

The Later List

Facilitator note: The skill is single-tasking a study block, and the heart of it is the return. Do not present wandering as failure - the story's rule is "staying gone is the failure," and students should count returns, not wanderings. The later list is the whole trick for things that arrive: written down, they stop shouting. No special apps, methods, or branded techniques are needed - one task, a timer, a paper list. Keep expectations honest: Mirele's blocks are never clean, and her grade is "not miraculous, good." Students are not asked to report their own distraction contents in class; the later-list items in the activities are fictional. If a student truly cannot focus even with support over a long period, that is a conversation for her parents, not for this worksheet.

Teacher answer key

1. Produced: one threaded needle, half a hem, one reorganized grocery list, two unasked-for puzzle pieces, one kugel dish accepted back and shelved, with six minutes of the hallway's news attached, three underlined lines of history. The small errands mostly finish - that is what makes them such good traps; the STUDYING is the thing that finishes nothing, because every arriving thing gets obeyed immediately and no thing is ever the one thing. Busy is motion; done is a finished thing. "Busy and done are different countries."
2. 1 L. 2 O - safety first, always. 3 L. 4 O (or a quick delegation - a small real need, thirty seconds). 5 L. 6 O - drop everything. 4 differs from 6 in scale but both are real needs of a person now; 1 differs from 4 because it is a thought, not a need - written down, it keeps until after the timer.
3. The mind wandering is what minds do; the skill is noticing and coming back, and each return is what builds the skill - the way each repetition builds a muscle. Mirele counts five wanders and five returns, and counts the returns as the reps - "The hour does not need her to be a statue. It needs her to come back."
4. 5 wanders x 2 minutes = 10 minutes lost; 40 - 10 = 30 minutes of real work. The friend gets 0. Sample completion: "Five returns beat zero starts because thirty minutes of real work exist and zero minutes do not." Steps shown.
5. She does one or two items each evening - the letter gets written; the party speech, "mercifully, does not." Doing some items proves the list is a real later, not a graveyard - so the mind trusts it and stops shouting during the block. A list nothing ever comes off of is just a worry page.
6. Open. The table should show only the sheets, the timer, and the list (with items like "Estee - Tuesday"). Strong captions quote "One thing at a time is enough" or "staying gone is the failure." Any honest rendering counts.

7. Sample: Setup - "Zissel puts her instrument, the timer, and a later list on the stand - one thing for thirty minutes." List items - "find other sock" and "check mail." Minute twelve - "She notices she is planning lunch, writes nothing, smiles, and plays the line again - that notice-and-return is the rep." Any one-thing setup with a written-later and a named return counts.

8. TIMER row 1 columns 3-7; THING row 2 columns 1-5; BACK row 3 columns 4-7; WANDER row 4 columns 3-8; BLOCK row 5 columns 5-9; LIST row 6 columns 2-5; DONE row 7 columns 6-9; PAGE row 8 columns 1-4 Attention does WANDER all by itself; the move that counts is coming BACK.