

Inner Peace University - Module 5, Lesson 3

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[00:00:00] In this lesson, we're going to talk about one of the biggest negative consequences to unmanaged detention or attention deficit. It's called dis-integration. Dis-integration is the state of awareness marked by a feeling of stress or overwhelm resulting from various objects competing for our attention, and the key word here is competing for our attention.

Think of a time when you had just way too much on your plate. Work was crazy with various different projects competing for your attention. You're worried about your kid's upcoming birthday party and making sure that all of the planning and the catering and all of the entertainment was set up. You just learned that your father was sick and you're worried about him. And to top it all off, you promised a friend that you would help them move over the weekend and you [00:01:00] have no time for any of it. This is the condition of disintegration. When our attention is trying to attend to too many things, which leaves us with a feeling of stress and overwhelm and anxiety.

So to understand why this is a problem, let's take a quick look at the central nervous system. What we want to realize is that job one of your nervous system is basically to keep you alive, to track and manage threats. Its job is to pay attention to the various threats in your environment. So to keep us safe, attention is constantly scanning our environment, evaluating each thing that's around us to determine whether it's a threat or if it's safe.

So this wouldn't be a cause for concern, except for [00:02:00] one little fact. And it's this: attention is limited. And it's limited in that it can only really focus on one thing at a time. Now, I know it seems like you can focus on a lot of things at a time, but the fact of the matter is that you can't. Multitasking is a myth. And this is why you can't text and drive at the same time as an example.

When we think of multitasking, what we're really describing is not focusing on many things at one time, but it's something that psychologists call rapid toggling. It's your attention very quickly changing between this, that and the other, something that can really easily overwhelm our nervous system. Now remember, the job of the nervous system is to scan the environment for threats and to [00:03:00] protect us from threats.

So if it has too many things on the radar, so to speak, if there are too many things that we're trying to pay attention to at the same time, each one, a potential threat, the nervous system gets overwhelmed. So too many so-called threats or potential threats itself becomes a threat and can very easily throw us into a state of stress and overwhelm.

But the key thing we want to understand is that the stress and overwhelm is really not because of our circumstance as much as it is because of our relationship to our circumstance. That is to say that if we were able to reign in our attention, and to deliberately place it on the various objects in our awareness, rather than allowing it to get overwhelmed by trying to attend to too many things, everything [00:04:00] would change.

