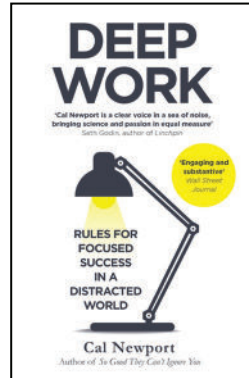




DEEP WORK



THE BOOK


Deep Work
by Cal Newport


INTRODUCTION

The concept of deep work is highly neglected in the modern workplace, but according to best-selling author Cal Newport, it is necessary to achieve great things.

Deep work is a phrase coined by Newport, and it describes the ability to focus without distraction. In a world where workers are drowned in emails, meetings and other shallow tasks, people are losing the ability to do deep work. This is a problem because it takes deep work to accomplish very difficult tasks at the highest level. The problem affects students as well because they are finding it harder and harder to focus on studying and other important tasks.

In *Deep Work*, Newport explains how professionals and students can reclaim their ability to achieve deep work. Take your output to the next level by embracing the concentration needed for deep work, and the rewards will flow.



5 BEST QUOTES

“If you want to win the war for attention, don’t try to say ‘no’ to the trivial distractions you find on the information smorgasbord; try to say ‘yes’ to the subject that arouses a terrifying longing, and let the terrifying longing crowd out everything else.”

“Idleness is not just a vacation, an indulgence or a vice; it is as indispensable to the brain as vitamin D is to the body, and deprived of it we suffer a mental affliction as disfiguring as rickets.”

“To simply wait and be bored has become a novel experience in modern life, but from the perspective of concentration training, it’s incredibly valuable.”

“Efforts to deepen your focus will struggle if you don’t simultaneously wean your mind from a dependence on distraction.”

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



7 BIG IDEAS

1. WHAT IS DEEP WORK?

Newport starts *Deep Work* with a description of Carl Jung's getaway early last century. Jung built a retreat specifically for the purpose of escaping distractions and going to a place where he could concentrate deeply on his work.

What Jung was doing, says Newport, was finding a way to focus on deep work.

Deep work is the ability to focus without distraction on a cognitively demanding task. It is difficult, and distractions will destroy it. This is why Jung built a place away from distractions.

While it's not possible to hide from the world in a literal way every day, understanding the importance of separation from distractions is key.

2. DEEP WORK IS VALUABLE

In the new economy, the highest-paid jobs tend to be knowledge jobs. The thing is, there are hundreds of people trying to get the same jobs in the same fields. You need to find a way to stand out and being able to do deep work can make a difference.

Newport outlines several examples of successful professionals in the tech field who have achieved their status through the use of deep work that set them apart and made them superstars. The ability to do deep work means you aren't just chasing your tail at work, you're actually coming up with new ideas and performing at your peak.

The same can apply to students; by being able to focus they can do more than answer basic questions. They can also give themselves the edge as they pursue further studies and careers.

3. DEEP WORK IS RARE

The reason Newport's book is necessary is that deep work is rare in the modern world.

For professionals, one of the worst culprits is email. The cultural expectation in many work environments is that all emails should be answered promptly. This means countless hours spent answering emails when real work could be getting done. Worse, many employers think that if workers aren't actively sending emails, then they are not working.

For students, there is the constant distraction of messages and social media. It makes being able to focus a near impossibility.



7 BIG IDEAS

4. DEPTH PHILOSOPHIES

There are different methods to achieve depth of work, and you will need to find the one that best suits you.

Newport outlines four different philosophies of deep work scheduling:

- **MONASTIC:** the monastic philosophy is the most intense. It means cutting yourself off from extraneous distractions for most of the time. While highly effective, this method is not practically possible for many people.
- **BIMODAL:** Bimodal is about splitting up the workday into two chunks; one for deep work and the other for shallow work that still needs doing. This method can be effective if you have the luxury of being incommunicado for a portion of every day.
- **RHYTHMIC:** The rhythmic method is the most practical for modern work and requires factoring in deep work sessions where you can throughout the day.
- **JOURNALISTIC:** The journalistic method is for more skilled deep workers. It entails switching into deep work mode for shorter periods whenever you can. This can come with time and practice.

5. MAKE FOCUS YOUR PRIORITY

Newport says, “To succeed with deep work, you must rewire your brain to be comfortable resisting distracting stimuli.”

This can be hard to do in modern society, so you need to train yourself by making focusing the primary goal and the distractions the secondary.

Newport recommends scheduling internet-free time so you are away from those intensely tempting distractions. This means that rather than eliminating distractions, you eliminate their ability to distract you.



7 BIG IDEAS

6. QUIT SOCIAL MEDIA

Saying goodbye to social media altogether is one of the best ways to avoid distraction and temptation.

Of course, this is not always possible, and Newport acknowledges that, but minimising or at least controlling your social media consumption will go a long way to encouraging deep work.

Newport suggests that you limit the pull of social media by giving your brain something more engaging to do, like structured hobbies or family time.

7. DRAIN THE SHALLOWS

By 'drain the shallows', Newport means to get rid of extraneous distractions.

The main way he suggests you do this is by altering the way you use email by these three methods:

1. MAKE PEOPLE WHO SEND YOU EMAIL DO MORE WORK: Let people know your time is valuable and have them jump through a few hoops before you use your valuable time to respond.

2. DO MORE WORK WHEN YOU SEND OR REPLY TO EMAILS: Phrase your replies very clearly so that you don't get bogged down in back-and-forth emails.

3. DON'T RESPOND: If an email is ambiguous and hard to respond to, if it is of no interest to you or if nothing good will come from replying and nothing bad from ignoring, don't respond.

**3 ACTION STEPS****1. EMBRACE BOREDOM**

Developing deep work skills takes time. It will be difficult and perhaps boring at first.

You need to push through this to train yourself to be able to perform deep work.

Rather than taking breaks from distractions to work, take breaks from focusing for distraction. Focusing should be more important than shallow distractions like emails.

2. QUIT SOCIAL MEDIA

You don't have to say goodbye to social media altogether, but release yourself from its grip. Remove it from your priorities and relegate it to specific times of day.

Social media is a killer of deep work, so the less you need to rely on it, the better.

3. DRAIN THE SHALLOWS

'Draining the shallows' is about finding ways to eliminate the unnecessary. Any way that you can filter pointless and time-wasting tasks like vague emails is worth implementing.

The less time wasted on pointless or distracting shallow work, the more time you have for deep work.

**1 KEY TAKEAWAY**

The key takeaway of Deep Work is that, with very few exceptions, deep work is necessary to achieve great success.

If you are willing to put in the effort that it takes to implement deep work so you can spend more time producing tangible content, your life will change for the better as you start to use your mind to its fullest capacity.



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Read the full book

Deep Work

by Cal Newport

Cal Newport makes the case that focus is a skill, and that distraction is quietly stealing your best work. He lays out four rules for training deep concentration. This summary captures the method; the full book gives you the research and the routines behind it.

[Get it on Amazon](#)