

## Summary: Deep Work by Cal Newport

***“I build my days around a core of carefully chosen deep work, with the shallow activities I absolutely cannot avoid batched into smaller bursts at the peripheries of my schedule. Three to four hours a day, five days a week, of uninterrupted and carefully directed concentration, it turns out, can produce a lot of valuable output.” This is a quote from Cal Newport himself that gives a very good résumé of his book.***

Newport's statement says that every achievement, in any sector, comes from concentration and intense work.

Newport defines “**Deep work**” as activities in job, which are performed without any distraction, pushing your intellectual capabilities to the limit. The achievement of this situation brings new values, improves capabilities and is very hard to copy.

The author not only mentions “Deep work”, but also “**Shallow work**”, which is the complete opposite. Shallow work defines tasks that are commoditised and done under distraction. These tasks are very easy to copy and do not bring many new values, like answering to E-Mails. The more shallow work you do, the more you forget deep work. Technology, networking and social media have fragmented our attention too much.

Those who can master their focus can get higher quality output in less time. In the economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, deep work is like a superpower. We are always distracted by other tasks: we think that people who answer directly their E-Mails and are available even at 11 pm are more productive. Newport rebuts this thesis, and draws therefore the attention to different studies for this purpose. These studies prove: you can only work 4 hours a day on cognitively high demand. The rest of the day, our head needs to relax and to process data. Newport describes concentration as a muscle, which is exhausted on high demand.

### **4 advices/philosophies are given:**

- 1) No social media while working, distraction to the absolute minimum.
- 2) Retreat in a room with no distraction to work on cognitively demanding tasks (example: Bill Gates “think weeks”, where he isolates himself and does nothing but read and think big thoughts).
- 3) Most realistic idea: take 1-2 hours a day, without being available for anybody. Work intensively on one task.
- 4) Last but not least, and champions league: during the day, take consistently phases without any distraction. However, this requires you are able to be concentrated within short time.

However, what can we do about it? We can actively train ourselves: Put focused uninterrupted work at the core of what we do.

**Main ideas of the book:**

- You need to commit to deep work to achieve your full capabilities.
- Producing cognitively hard tasks quite fast are two of the most important skills in the economy of the 21th century.
- You need to focus to learn hard things quickly.
- Effort and productivity become noticeable by working out carefully and respectfully a task.
- Deep work can be developed by introducing rituals and habits in daily work life, to create unbroken concentration.

By Jenny

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