

# Stefan van der Stigchel

Professor of Cognitive Psychology, Utrecht University

*How attention and visual awareness work together*



## Biography

Stefan van der Stigchel is professor of Cognitive Psychology at Utrecht University. He heads the AttentionLab research group that examines how attention and concentration work in the human brain and how they can be improved. Stefan's research has been supported in the past by NWO VENI and VIDI grants, and now by a VICI grant. He is currently researching visual working memory and eye movement control, supported by an ERC Consolidator grant. Stefan has been a member of De Jonge Akademie, a platform of young scientists within the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences.

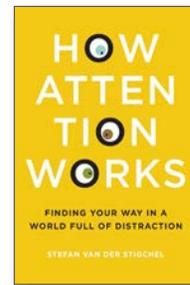
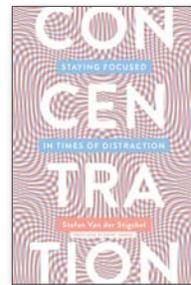
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## Topics & Books

*Behavioral Science*

*Psychology*

*Attention and Concentration*

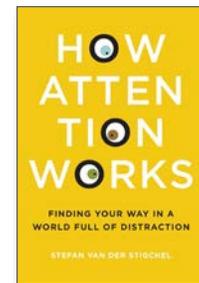
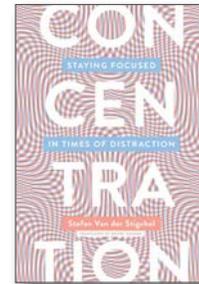


Stefan is an author of the popular science books *Concentration: Staying Focused in Times of Distraction* and *How Attention Works: Finding Your Way in a World Full of Distraction*, both internationally published by MIT Press.

In *Concentration*, van der Stigchel explains how to stay focused in a world of beeping smartphones, channel surfing, live-tweeting, pop-up ads, and other distractions. The good news, Van der Stigchel reports, is that we now know more about brain and behavior than ever before, and he draws on the latest scientific findings in his account of concentration. He explains the positive effects of taking “tech breaks” (particularly in natural surroundings), meditation, and even daydreaming.

In *How Attention Works*, Stefan van der Stigchel explains the process of attention and what the implications are for our everyday lives. The visual attention system is efficient because it doesn’t waste energy processing every scrap of visual data it receives; it gathers only relevant information. We focus on one snippet of information and assume that everything else is stable and consistent with past experience; that’s why most people miss even the most glaring continuity errors in films.

He is currently director of the Helmholtz Institute and president of the Dutch Society for Brain and Cognition.



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