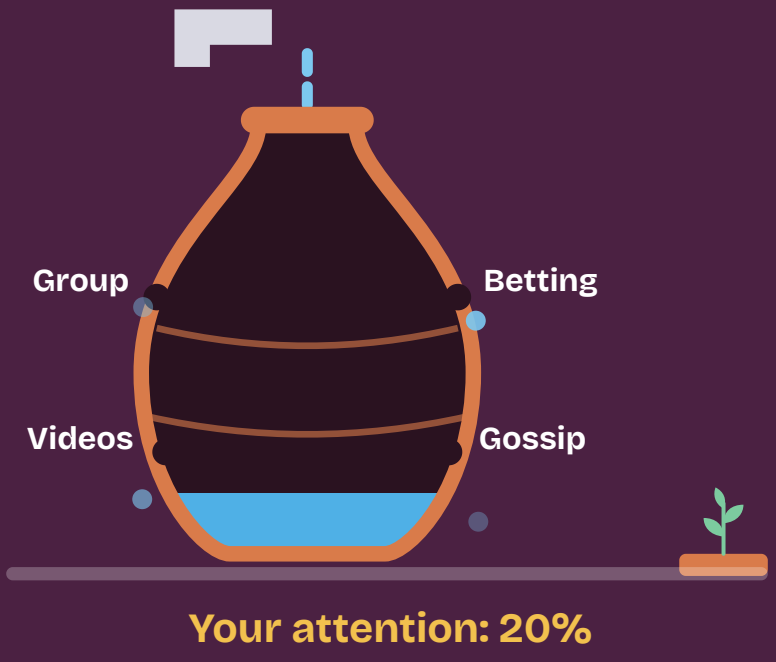
A MESSAGE FROM THE CO-FOUNDER · PART 3 OF 3

What Is Scattered Bears No Fruit

The same three laws, applied to an asset rarer than money: your attention.



By Mohd Asaa Khamis
Co-founder, and Digital transformation specialist
9-minute read



IN SHORT

1. Your attention is never lost. **It moves**: every minute you gave to a screen became someone else's income.
2. Unguarded attention scatters by itself. And what is scattered **bears no fruit**: you do not learn, you do not plan, you do not

finish.

3 What you prioritise every day is what grows. If you want a different life, **change what you give your attention to.**

> Part 1 showed us the abundance we have. Part 2 taught us that what is given no work rots. One asset remains that decides whether those two will happen or stay as words: your attention.

We were taught: "Whoever holds two, one slips away"

Our elders knew this long ago. Today we do not hold two. We hold ten: the customer in front of us, the WhatsApp group, short videos, the phone that is ringing, and the news of people we do not know.

You know the result. You wake up, and before you have greeted anyone at home, your hand has already reached the phone. "I'll just check one message." Forty minutes later you are still in bed.

At night you go to sleep worn out, and when you ask yourself "what did I really do today?", there is no answer.

You were not lazy. You were busy all day. But your attention was cut into small pieces, and everyone took a piece, except you.

The three laws of Part 2 govern money, time and strength. They govern attention too, and more harshly.

1 THE FIRST LAW, APPLIED TO ATTENTION

Attention is not lost. It moves.

IN RESEARCH

In 1971 the scholar Herbert Simon, who later received the Nobel prize in economics, wrote that a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention [1]. Information does not consume your money.

It consumes your attention.

Many of the apps on your phone are free. Who pays for them? Your attention does. For every minute you stay, someone sells that minute to an advertiser.

Part two said it: three hours of scrolling were not lost; they became the income of someone who understood this law before you.

The evening jam inside a daladala: fifty minutes, a hundred short videos. When you get off, you do not remember one. Those minutes were not lost. They moved.

At two in the night the phone lights up: "The match is starting, place your bet now!" Whoever sent it is not asleep; they are at work. And their work is taking away your sleep.

THE RIGHT QUESTION

~~Where has my time gone?~~

Whom is my attention building for?

The phone is not an enemy. It brings customers, it connects us with family, it teaches us.

The problem is not the vehicle, it is the driver: who is leading whom?

2

THE SECOND LAW · THE HEART OF THIS MESSAGE

Unguarded attention scatters.

IN RESEARCH

Psychology studies show three things.

1. Every time you move from one task to another, the mind pays a cost in time, and the cost grows as the task gets harder (Rubinstein, Meyer and Evans, 2001) [2].
2. When you leave a task half-done, part of the mind stays where you came from (Leroy, 2009) [3].
3. And the sound of the phone alone, even if you do not open it, is enough to raise mistakes (Stothart and colleagues, 2015) [4].

This is the entropy of Part 2: what is left to itself moves towards ruin. Attention needs no great thief. It spills by itself, drop by drop.

Look around you:

The WhatsApp group that never sleeps

214 messages before eight in the morning. "OK." "Thank you." A photo of tea. Only one was for you, and it has already scrolled past.

The mama lishe

Three plates of rice and beans, two of ugali and fish. The phone rings, she answers. When she comes back: "Sorry, how many did you say?" One customer has already left.

The shopkeeper

A customer has stood at the counter for two minutes. The shopkeeper is finishing a video. The customer crosses the road and buys from the next shop. They will not come back to tell you why.

The parent

The child does homework alone. Father on the couch, mother on the couch, each with a screen. "Dad, how is this one done?" "Wait a little." The little never ends.

The student

The exam is the day after tomorrow. One page, and the phone lights up. They return to the same page for the fourth time, and still do not know what it said.

The tailor

He measures the cloth with the phone on his shoulder. He cuts. Two centimetres short. The customer's cloth is ruined, and his name with it.

Attention: a bundle inside the bundle

Part 2 said that every morning you are given a bundle of 24 hours. Inside it is a smaller bundle: a few hours of a clear mind, and those are the ones that build a life.

If you give them away in the morning to other people's WhatsApp statuses, what is left for your own work is crumbs.

And a scattered mind is a tired mind. When you guard your attention you guard your calm as well: one quiet hour, away from the phone, is caring for your own mind.

> **Little by little fills the measure.**
> **And, little by little also pierces it.**

Two minutes here, five there. Not one of them looks big. Try it yourself:

YOUR ATTENTION BILL FOR THE YEAR

Minutes a day on the phone with no plan: **90**



Where would you have planted them?

Learning a new skill

In a year that is 548 hours. That is

68 working days



It is 9 per cent of all your waking hours.

It would have been enough for 13 courses in a new skill (40 hours each).

This is a worked example: a working day is 8 hours, and you are awake 16 hours a day. Your real number is on your phone: open Settings and look for "Digital Wellbeing" or "Screen Time".

Three paths for every hour of attention

Consumed

The day's work, answering a customer, cooking, driving a vehicle.

It is necessary, and it is right. It does its job and ends there.

Result: it is finished

Rotting

Videos that never end, groups that never sleep, gossip, arguments online, betting alerts, doing three things at once.

Result: tiredness without fruit

Planted

Listening to your child, serving one customer to the end, learning, planning tomorrow, sitting quietly for ten minutes to think.

Result: it comes back bigger

There is no fourth path called "doing everything at once".

> **So should I throw my phone away?**
>
> No.
>
> The phone is a tool for work, a way to bring the family together, and a way to learn. Many businesses today live inside it.
>
> The problem is not using it, but which of you leads the other?
>
> When you open it, for work you planned, it is a servant. When it calls you every five minutes and you answer, it is your master.

> Nor is it your fault alone. These things were built by experts to hold you. That is why beating them takes a plan, not self-blame.

Give every hour one thing.

3

THE THIRD LAW

What you prioritise grows.

IN THE BRAIN

Part 2 said the brain weakens the nerve pathways that are not used. The other side is true as well: pathways used every day grow stronger. Whatever you practise, even if it is jumping from thing to thing, is what you become good at.

Every action has a reaction, and thinking is an action.

The hardware-store seller who notices that a certain builder comes every Saturday for three-inch nails, and has them ready before he asks, has not sold just one packet; he has built a customer for life. The parent who gives a child twenty whole minutes every evening, without a phone, is raising someone who will listen to them when grown.

Here we return to Part 1. Watch other people's success for a whole hour and you feed the eye of lack. Look at what you have and at the work in front of you, and you feed the eye of abundance. The eyes are the same. What you give them is what grows.

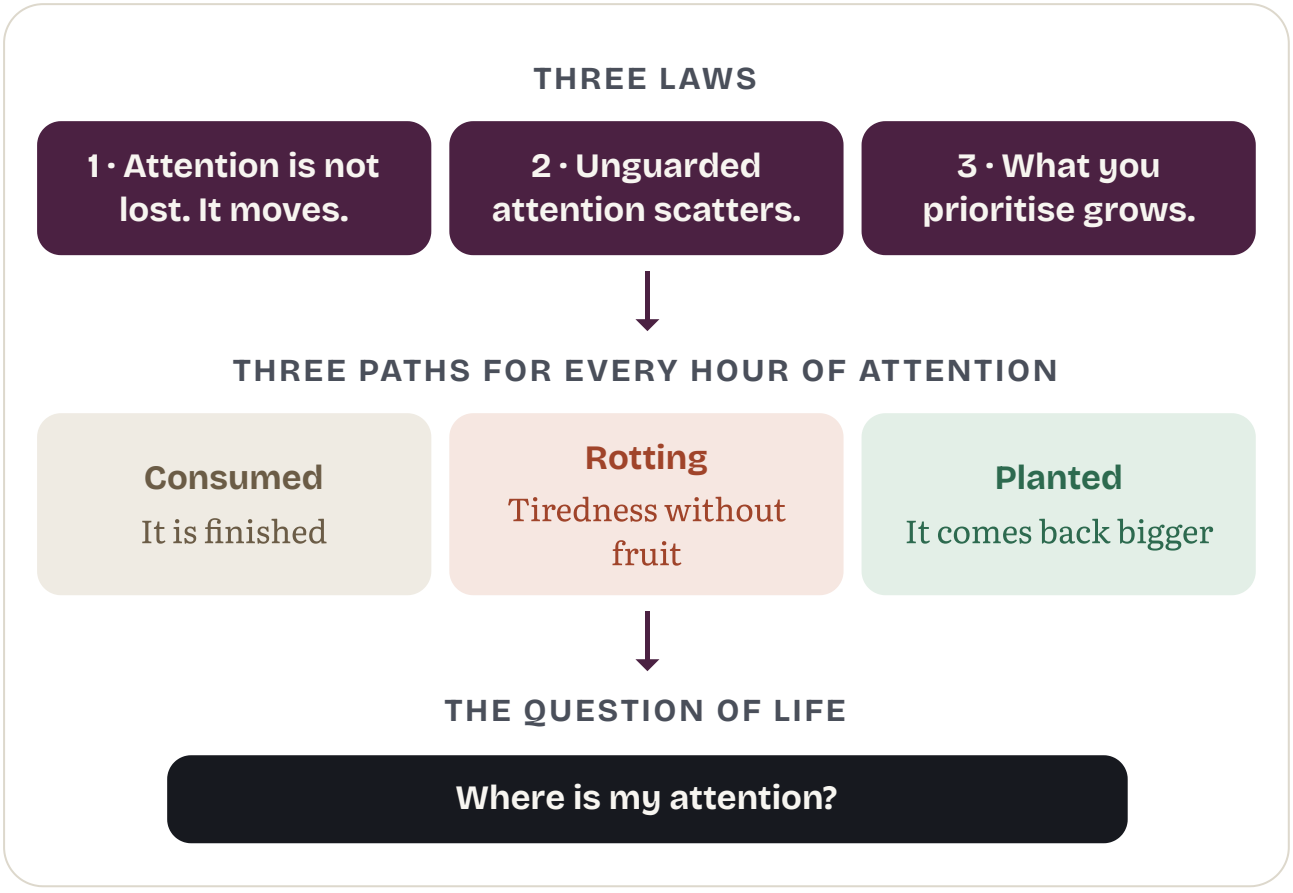
And like a seed, the reaction is late. The first day of guarding your attention will change nothing. The thirtieth day may show

the change.

> **You become what you give your attention to, every day.**

How they hold together

1. Your attention is never lost. It moves.
2. If you do not point it on purpose, it scatters.
3. Where you send it is where your life grows.



Three laws, three paths, one question.

THE QUESTION OF LIFE

~~Do I have time?~~

Where is my attention?

And how the three parts of this message hold together

1. **Wealth:** We see what is in our mind, abundance or lack.
2. **Decision:** If we do not use what we have, it rots by itself.
3. **Attention:** Without steady attention, we can neither see the chances of wealth nor make decisions.

Why do we know, but not act?

Even here, knowing is not enough.

Three habits of the brain fight us:

A **The unpredictable reward**

Every time you pull the screen with your finger, you do not know what you will find: a good message, bad news, or nothing. Behaviour studies show that an unpredictable reward holds harder than a certain one [5]. That is why the hand goes back, even after finding nothing.

B **Fear of missing out**

We are afraid to miss news, the group's joke or an opportunity. But do the sum: for fear of missing other people's affairs, we miss our own.

C **Habit**

The hand reaches the phone before the mind has decided. It is the same one we met in Part 1: business as usual, mindless actions, the child of ignorance.

> **Do not fight the phone with willpower. Fight it with distance.**

The whole picture: three enemies, one trap

Part 1 showed us the real enemies, Ignorance, Disease and Poverty, and told us that the excuses we fight are only shadows.

Part 2 taught us a law: what is left to itself moves towards ruin. Scattered attention is that same law at work in the head.

A mind left unguided does not stay still; it falls into disorder. That is the disorder (entropy) of thought.

And a mind in disorder is what keeps us fighting shadows. All day we are busy with the government, the neighbour and luck, while the real enemy, Ignorance, stays safe.

Because defeating it needs the one thing we no longer have: **directed focus**, staying with one thing until it is finished.

The whole picture: three enemies, three strengths

The three enemies work together, each feeding the next. Each piece of this message is a strength that defeats one of them.

Piece 1 · Wealth

Enemy: the eye of lack

✕ We look at what we are missing. Excuses are born, and we fight shadows.

✓ **Strength: Wealth. See what you have.**

↓ Once we believe we have nothing, we do not decide.

Piece 2 · Decision

Enemy: not acting

✕ We give what we have no work. It rots in silence: disorder (entropy).

✓ **Strength: Decision. Give it work today.**

↓ And that disorder gets into the head too.

Piece 3 · Attention

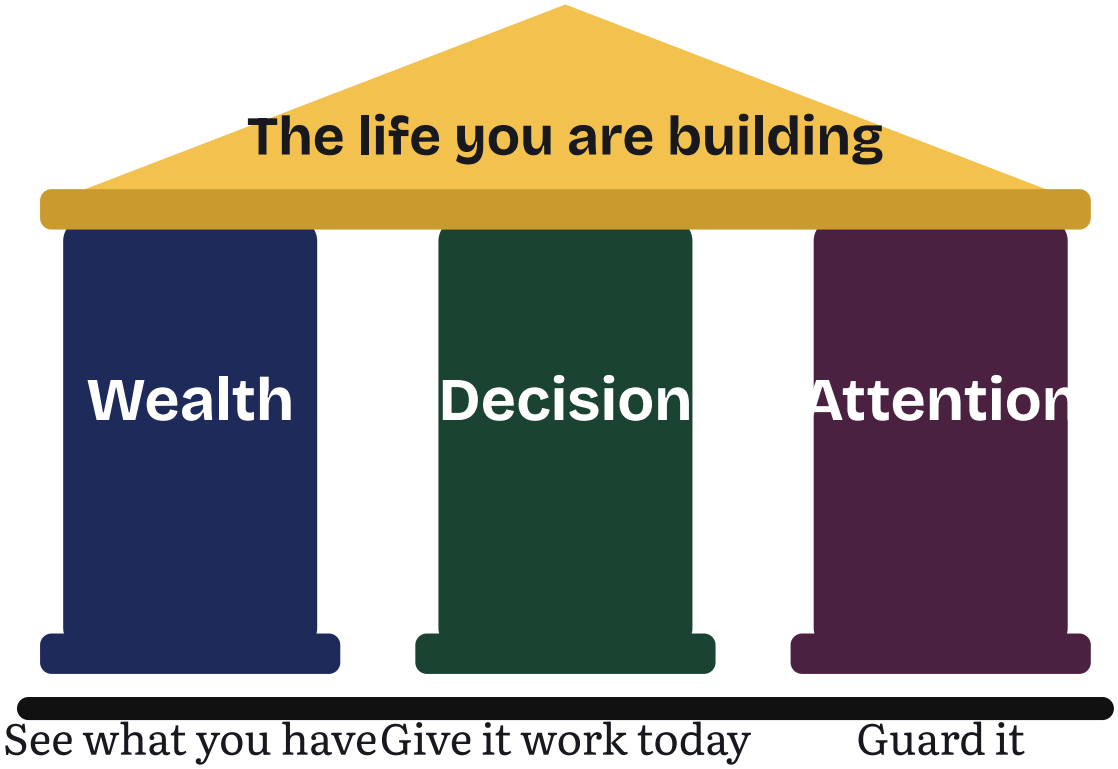
Enemy: scattered attention

✕ A mind left unguided scatters and leaks, drop by drop.

✓ **Strength: Attention. Guard your attention.**

The enemies' loop: once attention has scattered, we go back to looking at what we lack, and the trap starts again.

Three strengths, one structure



All three pieces have come together. The picture is complete.

Start today: three steps

1. **The first hour is yours**

   Tonight, charge your phone far from your bed.

   Tomorrow, do not touch it for the first hour after you wake: greet the people at home, drink your tea in peace, then write down three things you are grateful for, and the one important thing to do today.

   The phone will wait for you; it is not going anywhere.

2. **Silence the alerts, and choose your hours**

   Mute every group and every app's alerts. Open them twice a day, at an hour you chose.

An emergency will reach you by an ordinary call.

3 **One thing, 25 minutes**

Choose one thing you have been putting off. Put the phone face down, out of reach.

Stay with it for 25 minutes without moving away.

It is the same step as in Part 2: one sleeping thing, give it work.

If you do not manage it on the first day, do not blame yourself.

Attention is like a muscle: it is built little by little.

Every time you bring your attention back to what matters, you have won.

Choosing is not deciding

> **There is a difference between choosing and deciding. Make a decision now.**

Attention is what guards a decision. Every sound from the phone is an invitation to choose again, and whoever chooses again every minute has not yet decided.

To decide is to close the other doors, then hold to what you decided because you understand it. Part 2 explains this in depth.

Human beings have the capacity to design, build and live extraordinary lives, **if only they believe it is possible**.

DAY 1	CONSUMED	ROTTING	PLANTED
Morning	Opening the shop, arranging stock	40 minutes of WhatsApp statuses in bed	15 minutes planning the day
Afternoon	Serving customers	Scrolling Instagram, 30 times	Listening to one customer to the end
Night	Cooking, eating	2 hours of short videos	20 minutes helping the child with homework

An example of a one-day attention audit.
If you have already begun the audit from Part 2 (money, time, strength), add a fourth row: attention.

FOR OWNERS OF SCHOOLS, BUSINESSES AND INSTITUTIONS

> **"If you do not seal the crack, you will build the wall."**

Attention is not guarded by willpower alone. It is built by habit: learning a little every day, and a settled heart.

Maarifa is a place to learn a little every day: at school, at work and in life. And when your people are paid correctly and on time, with Maslahi, payday does not steal anyone's attention.

Get to know Maarifa

Your learning, your business, your people: one system.

See the whole system →

Perhaps someone you love is tired every day and sees no fruit from their effort, not knowing that what is being stolen is not their time but their attention.

Now you know. And knowledge is the only wealth that grows when you give it away.

Share this message

If this message has benefited you, send it to others as your thanks to the author.

That is the first step in removing ignorance for the people you care about.

Share it in your family, work and friends' groups.

Then put the phone down, and look at the one beside you.

And if your thoughts ever feel too heavy to carry alone, talk to someone you trust or a health professional.

This part is the last piece of the whole picture. **Part 1** showed you what you have; **Part 2**, why you should not let it sleep; this one, how to guard what makes both possible. Now it is your turn.

All three parts

Written by



Mohd Asaa Khamis

Co-founder, and Digital transformation specialist

WhatsApp: MOHD · 0742 537 555

director@motech.co.tz

Sources

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