

Seven Practices to Keep Your Head Clear

Keeping your head clear is incredibly important. You need to think well to lead well, especially in times of crisis and challenge. Yet it's really easy to find yourself frazzled and fatigued—and to find your headspace foggy—rather than focused.

Despite all the pressures around him, Jesus kept his head clear. He did this through a regular rhythm of pulling away, even though he was very busy! Keeping your head clear isn't a luxury left for quiet seasons. It's an intentional discipline that can radically and positively change your head and heart space, especially in the midst of crisis and difficult leadership seasons.

Here are seven practices to help you keep your head clear:

- 1. Get Moving** - Move away from your desk every 45 minutes. I try to step out away from my work every afternoon and take 15 minutes to walk around the block. And a run can quiet and clear my head.
- 2. Silence** - With so much media noise, silence can refocus you. Rather than starting the day with your newsfeed, take 3-5 minutes of silence and add short windows of silence to refocus during your day.
- 3. Scripture** - We need a steady diet of God's Word. And this discipline is even more important in times of crisis. One simple idea is to focus on one verse of Scripture and return to it several times that day. Write it on a post-it note and put it on your laptop screen or car dashboard. Pause at lunch to read a larger Scripture passage.
- 4. Community** - If you are an external processor, you'll need to process out loud with others in order to clear your head. If you are an internal processor, you'll need time alone to clear your head before processing with others.
- 5. Rest** - Getting good sleep is key to keeping your head clear. Studies show that a nap of 20-25 minutes can dramatically improve focus and attention.
- 6. Restore** - Invest time in an activity or hobby that lets your head rest or focus on something restorative. This is an investment that replenishes, which is different than simply numbing your brain or killing time.
- 7. Focus Words** - As you look back on this challenging time, what are 3-4 words or phrases that you would like to be able to say about how you handled it? Use these words as filter and focus words for your decisions and actions. For instance, if "bless and serve" are two focus words, ask yourself how you can "bless and serve" in this moment or decision. Keep going back to these words to find clarity.

What can you do to clear your head today? It may be the key to clarity, focus and confidence.



About Dr. Steve Brown: Steve is husband to Lea and dad to three teens - Luke, Ainslea and Lauren. Based near Vancouver, BC, Steve develops Jesus-centered leaders as President of Arrow Leadership, an organization focused on developing Jesus-centered leaders. He's the author of "Leading Me - Eight Key Practices for a Christian Leader's Most Important Assignment", "Great Questions for Leading Well" and www.sharpeningleaders.com.

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