

# A KEY SKILL WE ALL CAN MASTER

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To “pay attention”, more specific, to pay attention to details is a very challenging human act; but probably the most under rated of all skills we can develop. To *pay attention* by definition, is the process whereby a person concentrates on particular features relative and/or relevant to others and the environment or in other words, current surroundings.

Attention is a limited resource that our brain allocates to what “it” estimates is most relevant. How then do we determine what is relevant and what is not? This is a key question when it comes to understanding what we give attention to and why we so often get distracted. The contradiction is caused by the division that occurs within ourselves. When it comes to evaluating conversation, people-personality, and circumstances – we are not single minded.

Since relevance is the primary criteria we use to decide what we pay attention to, and this is problematic and explains why our attention wanders with little feeling or control over it. Furthermore, our brains are a collection of neuro programming developed over years and years of conditioning. What we may deem relevant is stimulated by the stability of our environment and our emotional interest. When activity weakens, we become distracted and our attention to what is before us is lost. Also, conditions such as fatigue and stress including external noise will impair your ability for your brain to stay active and you will easily get distracted.

To pay attention is to realize clues on a conscious level. Studies from as far back as the seventies show that our brains begin to prepare for action just over a third of a second before we consciously decide to act. In other words, even when we ‘think’ we are conscious, it is our unconscious mind which is actually making our decisions for us.

Since the effectiveness of a compelling conversation depends on how well you can pay attention to the clues of the other person, how do we then move into a more conscious state when interacting with other people. First, understand that, “when you really pay attention – everything becomes your teacher.” When you focus your attention on the other person, in terms of the words, tones, pace, and physiology they demonstrate; you can connect on a deep-compelling level. It is the power of attention that fosters a powerful connection with others. Nothing is more important to transforming a relationship with people or our world than to pay attention.

Victor Franco, said; "that between stimulus and response there is a space. In this space lies our freedom and power to choose our response and in our response, lies our growth (and power)."

The power of Paying Attention is a very powerful force; it allows you to recognize what's going on and what you'll do with it. Paying attention can liberate you from great burdens, the power of paying attention can overcome the greatest of barriers.

Dr. Brewer introduced a simple process using the acronym R.A.I.N. that seems applicable in any situation and helps with the practice of paying attention.

**R – Recognize:** Recognize the communication state of the other person. Determine whether they are in a Visual, Auditory or Kinesthetic communication state. We go into much greater detail with this topic in the live training sessions. But, I will say this, determining what state the other person is in is critical and yet simple. Pay attention to the words, word reveal the state and words are categorized by visual, auditory and kinesthetic senses. If I say, "I love that" what state am I in (kinesthetic). If I say, "that look great to me" what state would I be in (visual). In addition to the words are the tones and pace of how a person says the words.

**A – Accepting:** Know that there is not a wrong or right way for a person to speak. No communication state is better than another. What is important is accurately identifying and then adapting to match your communication to the same state.

**I – Investigate:** You need to ask questions that reveal the state of the other person and which state is predominate and how they may fluctuate depending upon topics. It takes much practice to get really good at accurately identifying a person's state, but when you master this skill things change in a very positive way and in a very, very big way.

**N – Note:** Be mindful how the words, pace and emotions change and shift from moment to moment. Take note of environmental conditions and underlying messages that are being shared.

When you can connect with other people, you will always make a difference. It's not a coincidence that successful individuals and companies thrive. When you are conscious of your conversations and you make conscious decisions to speak and convey your message on the level of the other person, you will transform your life and positively affect the company you represent and customers that do business with that company.

I use this method in nearly every aspect of my life. I practice paying attention when I am negotiating with CEO's and when I am coaching my son's 8-year-old basketball team. The results are amazingly considerable. I do share many personal stories and examples from my own life in webinars, seminars, and live training. Please check those out when you can. There is not a more widely shared topic you will hear from me than to PAY ATTENTION! I advocate this to my children, to my clients and students and to my friends. It is the primary message I share with everyone and that is because there is not a more impactful message, a more important lesson, a more rewarding ability! Pay Attention, you can do it right now, you can gain rewards immediately, you can change your life instantly and you will recognize the positive impact it will have on other people's lives that converse with you.