraction. I understand it's not really a small thing a car repair can be a very big thing, but these are kind of the ongoing distractions these are the things that we're talking about when we say put your phone away, you know, time, block your schedule, whatever.

But then the other side of that coin are the big distractions and big distractions to me are the more acute. They're short lived or tend to be short lived, but they take over your life so I'm talking about things like moving to a new house or planning a wedding or having a baby or caring for an elderly parent who suddenly cannot care for themselves or an election, for example. These are big distractions. They come and they go, and we need to be able to deal with them when they show up because we don't always know when they're going to show up but they can definitely derail our business and our life if we let it happen.

So I promised you I would give you 14 ideas you can use and I'm going to give you these ideas with that distinction between small distractions and big distractions in mind so the first ideas that I have for you will work really well if you are dealing with small distractions, if you are spending too much time doom scrolling on Reddit, or if

you're allowing day-to-day stuff to get in the way of getting your work done. Ok, so the first idea that I have for you is to set clear working hours. I will tell you, this works really, really well for me. I used to have a problem with being interrupted.

My husband would come in to talk to me about some household thing or some car thing or whatever, or, you know, I would make doctor's appointments during my working hours. And I finally sat myself down and thought, you know, if I had a job, I couldn't do this if I had a job, I couldn't just schedule a tire rotation at 10:00 in the morning. You do those things after your work day ends why do I not do that? Just because I work for myself, just because I have the freedom to schedule a tire rotation in the middle of my day doesn't mean it's a good idea.

So I stopped doing that and instead I have work hours. I work from about seven AM until one or two o'clock in the afternoon every day. I don't schedule other things during that time. I don't even schedule appointments with my clients during that time. Those are my work hours and I protect them. So if you find yourself distracted by daily routine stuff on a regular basis and that is preventing you from getting your work done, take a look at setting a work schedule and treat it as if you have a job as if you are going to a job where your boss is expecting you to produce a result at the end of the day or the end of the week or the end of the month.

Your boss wouldn't put up with you leaving every day to take a long lunch or, you know, meet with meet with your mother-in-law or get get your tires rotated. So why are you putting up with it from yourself? Likewise, I had to set boundaries with not only myself but with my husband as well. And now he doesn't bother me during the day he does not come into my office to talk to me during the day unless he's coming in to talk to me about something related to work.

He knows that I'll be done working by one or two o'clock and then we can have those discussions about what are we going to do about fixing the the air conditioner or, you know, where do you want to go for dinner or what do you want to do for vacation this year. He can talk to me about all of those things after my work day ends. And he respects that boundary and I respect his work hour boundaries as well. So setting boundaries around your work time can really help to reduce the distractions, the external distractions that come in from other people.

Now, another thing that I allow to distract myself, and I am fully aware that I am allowing this and I am in some ways incapable of controlling myself in this way. Things like social media, Facebook, Instagram, Reddit, the news can all distract me if I allow it to. I can spend, and I've talked before about spending hours scrolling through YouTube shorts, right? It is not a good use of my time, but I also recognize that I am not always able to prevent myself from doing it that sounds terrible, like I have no self-control but sometimes I don't and I don't blame myself for that because these companies, these apps spend millions and millions and millions of dollars to figure out how to keep us on the app.

It's their sole job to keep us logged in and scrolling. So if you find yourself like I do, sometimes incapable of not scrolling or we get, we pop in for just a minute to check on something and pretty soon it's been 90 minutes and we haven't done any more work. If you find that is the case, then I want to recommend that you use a tool to block these apps during your work hours the one that I use is called Freedom.

Dot two, and I'll put the link in the show notes or below the video if you're watching on YouTube, I will drop the link there but Freedom. Dot two allows me to set a schedule and block websites and apps during that schedule. So from seven AM until two PM every day, I have all of my most distracting sites blocked i can't get to Facebook, I can't get to Instagram, I can't get to Reddit, I can't get to the news.

I can't do any of that stuff and that helps me to maintain my focus. Another thing that really helps me is to set a timer and I've talked about this before, but something about having a timer set and specifically a timer that makes noise so I use a timing app on my computer that ticks like an old fashioned clock. And hearing that ticking noise is a subtle reminder that I am working on a project, that I am focused, and I am able to maintain that focus because I hear that ticking.

And then once that timer stops, and I usually set it for 25 minutes, once that timer stops, then I'm free to go and be distracted for a few minutes until I set the timer again so if you've never tried this, it's called the Pomodoro technique. If you've never tried it, I highly recommend it. For some reason in my brain it just makes me feel more focused and I think it might work for you too.

Another thing I really want to recommend is that you take up meditating if you have not tried this, it is the best way that I have found to really build up that focus muscle. And focus is a muscle so if you are finding yourself distracted, if you're checking your email every three to four minutes like I used to do, or if you can't stay focused on a project for very long or you keep finding yourself scrolling through Facebook or Instagram or reading the news. If that is a problem for you, then I want to highly recommend that you try meditating because the ability to stay focused comes from practice and meditation is a really good way to practice that.

And it doesn't have to be i'm not saying you have to meditate for 30 minutes or an hour at a time. Start really small, and I'm certainly not a meditation teacher i can recommend some books and some other materials for you if you are interested in that i'll drop a couple of links in the show notes, but just starting out small, just one or two minutes of meditation really can calm your mind and and bring about that focus that was that was missing.

At least it does for me when I find myself very very distracted if I just sit and meditate for even as little as 5 minutes, it has a very calming effect on me and I'm better able to focus after that so if you have not tried meditation, I highly recommend it. Another thing you can do is get an accountability coach or partner, someone who will hold you accountable when you say.

I'm going to send an email today and they're going to check in on you and they're going to say, hey, did you send that email today hey, did you work on that course today hey, did you record that video today hey, did you record that podcast today they are going to follow up with you and find out why if you say no, now, it's really important if you're going to work with an accountability partner, that it is not someone who is such a good friend that they're going to forgive you every time you don't do what you say you were going to do because that just reinforces the idea that you don't have to stay accountable, that you don't have to stay focused, that you can be distracted it's OK, Don't worry about it everybody's distracted right now.

Nobody's nobody's getting anything done right now give yourself some slack you don't want an accountability partner who is going to say those things. You want an accountability partner who is actually going to hold you accountable. So sometimes that means hiring a coach because a coach is not really your friend. They're not

there to be supportive in the same way that a friend is. So if you are going to go for an accountability partner, then I would recommend you look for someone who is not such a good friend that they're going to forgive you every time you don't do what you said you were going to do.

Another tool that I use to keep myself focused, and this is kind of along the same lines with the focus timer that I use the little clock app that ticks at me is called Interstitial Journaling. I discovered this a couple of years ago and what this is, it's simply taking a couple of minutes during your day as you finish up a project or you finish up a task to write down in a journal what you said you were going to do, what you did, how you feel about it, and what you're going to do next so it's literally like a little time stamp and then, you know, this is what I was working on it went really well, or it didn't go well, or I'm frustrated with this, or I'm going to try that.

Here's what I'm going to do next but first I'm going to go get a cup of coffee. Just that sort of thing just little notes jotted to yourself throughout the day in your journal that you can then go back and look at later and say, you know what, I was really, really distracted i was really having a hard time focusing on Monday i want, I wonder why that happened and you can kind of read back and see what was happening in your work day and then make improvements to it going forward.

So if you keep a journal, consider interstitial journaling. I'll drop a link below where you can learn more about it i found it really helpful in keeping myself on track throughout the day. And finally, one more thing that I do to keep the low level, small, chronic, long term distractions at Bay is to really be mindful of the media that I consume. I used to really love true crime podcasts. I used to listen to them all the time. I started reading true crime books. I got down a true crime rabbit trail on YouTube and I discovered that allowing that type of negative content into my brain had a really negative impact on my ability to focus and on my ability to do creative work and on my ability to even manage my mindset.

I was, I was finding myself more depressed, more anxious, and no wonder, right i was constantly consuming content about murder and missing people and terrible things happening in the world. Of course I was depressed and anxious. Who wouldn't be, right? So be very mindful about the content that you are consuming. Is it serving you or is it making you feel worse is it making you more distracted,

more anxious, less able to focus on your business and enjoy your life? Ask yourself that be honest with yourself about it and decide if it's something you want to continue to watch or read or listen to.

So that's eight ways that you can deal with the smaller distractions, but what about the big ones? What about things like contentious elections and weddings and births and graduations and holidays and all of the things that seem to take over our life as we are trying to build a business? What can you do about those? Well, the first thing I'm going to recommend is that you get enough sleep because when we are sleep deprived it is extremely difficult to stay on task and we're all sleep deprived these days, right if you're not, I'm envious because even though I work for myself and I don't have kids or demanding family, I still somehow managed to stay up too late every night and get up way too early so if you are finding yourself continually distracted by what's happening in the world or what's happening in your family or in your life, then start by getting enough sleep.

It really does matter. And along those same lines, prioritize eating good foods. Eat healthy foods that will not only keep your energy up and keep your brain working at its maximum potential, but it will also help you sleep better. I know for myself when I eat junk food, and this is an unfortunate part of aging you guys, but when I eat too much junk food, I get terrible heartburn and then I can't sleep.

So then I don't get enough sleep and the cycle repeats itself so if you are getting enough sleep and you are prioritizing your nutrition, that's going to really help you focus on your work and on getting those projects done that you said were so important. Another thing that really helps me is to use and maintain a content calendar and I will tell you why this works for me. Because if I sit down at my desk to create content to work on marketing my business, to work on being more visible, and I don't know what it is that I have planned to create, I can sit here all day and get nothing done.

I can sit here all day and scroll through Facebook and Reddit and not accomplish anything because they don't even know what I'm supposed to be doing. But if I have a content calendar, if I know that this week I'm writing emails about this subject or this month I am creating podcast content about content, for example, then it makes it that much easier for me to actually sit down and do the work,

because I know what I'm supposed to be doing if I have to figure out what I'm supposed to be doing when I sit down, my odds of doing that are retty slim.

I also make really good use of time blocking, and I have talked about this before. It is probably the best tool in my toolbox for staying focused and time blocking is very simple. At the beginning of every week, I get out my calendar and my list of things that I need to do and I assign every task a time block. I assign an appointment to myself in my calendar that tells me exactly what I'm going to be working on during that block of time. On Mondays from seven to, ten i'm writing emails, and then I can look at my content calendar and see which emails I'm writing so the combination of those two things gets me really focused.

I don't have to waste time thinking about what should I be doing, what's the priority project I should be working on i don't have to worry about or waste time thinking about what content should I be creating, what course should I be working on. I know ahead of time I've made those decisions already and that helps me to focus quicker and easier than if I just let everything be free flowy. And believe it or not, along with that time blocked schedule, you can actually schedule time to be distracted. You can say, you know what, from noon to noon 30 Well, I have my lunch.

I'm going to scroll through the news sites and see what's happening in the world, or I'm going to spend time on Pinterest and start building out a Pinterest board for that upcoming wedding that I'm planning, or whatever the case may be, right schedule your time to be distracted and that way you will be less likely to think about it during those times when you really should be working instead. And finally, if you are distracted, if you get to the end of the day or you get to the end of the week and you think I just did not get anything done, I was so distracted all day or all week or all month, or this has just been terrible i'm getting nothing done.

Forgive yourself, it's OK. This too shall pass, and beating yourself up about it is not a good way to fix it. Instead, go back through these I these ideas that I have given you and figure out a plan going forward that's going to help you to be more focused tomorrow or next week or next month. But forgive yourself for losing your focus in the moment. It happens to all of us it's not the end of the world. It doesn't mean you're a bad person or a terrible business owner or that you're just not cut out for

this. But we have to decide that every day, every hour, every minute is a chance to make a new decision and to find that focus again.

So forgive yourself if you have lost your focus, lost your direction, felt distracted, even if it's been weeks maybe since you last felt like you were super focused on your business. Tomorrow is a good day to start again. Now it's your turn i'd love to hear from you tell me in the comments if you are feeling distracted, if you have felt distracted in the past, if it's if that distraction is causing you to not make the progress in your business that you had committed yourself to and what you did to fix that if you have found a solution, I'd love to hear how you are working to find more focus to get your business off the ground or to get a big project off the ground even amidst all of that distraction that's kind of pulling you in all different directions i'd love to hear about it so drop a comment below and let's talk about it.

And remember, if you have a friend or a colleague who could use business building advice, be sure to send them the link. We drop new episodes every Monday morning and again next week I'm going to be back to talk about that new project I am working on i can't wait to tell you all about it. So have a good rest of your day .and I will talk to you all again next week.

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