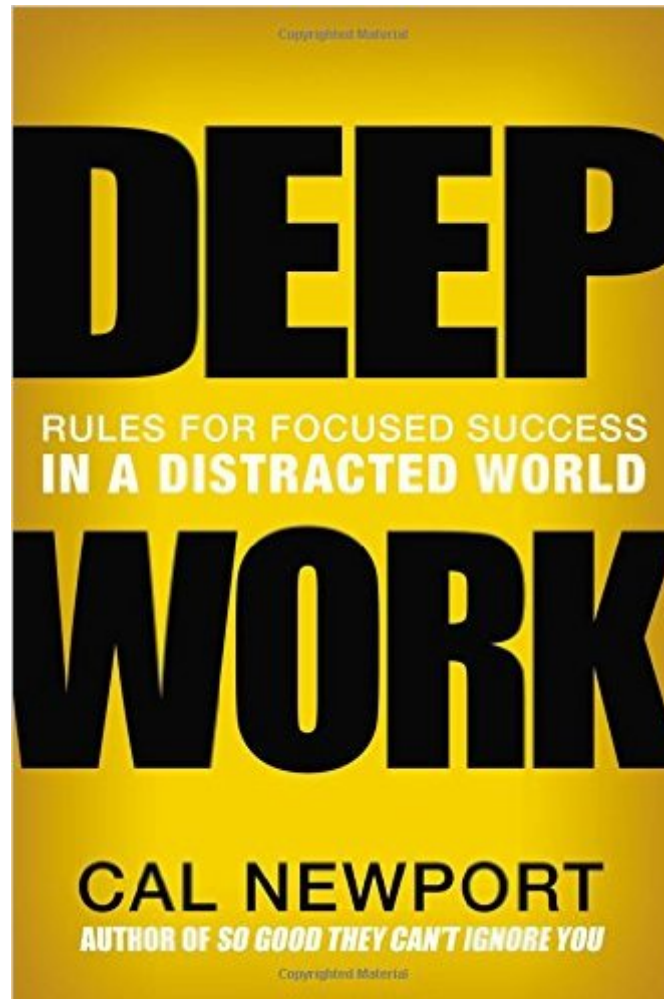


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Deep Work: Rules For Focused Success In A Distracted World



Synopsis

One of the most valuable skills in our economy is becoming increasingly rare. If you master this skill, you'll achieve extraordinary results. Deep work is the ability to focus without distraction on a cognitively demanding task. It's a skill that allows you to quickly master complicated information and produce better results in less time. Deep work will make you better at what you do and provide the sense of true fulfillment that comes from craftsmanship. In short, deep work is like a super power in our increasingly competitive twenty-first century economy. And yet, most people have lost the ability to go deep—spending their days instead in a frantic blur of e-mail and social media, not even realizing there's a better way. In *DEEP WORK*, author and professor Cal Newport flips the narrative on impact in a connected age. Instead of arguing distraction is bad, he instead celebrates the power of its opposite. Dividing this book into two parts, he first makes the case that in almost any profession, cultivating a deep work ethic will produce massive benefits. He then presents a rigorous training regimen, presented as a series of four "rules," for transforming your mind and habits to support this skill. A mix of cultural criticism and actionable advice, *DEEP WORK* takes the reader on a journey through memorable stories -- from Carl Jung building a stone tower in the woods to focus his mind, to a social media pioneer buying a round-trip business class ticket to Tokyo to write a book free from distraction in the air -- and no-nonsense advice, such as the claim that most serious professionals should quit social media and that you should practice being bored. *DEEP WORK* is an indispensable guide to anyone seeking focused success in a distracted world.

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Customer Reviews

I have generally been a fan of Cal's work, but had a mixed view on this book. TL DR: It has some good actionable steps, but with a lot of fluff about being more counter-culture and revolutionary than it is or needs to have.

The Good

1. Cal highlights actionable ways to 1) increase concentration and focus and 2) produce more work output. He specifically delineates between "shallow" low priority work and "deep" high-priority, high-payoff work and ways to identify which types of work fall into which category.
2. Cal anticipates more of the (valid) objections and nuances to his thesis than I've seen him do previously. I thought his discussions on professions like CEOs that might not be deep-work appropriate, different ways to think about what social media improves your life, and going off-schedule to pursue an insight made the book much more well-rounded and connected to life.

The Not-so-good

1. The book is written as if it's presenting "a new, flashy, grand theory of everything". It's not that. The idea of working in a deep, focused manner isn't a new one or one that would shock people (as the book's extensive citations show). But the book puts up a very intense battle against an army of straw men. I don't think you'd find anyone who disagrees with the general notion of working intensely on your priorities; it's making your life conducive to it (and getting done what you aim to get done when you sit down) that's the hard part. So the book feels more to me like ideas you'd share with friends about how to be more productive than a revolutionary new idea, but you have to wade through *pages* of why this is *life-changing* and *flashy* to get to the more useful actionable steps.
- 2.

Deep Work is the execution/tactical companion to Newport's last book, So Good They Can't Ignore You and it doesn't disappoint. These books should be taken together as a whole because they give you the WHAT, the WHY and the HOW for being an elite knowledge worker.

So Good they Can't Ignore you shows you why building valuable and rare skills, which Newport calls "career capital" is the number one most important thing for finding a job you love (not "finding your passion"). Building that capital allows you to find a job where you can have creative control over your work and more control over your time, which allows you to do "deep work," aka deliberate practice (and the 10,000 hour rule for expertise, Gladwell, Ericsson and others). There are also 2 other factors, choosing a domain or mission or project where you will have a positive impact on the world, and choosing to work with people who you like being around, which aren't covered much but Newport assumes you should be able to figure out on your own.

Summary of what you need to be So Good They Can't Ignore You

1. Rare and valuable skills (aka career capital)
2. Creative control over projects
3. Control over your time (which allows you to do deep work, virtuous cycle)
4. Work that has a positive impact on the world
5. Working with people you enjoy being with

Here's the formula:-Use deep work to learn

fast and build up rare and valuable skills.-Then apply these rare and valuable skills to the right projects so that you can build up career capital.-Then cash in the career capital to get more creative and time control over your job.

Iâ€™ve been a fan of Cal Newport for a while now. Iâ€™ve linked to his blog from mine. Iâ€™ve reviewed one of his previous books, SO GOOD THEY CANâ€™T IGNORE YOU. So it shouldnâ€™t be a surprise that when he has a new book, Iâ€™m going to grab it. And DEEP WORK doesnâ€™t disappoint. Itâ€™s short, direct, and not only provides techniques you can start using today, but it also explains why those techniques are going to have tremendous benefits in the long run. Newport defines deep work as (no spoilersâ€”you can find this definition in the sample chapter on):Professional activities performed in a state of distraction-free concentration that push your cognitive capabilities to their limit. These efforts create new value, improve your skill, and are hard to replicate. But in a world full of constant Facebook notifications, tweets, e-mail alerts, a thousand channels on top of Netflix and Hulu and prime, family, friends, pets, hobbies, and more, we live in a world that is rich in distraction and poor in deep work. Even worse, every time we give into refreshing a webpage or replying to a group text, our brain becomes wired in such a way as to make that deep-work-ready mental state harder to achieve. Therefore, at its heart, DEEP WORK is about changing how you think and how you act, so you can decrease distractions and shallow work and increase focus and deep work. Who doesnâ€™t want that? Especially in a time of new resolutions and commitments? Part One explains what deep work is, why itâ€™s so rare in todayâ€™s world, and what makes it so valuable. Part Two offers techniques to maximize deep work and minimize shallow work.

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