Time Management: “Can you help me work through something that’s been bothering me related to time management by using cognitive restructuring? I’d like to talk about what’s been happening, how it makes me feel, and explore whether there’s another way I could look at it. I want this to be a caring, attentive conversation, with a high degree of interaction between us. I’d like you to help me explore my thoughts, emotions, and behaviors around time, and help guide me through the process of cognitive restructuring.”

**ChatGPT said:**

Absolutely, let's work through this together. I’ll guide you through a **cognitive restructuring** process step by step, with an attentive, caring tone. We'll explore what’s been happening, how you feel about it, and look for new perspectives and practical ways forward.

**Step 1: Describe what’s been bothering you**

Can you share what specific situation or pattern related to time management is troubling you?

* Is there a particular recurring situation (e.g., feeling rushed, procrastinating, or overcommitting)?
* Or a recent event that made you feel like your time was mismanaged?

Would you like to start by describing **what’s been happening** lately with your time management that feels stressful or frustrating?

**You said:**

Generally I like to and I do divide time for the daily routine tasks I am targeting. But, in between of the task performing, I distract too much with mobile and I feel, probably it leads me towards overthinking and at the end of the task's ending-time, I can't get the task completed. And The task is a bit challenging ones as I am working on an AI related work in a startup. So, the difficultness could be the reason and I feel, I should have a better approach to handle this problem. So, I don't end up in time wastage with distractions.

**ChatGPT said:**

Thank you for sharing that. It sounds like you have a strong intention to manage your time well, but distractions (especially from your mobile) are pulling you away from your tasks, particularly when the tasks are challenging. That can lead to feelings of frustration, overthinking, and ultimately a sense of not completing tasks as planned.

Let’s break this down and work through it step by step using **cognitive restructuring**.

**Step 2: Explore Your Thoughts and Emotions**

1. **Current Thought:**  
   When you get distracted, what goes through your mind?
   * Do you think something like *“This task is too hard”* or *“I’ll just take a quick break”*?
   * Or is it more like *“I can’t focus right now, maybe later”*?
2. **Emotion:**  
   How do you feel emotionally when you realize you’ve lost time due to distractions?
   * Frustrated? Guilty? Stressed?
   * Do you feel pressure because of the startup environment?

**Step 3: Identify Possible Distorted Thinking**

Sometimes when tasks are hard, the brain wants an *“easy escape”* (like checking the phone). This is normal. But the thought *“I can’t handle this right now”* might not be true — it’s just a mental block.

* Do you feel that challenging tasks make you doubt your capability or create a sense of being overwhelmed?

**Step 4: Reframe and Restructure**

Let’s consider alternative perspectives:

* **Current belief:** *“I get distracted, and it means I’m wasting time and not productive.”*
* **Alternative belief:** *“Distraction is just a habit my brain uses when it feels challenged. I can train myself to focus for shorter intervals and still make progress.”*

What if we reframe it like this:

* Instead of aiming for **long, uninterrupted work**, what if you break the task into **smaller 25-minute focus blocks (Pomodoro technique)**, where checking your phone is only allowed during 5-minute breaks?
* This way, you can manage your focus in “bursts,” which often works well with challenging AI tasks that require deep thinking.

**Step 5: Behavioral Adjustments**

Here are some techniques we can build on:

1. **Set a clear micro-goal:** Instead of “I’ll finish this AI feature,” focus on *“In the next 25 minutes, I’ll get the data preprocessing done.”*
2. **Physical environment cue:** Keep your phone out of sight — even in another room if possible.
3. **Mindset shift:** Remind yourself: *“A few minutes of discomfort while focusing is normal. I’m building mental strength.”*
4. **Reward mechanism:** After a 25-minute block, consciously allow 2-3 minutes to check your phone as a reward.

**Let’s Reflect**

Would you like me to guide you through a **mini-cognitive exercise** right now?  
We’ll:

1. Identify the exact negative thought that hits when you pick up the phone.
2. Challenge that thought.
3. Replace it with a new, empowering one.

**Would you like to try this short exercise together right now?**