

Deep Work: Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World by Cal Newport (Piatkus, 2016)

Summary of Rule 1: Work Deeply chapter

Goal: To develop “routines and rituals” to maintain a state of deep concentration so that deep work “becomes a regular and significant part of your daily schedule”. There are six strategies outlined to achieve this.

Strategy 1 - Decide on your type of depth philosophy



There are different ways of working deeply, dependent on the other demands you have on your time.

- 1. Monastic.** This involves doing deep work almost all the time. It requires working on one's own or in a small group. It is also important not to have too many demands from clients or colleagues.
- 2. Bimodal.** This involves having clearly defined periods of deep work interspersed with other work. The minimum period is a whole day. The periods of deep work can vary - eg. a 4-day weekend or a whole month - or a combination of different time scales.
- 3. Rhythmic.** This involves having daily sessions of deep work scheduled for a set time each day. It is suitable for people who can't devote full days to deep work and is the most common approach.
- 4. Journalistic.** This involves deep work being scheduled whenever there is spare time available. It can be planned in advance or done when the opportunity arises. This schedule requires the most discipline.

Strategy 2 - Ritualise



It's important to develop rituals that facilitate deep work by reducing the need for decisions and making productive actions automatic.

Here are some questions that need to be answered:

- your location and how long?
- your rules for working? eg. will you stop using the internet at work?
- what resources do you need eg. Coffee, room organisation, pens.

Finding the right rituals will need experimentation.

Strategy 3 - Make grand gestures



A big change to your normal place of work indicates serious commitment to your brain. JK Rowling has written in a hotel suite and Bill Gates has gone away for a week of deep thinking in a secluded cabin.

Strategy 4 - Don't work alone



The theory of serendipitous creativity suggests that chance encounters with people can stimulate new ideas and collaborations. In addition, working with a colleague can help deep work.

Strategy 5 - Execute like a business



It is important to (i) have ambitious goals, (ii) decide on measures that will help you reach them, (iii) record these measures on a public scorecard and (iv) have a weekly review of progress and plan for the week ahead.

Strategy 6 - Be lazy



next day.

Having downtime is critical because it stimulates insights and recharges batteries. It's important to have evenings free of work concerns. Critical to this is having an evening shutdown ritual which involves recording incomplete issues and planning for the