

FOCUS: THE HIDDEN DRIVER OF EXCELLENCE

By Daniel Goleman
The secret to high performance and fulfilment



IS FOCUS TODAY'S SCARCEST RESOURCE?

The book Focus delves into the science of attention in all its varieties, presenting a long-overdue discussion of this little-noticed and under-rated mental asset. Here are some tips to sharpen your ability to pay attention:



HEALTHY MINDS NEED WORK

Attention is like a muscle, in that it needs to be worked out to stay strong. In the same way you lose muscle mass when you stop going to the gym, failing to work out your attention skills leads to decline.



TAKE A BREAK

Have you ever been stuck on a problem, only to have the answer come to you during a walk or a shower? Sometimes, a lack of focus can open up new pathways in the brain. Taking a break often results in greater creativity than active mental striving.



DEVELOP YOUR WILLPOWER

Anyone who lacks willpower is unlikely to knuckle down and concentrate when things get tough. Adults who demonstrated higher levels of willpower when they were children tend to be more successful and happy in their adult life. Like attention, you can train willpower.



FOCUS ON OTHERS

Successful people often know what to say and do by paying attention to the subtle cues of others. Goleman writes that to succeed in life, you need to develop empathy and manage how you pay attention to other people.



“It’s not the chatter of people around us that is the most powerful distractor, but rather the chatter of our own minds.”

THREE ACTION STEPS:

1

KNOW YOURSELF

Before you can take any action towards managing your focus, you need to know yourself. It’s impossible to work on issues you aren’t even aware of. Try to see yourself as others see you, and you will start to understand where you can improve.

2

FIND STRATEGIES

Mindfulness is one of the best strategies for staying focused. Taking a break from the thing you are trying to focus on is another. Whatever works for you, try to use your self-awareness to keep yourself on task.

3

HONE YOUR FOCUS

Focus is about paying attention to your work or study, and the world. Learn what is important around you that deserves your focus and expand your mind to include others.