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[Home](#) > Fixing Your Focus - 006 Time Management

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Water-of-Water: *'Dragged' Further and Further*

With *siyata d'shmaya* we continue here to learn about the power of focus. In this chapter, we will discuss problems with focus which stem specifically from the "water" aspect within the element of water.

As mentioned earlier, water is the element which "drags" a person towards something, just as a stream of water pulls and drags things with it. The implication of **water-of-water**, then, is a nature that keeps dragging a person.

We will give several examples of this nature, but we should first know that if someone has a strong amount of **water-of-water** in himself, he will have a very hard time with concentration and focus, because **water-of-water** is a total antithesis to the entire idea of focus. This is because the power of focus is rooted in the element of earth, a stable element which stays in place, whereas the water keeps dragging a person away from his place, preventing a person from focus.

(The other elements can also deter a person's focus. When the element of wind is impaired, a person keeps moving from his place, and he cannot concentrate then; and when the element of fire is impaired, a person is jumping and skipping from place to place, which also makes him lose his concentration).

Water-of-water [in its impaired form] is thus a root cause of losing focus, because it keeps dragging a person. This will manifest itself in the three main "garments" of the soul, which are: action, speech, and thought.

1) Impaired "**Water-of-Water**" In The Area of Action

A) Pushing Off Things For Later -When it comes to the area of **action**, the person with a lot of **water-of-water** before he is about to do something will immediately push off doing it, and in this way, he 'drags' it away from him.

It is said that there are two kinds of people. The ideal [responsible] kind of person is one who does today's work today, and he doesn't push it off for tomorrow, whereas the irresponsible person does tomorrow's work today. The irresponsible kind of person is always pushing off things for later - for tomorrow, for after the festival, in an hour from now, etc. If he has no choice of pushing things off, then of course he will take care of it. But as long as he has the possibility to push things off, he will do so.

For example, as long as he sees that the dishes aren't piled up that high in the sink and it's still possible to use the sink, he won't wash the dishes today. If he needs to replace an item in his house which isn't working that good, he'll push off buying the replacement as long as the old item is working somewhat. He pushes off things for later, meaning that he is always 'dragging' the current situation away from himself. Unless this is impossible for him to do, he will act this way.

2) Caught Up In Various Activities - Another kind of this problem in the area of action is in an opposite manner than the above: When a person is in the midst of doing something, and he gets 'caught up' in what he's doing and he finds it difficult to stop whatever he's in the middle of. This problem can be manifest either in a physical activity or even in a spiritual pursuit (just because it is a spiritual pursuit doesn't mean he is acting correctly).

We will give some common examples of this problem. Many people - especially women - enjoy reading all kinds of books, such as storybooks, or novels, or collections of writings, etc. A person begins reading a book and he finds it impossible to stop in the middle. Now it's getting late, he has to take care of some things now, he has to go somewhere. But he's in the middle of the book, so he says, "Just another 5 minutes", or "Just one more page..." or "Just one more chapter."

There are others who take it further - they totally lose track of time while reading a book. They're not thinking that they have to get to the end of the book or to the end of the chapter or that they need another 5 minutes; they are just 'dragged' further and further into whatever they are reading. When this kind of person finishes whatever he was reading, only then does he close the book and goes to take care of whatever he has to do. They never set a limit upon their reading time.

Even if this kind of person does have some concept of placing limits on his reading time - for example, he plans to stop at the end of the chapter, or the end of the page, or to stop at 5 minutes later - the problem is that he will tell this to himself with every passing page, and each page leads to another page, and then another page, etc. In the end, he doesn't actually pull away from the book until he finishes it, even though he had originally planned to stop at a certain point.

There are some people who begin reading a book in the beginning of the night, and suddenly they notice that the clock says 3 A.M. The person gets up late the next morning and wonders, "How did this happen to me?!" But this is not an isolated incident in his life. His whole lifestyle is really like this, where he gets pulled and dragged after what he was doing and he can't stop, and he loses track of time. He simply has a difficulty stopping whatever he's in the middle of.

This will only be a problem for him when it's something interesting to him, however. If it is not that attractive and interesting to him, he would of course stop in the middle of it when he has to. But if he is very interested in what he is doing, he feels like he cannot stop in the middle and go take care of other things. It doesn't come easy to him to stop in the middle of what he's doing, and it requires a lot of energy for him to stop himself. So he is 'dragged' further and further into whatever he's in the middle of.

This problem is very common when it comes to the example of reading books and stories, as mentioned. We can also find more examples of this problem, but the point is that when a person is in the middle of doing something he enjoys and loves, he may find it too hard to stop in the middle. Sometimes it's not even something he loves that much - he entered into some activity and he gets caught up in it, and he finds it too hard to pull himself away from what he's doing and go take care of other things. To some degree, this is also due to laziness, which comes from a dominance of the element of earth.

In the first example we gave, this problem stems from a total dominance of **water-of-water**. In the

second example we gave, which also stems from **water-of-water**, we can more specifically label it as **“earth”-of-water-of-water**, because it involves some “earth” aspect, laziness, within the nature of the **water-of-water** that totally drags a person into what he’s doing.

As mentioned, we can give many more examples of the problem. It is a problem that can be manifest in any activity, pastime or hobby that a person enjoys doing. Some people love to build things, others love to sing, etc. Whenever one is involved in something he enjoys a lot, he may have a problem of finding it too hard to stop in the middle of what he’s doing.

Impaired “Water-of-Water” In The Area of Speech

Now we will see how this problem is also manifest in the realm of **speech**.

This is a problem that is commonly found. Whereas one kind of person says few words, another kind of person can keep talking and he doesn’t stop. It can be due to many reasons. It can be when one friend is talking to another friend, or it can be when a person is giving a speech, where the person just keeps talking and he doesn’t stop. When he is talking, no one knows when he will stop.

It is like when the students came to their *rebbe* to tell them it is time to recite the morning *Shema*. He keeps talking. It doesn’t make a difference to him that no one in the audience is listening or that they are all waiting to *daven Maariv*. He has one more thing to say, so he has to finish saying it, no matter what. That leads him to talk about something else, and then something else. If he is a person who has a lot to say – or if at least he thinks he has a lot to say – he keeps continuing to talk, and perhaps he is confident that he has just one more thing to say and then he’ll be finished. He is ‘dragged’ further and further into his speech and he will not stop talking.

There are some people who can keep talking and even if you give them a time limit of when they have to stop, they aren’t aware at all when they go overtime. In some cases, a person can speak for a long amount of time in front of an audience because he imagines that everyone is waiting to hear him speak and that he is the only person they want to hear. Such a person is delusional. But there are others who can be aware that there is a time limit of much how they can speak in front of an audience, and they will even say openly “Just one more minute and then I will finish”, when they go overtime - but in reality, they are not paying attention to the time. He has to just say “one more story”, and from there, he becomes dragged into talking about all kinds of other topics.

There are also some people who, when they start talking, they can keep going on and they lose track of the time. This week someone told me that his child came home one day a few hours later from school, and his worried parents asked him, “Where were you??” The child responded, “I was speaking with my friend.” The parents said, “But you normally come home at 5, and tonight you came home at 9.” The child said, “No, I started to speak about a certain thing, and then we started speaking about something else, so it became a whole conversation.” The parents said, “What time is it now?” The child wasn’t even aware that the sun had set. He simply became dragged along with the conversation.

This is also commonly a scenario with boys in a dormitory room, where they can get into a conversation before they go to bed and it can keep going for hours, because they get ‘dragged’ more and more into the conversation. Some people talk non-stop for a different reason – it is because they are bored and they feel empty, and they have nothing to do, so they can keep talking without stopping. But even if a person is the type to be careful to get up on time in the morning to make the first time for *Kerias Shema*, he still might get up late because he spent the night in a conversation that kept going, he was ‘dragged’ further and further into it.

Similarly, there are some people whom you can start conversing with, and when you want to stop, you can find that it is very hard to stop talking to them, because they want to keep talking. You want to walk away already, and the other person says, "Wait, let me just finish what I'm trying to tell you." The other is not prepared to stop the conversation so quickly – he finds it too hard.

There are varying levels of this problem, but it is common. Some people can keep talking and they don't give the other person a chance to talk, and they have a problem with being listeners. Others can be good listeners and they let the other person talk, but they can't stop in middle of a conversation.

Impaired "Water-of-Water" In The Area of Thought

This problem of becoming 'dragged' without stop can also manifest in the area of **thought**. A person may begin thinking of something and he becomes 'dragged' in his mind after all kinds of thoughts, with one thought leading to another.

For example, a person may be learning one *halachah* in the Gemara and then he is reminded of another *halachah*, so he begins to think about the other *halachah*, and that reminds him of a different *halachah*. By the time he is finished learning the Gemara, he has ended his thoughts in an area that is totally unrelated to the page or topic in front of him. He may turn to his *chavrusa* in the middle of his learning and ask him, "Remind me – what were we in the middle of learning about?"

The person becomes dragged from one thought into another related kind of thought, and then into another related thought. The problem here is that he is turning that which is "secondary" (*tafel*) into the "priority" (*ikar*), and the priority becomes secondary.

(This is not the same thing as when a person simply jumps from one topic to another (which is a nature rooted in the element of fire), where a person is suddenly reminded of something else related to what he is thinking about, and his thoughts digress into that topic.)

Although all of his thoughts will generally be related to each other, the problem is that they 'drag' him out of the topic he was talking about, and into a different point.

Others will sometimes get sidetracked from what they were talking about, and as soon as they realize that they've gone off on a tangent, they quickly re-focus and return to what they were first speaking about. A person may also need to bring up other points while speaking to an audience, in order to awaken the hearts of the listeners, and there are other valid reasons as well for digressing to another topic. But many times, a person starts talking about a certain thing and then he begins to think about something else which is somewhat related, and then another thing, and by the time he is finished speaking, it is far from what he began to speak about.

'Dragged' Within One's Place

There are three dimensions – the soul we have, the place we are in, and the time we are in.^[1] In all of these three areas, a person may become 'dragged' further and further into something.

When it comes to a certain place, for example, a person may keep expanding and renovating his house, like if his family is getting better and he needs to add on some space to his house. He measures how much space he will need to renovate, but then he ends up renovating even more than what he planned. This is an example of being "dragged" within the place he is in, because he keeps expanding it without any restraint.

Disconnected From Time

A person may also become “dragged” in the area of time, which is a very, very common occurrence.

There are people who never pay attention to the time. They come later when they call the taxi to pick them up, and they come late even to their flights. When they buy a plane ticket, it is doubtful if they will even make the flight at all, because they never come to the airport with enough time to make the flight.

They come to the airport and hope that they can be switched to another flight, and sometimes the airport is kind enough to let them on to another plane, even though they find it embarrassing and nerve-wracking, and it troubles other people (maybe it is because they think that everyone else in the world should work around their schedule wherever they go). They simply have no concept of time. Even if they give a guarantee that they will come on time to something, they would need a blessing and a miracle for this to happen. By them, time is not defined as time - they view time as something that they should “try” to adjust their life to.

This kind of person usually has this problem in the area of going to sleep and waking up on time. The hours on the clock mean nothing to him. A person like this can go to sleep at 3 or 4 A.M. in the morning, planning to get up sometime between 8 A.M and 10 A.M. (Clearly they go according to the later *zman Kerias Shema*).

If you ask such a person, “Are you aware that you went to sleep at 3 A.M. in the morning?” He may respond, “I was planning to go to sleep already at 1 A.M.” What happened? He got involved with a phone call, and then other things suddenly came up. At 2:30 A.M. no one is calling him anymore (unless it’s a call from out of the country), so only then does he go to sleep. He becomes ‘dragged’ after different areas of his life to take care of, planning to “only” take care of “just” this and “just” that...

If you know people like this, you know that some of these people have turned their day into night, and their night into day! They become dragged after their own concept of time, and they abandon the time zone of reality.

Poor Time Management - Two Scenarios

There are two kinds of people who have this problem with time:

1) One kind of problem is **when a person doesn’t identify with the reality of time**. It is like a person who has a weak sense of touch or smell. He has a weakness when it comes to relating to time. If you ask him how much time has just passed, the answer he will give you is far from the reality. He doesn’t pay attention to the time as it passes. To him, the 24 hours of the day can seem to him like only a few hours have passed.

2) Another kind of problem is **when a person tries to do too much in a certain amount of time**. He thinks he can do everything that needs to be done in an amount of time which really takes much longer. If something really requires an hour of work, he will think that he can do it all very quickly, perhaps because he thinks he is very talented. He has a problem in that he does not know how to calculate how much time something will take.

The Problem of “Cramming It In”

Of course, sometimes a person cannot know precisely how much time something will take. Any job which involves physical work or carpentry can take much longer than expected, for all sorts of reasons. But many people simply try to do too much within a certain amount of time, when it is not realistic.

For example, a *chosson* (a boy who is engaged to be married) often tries to cram in a lot into his engagement period – he may have aspirations to try to finish *Shas* before the wedding, as well as *Shulchan Aruch* with the commentaries, and to also try to know *Tikkunei HaZohar* by heart. Are there any people who have succeeded at this? There were some rare cases, but with most people, this is totally unrealistic. Yet a person may think that he can somehow do it, and when he realizes at the end that he couldn't succeed at it, he wonders why not.

People of this type push their energies very far, way beyond their actual capacity, and they always feel like they are not succeeding. Erev Rosh HaShanah arrives and this kind of person feels that the year has gone by with absolutely no growth. Often they really have grown during the year, but they are not aware of it, because they have very unrealistic aspirations from themselves.

The problem of trying to cram in too much work within a certain amount of time is a common problem in many people. Many marriages suffer from this issue. The husband and wife make up a time where they will spend time with each other, and one of them is late because he\she got caught up in something, or doesn't make it at all.

People even miss taking care of basics because of this problem. I met a person a few weeks ago who is trying to get certain a degree so that he can earn a living, and he has to be in the place early in the morning. So that he shouldn't arrive late, he tries to leave his house every morning at 6:20 A.M. in order to make the bus. But he doesn't even make the 7 o'clock bus! And this is about something that a person considers very important.

Another example of this problem is when a person needs to go to a wedding of a relative, which he considers very important to attend, and he doesn't end up making it, and if he is asked, "Why didn't you make it? Wasn't this important to you?" He responds: "What was I supposed to do? I tried doing a bunch of things I needed to take care of, and I didn't succeed at getting them done with enough time to make it to the wedding."

This kind of person will feel that it is never his fault for being late or for missing events, because he thinks that he has done everything in his power. He has formed the belief that it is truly impossible for him to change these habits, because there's nothing else to do about it, and, after all, he does have to take care of whatever he was taking care of.

Where does this problem come from? It is due to any of the two reasons we explained earlier. It may either be because the person has no concept of time, or it may be because the person is trying to cram in too many things within a short amount of time, which is really much more than he can do. And if the person also has a nature to become 'dragged' into other things as he is the midst of doing something else, he will be constantly involved in a "world that is not his". He is in the middle of doing something, and he is not aware of the time, so he has a hard time stopping in the middle of what he is doing.

We should understand that there are those who, if they are *avreichim*, they never have a *Kolel* to go to; and if they work, they cannot keep a job. They never manage in any place they are in.

Sometimes a person like this becomes "his own person" who tries to survive somehow on his own. He may get hired for a job by people who don't really know what his habits are like, and he gets fired from there, and again he gets hired for another job, only to be told that he can only work there for half the time....and everyone who meets him thinks that he's working like any other normal person, and he seems to be fine and doing well. They don't really know his true situation. Sometimes this kind of person may even resent others for the unjust "mistreatment" that is being accorded to him, because he feels that he deserves to be treated better, in spite of his habits...

This way of living will not work for anyone, because it is like trying to live in fantasy.

In Conclusion

The above is all a brief description of the problems caused by impaired **water-of-water**. Many people who have a dominance of this nature in themselves face much destruction in their life, because they do not recognize where the limitations around them. We have so far explained how this problem can be manifest in the areas of place and time, and now we will briefly mention how it is a problem in the area of the soul, which is a subtler point to discuss.

Impaired Water-of-Water In The Area of "Soul"

Earlier, we mentioned that the problem of getting "dragged" and "caught" up in certain activities, the problem of impaired "**water-of-water**", can be manifest in the areas of place, time, and soul. So far we explained how it manifests in the areas of place and time. Now we will explain, briefly, how this problem can manifest in the area of "**soul**".

In the area of "soul", the problem of impaired water-of-water is that a person will not know what his true limitations are. He might think he knows his personality, but really he doesn't. As an example, a person may be a carpenter, and if he is asked what he does, he may say, "I only do it in special cases." He is 'dragged' after a certain pastime and he is "confident" that things will turn out good, but this job does not suit his personality at all.

I once met an artist who was showing me his paintings. He said to me, "This is not really who I am. I can really paint much better than this." He feels that he hasn't fully utilized his talent yet in this picture, and he feels he can do much better. He became 'dragged' into the pastime of art, when it is not really for him to do, and he keeps thinking that he can do better at it. A person like this, as well as in any other profession which doesn't suit him, is suffering inwardly, because he always feels like he has never found himself yet in a profession that truly utilizes his talents.

There are many more examples we can give, and we have tried to present here a general picture of the problem and how it manifests in different areas. We cannot provide an exact solution for each of these issues mentioned, but we will try to give general rules of what a person can do about this, to alleviate these kinds of issues.

Time Management: Leave A Little Earlier

Let's consider the following example, where a person has the problem of not being aware of time.

If a person plans to get to a certain place at 9 o'clock, he should seriously consider how much time it will take him to get there. He can check the GPS or the time on the dashboard of the car, and see at what time he left. He might notice that it will take him a half hour to get there. At what time did he leave? He may discover that he left at 8:35, and he is not the type to drive fast, so he knows he will be a bit late, but he figures, "What's so bad if I will come 2 minutes late?" He will even plan to leave the house at 8:35 to begin with, because he figures that he has enough time to get there, and he thinks there's nothing wrong with coming a few minutes late, so he takes his time a bit when he's getting ready...

The advice for this kind of person is that **he should resolve to leave 30 minutes before the actual amount of time that he needs**. Some people can take this even further and set an alarm clock so that they will remember to leave earlier. But the basic idea is that he shouldn't aim to leave at exactly the time he needs to leave, or after it. He should resolve to leave *before* that. If he has to be at a certain place by 9 o'clock and it will take him a certain amount of time to get there, he should

leave *before* that amount of time. Even if he comes late, he will have gained by getting his soul used to the idea of limitations. He will train himself to the idea of sticking to certain boundaries which he doesn't try to override.

Although this kind of person believes that there's nothing wrong with coming a bit late, and especially because everyone else also comes late sometimes, he has what to gain by getting used to leaving to his destination before the actual amount of time he needs, because he will training his soul to get used to the concept of sticking to certain limitations. He also learns how to move in the opposite direction which his soul wants to move in, by getting used to showing up a bit earlier to where he has to get to. It might feel to him like a waste of time when he arrives earlier and there is nothing to do, but it is actually not a waste of time - to the contrary, he is building his entire concept of time, by arriving earlier.

The Solution For Getting 'Caught Up' In Activities

We have so far explained how a person who has no concept of time can train himself to get a concept of time. What should a person do, though, if he has the problem of cramming in too much activity within a certain amount of time, and because of that he becomes dragged into other things and this pushes him off schedule?

This kind of person thinks that he can keep pushing himself to do just a bit more, another thing and another thing, and that is why he tries to cram in so much work into a short amount of time. The advice for him is to try an opposite approach than what he is used to: He should try doing 10% or 20% less than what he thinks he is capable of doing.

At first, he may feel like he is wasting his time, by not utilizing his time as much to get more things done. He may feel that it's possible for him to do more than what he is doing and to make the most out of his time. But in truth, he is really not wasting his time, for although he is getting less done, he is gaining a bit more *menuchas hanefesh* (serenity) instead. He is also valuing the "quality" in his life more than the "quantity" in his life. But even without this gain, he is gaining in the sense that he is learning how to place limits on his activities and to be able to properly manage his time.

In summary, before starting to do something, the person should make up with himself that he will try doing 10% or 20% less of how much he thinks he can do - not more, and not less.

This advice we are saying is not only a solution for this particular issue we are discussing. When one practices it, it can slowly limit the entire nature of "dragging" in the soul, enabling a person to restrain himself from becoming 'dragged' after any of the activities that he previously couldn't pull away from.

Based on the above, if a person has the problem of losing track of time when he is talking and he has a hard time suddenly stopping himself in the middle, it will not work if he tells himself that he will stop in "Another 5 minutes", and if a person has the problem of not being able to stop in the middle of reading something, it is also not practical if he tells himself that he will stop at the end of one more chapter. This is because once a person follows the nature of becoming 'dragged', he is pulled after it almost helplessly and he won't be able to stop himself. Instead, the way to deal with this issue is by **setting a certain amount of time for yourself, before you start; and to end at that time.**

If you keep telling yourself "Just one more minute" or "Just one more chapter" or "I'm just doing one more thing...", it will never work, because since the problem is that you are dragged further and further after what you are doing, it will only become more uncontrollable with the more you allow yourself to become dragged and pulled into it. Instead, you need to set for yourself a certain amount of time from beforehand, and you should view that as the amount of time you will be spending on it.

In addition, besides for stopping at the amount of time you have set for yourself, we also mentioned that you should stop a little bit before that. For example, if you decide that you will stop what you are doing at 9 o'clock, you should really stop at 8:55. In this way, you gain doubly. You train your soul to get used to the boundaries which you have made for yourself, but even more so, to stop a little bit before the boundary arrives, so that you don't even meet the actual boundary!

Example - Accepting Shabbos A Little Earlier

A good example of how you can implement this idea is on Erev Shabbos: to accept Shabbos a little bit earlier than the actual time.

In most homes, the atmosphere on Erev Shabbos is not calm, especially in winter, when Shabbos is earlier. With many people, there is no difference when Shabbos is in the winter or in the summer - whether there is 4 hours left to prepare for Shabbos or even if there is 8 hours left to prepare for Shabbos, they are always busy with the preparations until the last minute of when they have to stop doing *melachah* (work). Whether you usually accept Shabbos 10 minutes earlier before sundown, or 20 minutes earlier, or 30 minutes earlier - it would be a good idea if you accept Shabbos 15 minutes earlier than your usual time. If sundown is at 4:50 and you would normally accept Shabbos at 4:30 (which is 20 minutes earlier), instead, accept Shabbos at 4:15. (That will also mean that instead of cramming in all the preparations on Friday, you will be doing less on Friday, in order to be able to accept Shabbos earlier.)

The idea is that whenever you have a deadline for something when you must stop, you make sure to make the deadline a bit earlier, so that you will never even get near the actual deadline.

Understandably, we can give many more examples of the idea, but we have explained the main point is, and from there you can come up with your own examples of how to apply this. In summary, the idea is to make boundaries for yourself, and then to extend the boundary a bit further, so that you can go turn yourself away in the opposite direction than the one you are being dragged towards.

Even if one does not work on the ideas here perfectly, by simply trying to implement these ideas, he can still change his perspective, slowly; and in addition, he will acquire the ability to go in the opposite direction of where he is being pulled towards, and in that way, he can counter his nature to become 'dragged'.

The Power of "Contraction"

In different terms, when one learns how to move in the opposite direction of where he is being pulled towards, this is also known as the soul's power of "contraction" (in contrast to an opposite power of the soul, which is called "expansion").

When a person has too much **water-of-water**, he will keep expanding outward, with no ability to restrain himself. This person will need to develop the power of "contraction", which will place some restraint on his power to expand, by getting used to "contracting" (sticking to his boundaries and stopping even before it) instead of "expanding" (becoming dragged).

Let us explain a bit more, in order to be clear about how this concept works.

The simple solution to the problem of becoming "dragged" and losing track of time, is to simply establish boundaries for oneself. In order to counter the nature of impaired **water-of-water**, it would seem that we need to use the very opposite of this, which is **earth-of-earth**. However, this will not prove successful, because in order to establish boundaries in the first place, one needs certain inner strength to do so. When one's **water-of-water** keeps expanding and causing a person to become so

“dragged” into whatever he is doing, it is very difficult to stop. The person may want to stop his habits and he may even be prepared to make resolutions to improve his behavior, but it still won’t work, because he still gets dragged after what he does.

Instead, one needs to counter the movement of the soul which is dragging him, by creating an “opposite movement” to go in, which will go against the movement of the “dragging” that is caused by impaired **water-of-water**.

Gradual Change

This does not mean that a person will change all of his habits so fast and that he will never again have the problem of becoming too ‘dragged’ after what he is doing. A person may be 99% dragged after what he is doing, but if he can move in the opposite direction of the ‘dragging’ by even 1% (by setting a boundary for himself of how much time he will spend on something, and stopping a little bit before that actual time), he slowly develops the power of “opposite movement”, and he will be able to slowly counter his nature of getting ‘dragged’.

It is as the Rambam says, that in order to change any trait, one needs to first go in the opposite extreme of his weakness, in order to get to the “middle point” between the two extremes. The middle point is essentially where there is recognition of proper, balanced boundaries of the trait.

[1] *Sefer Yetzira* 3:1 - “Olam (World\Place), Shanah (Year\Time), Nefesh (soul).”

Source: <http://bilvavi.net/english/fixing-your-focus-006-time-management>