

Deep Work by Cal Newport

Finished Wednesday 11th May notes started same day and took 50 mins

Premise is:

Deep Work is professional activities performed in a state of distraction-free concentration that push your cognitive capabilities to the limit. These efforts create new value, improve your skill, and are hard to replicate.

Shallow work is

Non-cognitively demanding, logistical-style tasks, often performed while distracted. These efforts tend to not create much new value in the world and are easy to replicate.

A 2012 McKinsey study found that the average knowledge worker now spends more than 60% of the workweek engaged in electronic communication and internet searching, with close to 30% of a worker's time dedicated to reading and answering email alone.

Larger efforts that would well be served by deep thinking, such as forming a new business strategy or writing an important grant application, get fragmented into distracted dashes that produce muted quality.

Spend enough time in a state of frenetic shallowness and you *permanently* reduce your capacity to perform deep work.

Learning something complex like computer programming requires intense uninterrupted concentration on cognitively demanding concepts. Most knowledge workers have lost their ability to perform deep work.

To remain valuable in the economy, therefore you must master the art of quickly learning complicated things. This task requires deep work. If you don't cultivate this ability, you'll likely fall behind as technology advances.

To succeed you have to produce the absolute best stuff you're capable of producing, a task that requires depth.

The Deep Work Hypothesis

The ability to perform deep work is becoming increasingly rare at exactly the same time it is becoming increasingly valuable in the economy. As a consequence, the few who cultivate this skill, and then make it the core of their working life, will thrive.

Busyness as a proxy for productivity

In the absence of clear indicators of what it means to be productive and valuable in their jobs, many knowledge workers turn back toward an industrial indicator of productivity: doing lots of stuff in a visible manner.

Reclaro cues this!

This potent mixture of job ambiguity and lack of metrics to measure the effectiveness of different strategies allows behaviour to seem ridiculous when viewed objectively to thrive in the increasing bewildering psychic landscape of our daily work.

Again Reclaro helps with this!

Deep work should be a priority in today's business climate, but it's not. Depth will become increasingly rare and therefore increasingly valuable. Systematically develop your personal ability to go deep- and by doing so reap great rewards.

Calaiszentmihalyi:

"The best moments usually occur when a person's body or mind is pushed to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile."

Human beings it seems are at their best when immersed deeply in something challenging.

To build your working life around the experience of flow produced by deep work is a proven path to deep satisfaction.

Rule 1 Work Deeply. You have a finite amount of willpower that becomes depleted. The purpose of the deep work chamber is to allow for total focus and uninterrupted work flow.

The key to developing a deep work habit is to move beyond good intentions and add routines and rituals to your working life designed to minimise the amount of your limited willpower necessary to transition into and maintain a state of unbroken concentration.

If you deployed smart routines and rituals perhaps set a time and quiet location used for your deep tasks each afternoon you'd require much less willpower to start and keep going.

Carl Jung approach:

Bimodal philosophy of deep work. Four days of deep work and the rest to open time.

In this approach the minimum amount of deep work time is a complete day.

Rhythmic philosophy

Have a regular rhythm of time to go deep

Journalistic philosophy

Fit in deep work whenever you can into your schedule for

Guidelines for deep work

1. Distraction remains a destroyer of depth
2. Even when you can retreat to a spoke (hub and spoke work method) to think deeply when it is reasonable to leverage the whiteboard effect, do so

When it comes to deep work in other words consider the use of collaboration when appropriate as it can push your results to a new level

With deep work there are disciplines

1. Focus on the wildly important
2. Act on lead measures
3. Keep a compelling scorecard
4. Create a cadence of accountability

Rule 2 Embrace Boredom

The ability to concentrate intensely is a skill that must be trained

Don't take breaks from distraction take breaks instead take breaks from focus

Schedule the occasional break from focus to give into distraction.

Schedule in advance when you'll use the internet.

Point 1 this strategy works even if your job requires lots of internet use and or prompt email replies.

Point 2 regardless of how you schedule your internet blocks you must keep the time outside of these blocks completely free from internet use.

Point 3 schedule internet use at home as well as at work can further improve your concentration training.

To summarise to succeed with deep work you must rewire your brain to to become comfortable resisting distracting stimuli.

Deep work requires levels of concentration well beyond where most knowledge workers are comfortable.

Productive meditation

1. be wary of distractions and looping
2. Structure your deep thinking

Rule 3 Quite Social Media

The craftsman approach to tool selection:

Identify the core factors that determine success and happiness in you professional and personal life. Adopt a tool only if it's positive impacts on these factors substantially outweigh it negative impacts.

This is different to the 'any benefit approach to tool selection.

Apply the law of the vital few to your internet habits.

If you want to eliminate the addictive pull of entertainment sites on your time and attention, give your brain a quality alternative.

Rule 4 Drain the Shallows. 25-34 year olds thought they spend between 15-16 hours per week watching TV, they actually spend 28 hours a week.

We spend too much time on autopilot not giving much thought to what we're doing with our time. This is a problem.

Schedule every minute of your day.

The minimum amount of a time block should be 30 mins.

You can batch tasks together that are similar like email, etc

Maintain at all times a thoughtful say in what you're doing with your time going forward.

Ask yourself:

What makes sense for me to do with the time that remains?

The motivation for this strategy is the recognition that a deep work habit required that you treat your time with respect. Decide in advance what you're going to do with every minute of your workday.

Fixed schedule productivity means for example finishing your work by 17:30.

Tips

Become hard to reach

Make people who send you an email do more work

Do more work when you send or reply to emails

Don't respond to every email

Become a deep work machine

Deep work is way more powerful than most people understand.

"To leave the distracted masses to join the focused few, I'm arguing, is a transformative experience." Cal Newport

Writer Winifred Gallagher quote:

"I'll live the focused life, because it's the best kind there is."

An excellent top 5 book