



# Continuum of Choices

A TARCP Professional Series August 2023



This could be why you are depressed or anxious. [Johann Hari TEDSummit2019](#)

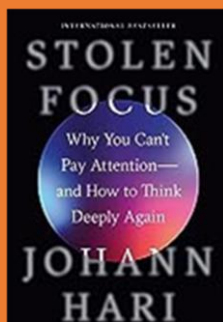
In June of 2015 Johann Hari gave his thoughts on addiction. [TEDGlobalLondon](#)

Johann Hari being interviewed on the *Life Process Program*. [Stolen Focus](#)

*Absolute Motivation* pulled together a video post on what they call [The Twisted Truth](#).

Mayurakshi Ghosal talks about the effects of social media on relationships, offering an understanding of what young people have to deal with on a daily basis. [TEDxYouth@DAA](#)

Wendy Suzuki on the brain-changing power of exercise. [The Most Transformative Thing for Your Brain](#)



With Appreciation



Doug Neeley is the winner of this month's TARCP 20-ounce YETI Rambler!

## Life is Like a River

In January of 2022 *The Guardian* published an edited extract from *Stolen Focus: Why You Can't Pay Attention* by Johann Hari, published by Bloomsbury in January of 2022.

In the extract, Hari reminisces about a time he cut himself off from all technology for three months. He remembers that when he disconnected from the noise in the room (smartphone, laptop, TV, social media, texting, emails) for a prolonged period of time, there was an initial feel-good that eventually morphed into an empty space that he had to fill. This reminded him of an area of psychology called the flow state. The flow state is when you become lost in doing something that means a great deal to you, losing track of time, not being engaged in ego, being effortlessly lost in the meaningful action itself. He writes that flow is the deepest form of attention for human beings and tells us how to achieve this.

Hari interviewed the first scientist to research and study flow states, Professor Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. From this he uncovered three necessary factors to get into flow. First, choose one goal. Second, this goal must be meaningful to you. Third, push yourself to surpass your ability to that point. Hari gave the example of his writing, starting to write a different form of writing from his previous work, stretching himself in the process. Eventually he surpassed feeling challenged by this change and started to realize his brain power was returning, with him freely focusing for an extended length of time.

Through additional research, Hari learned the brain has a threshold, it can only produce one or two thoughts in your conscious mind at one time. When people believe they are multi-tasking (working and taking a text or email break), they are not. With such action, you switch back and forth, reconfiguring your brain task to task. This is called the switch-cost effect. You not only lose the time it takes to check your text as you work, you also lose the time you need to refocus afterwards because you have to recall what you were doing before the switch as well as what you thought about that particular task. Evidence shows with this, your performance drops and you slow down, all because of the switch-cost effect.

In his book, *Stolen Focus: Why You Can't Pay Attention*, Hari takes away the sting of blaming ourselves for feverishly using the technology we have at our fingertips. He offers hope by helping us realize we own our own minds and we have the ability to take them back from those who make a profit off finding a way to make them their own. To read the complete article, go to *The Guardian* and read [Your attention didn't collapse. It was stolen.](#)