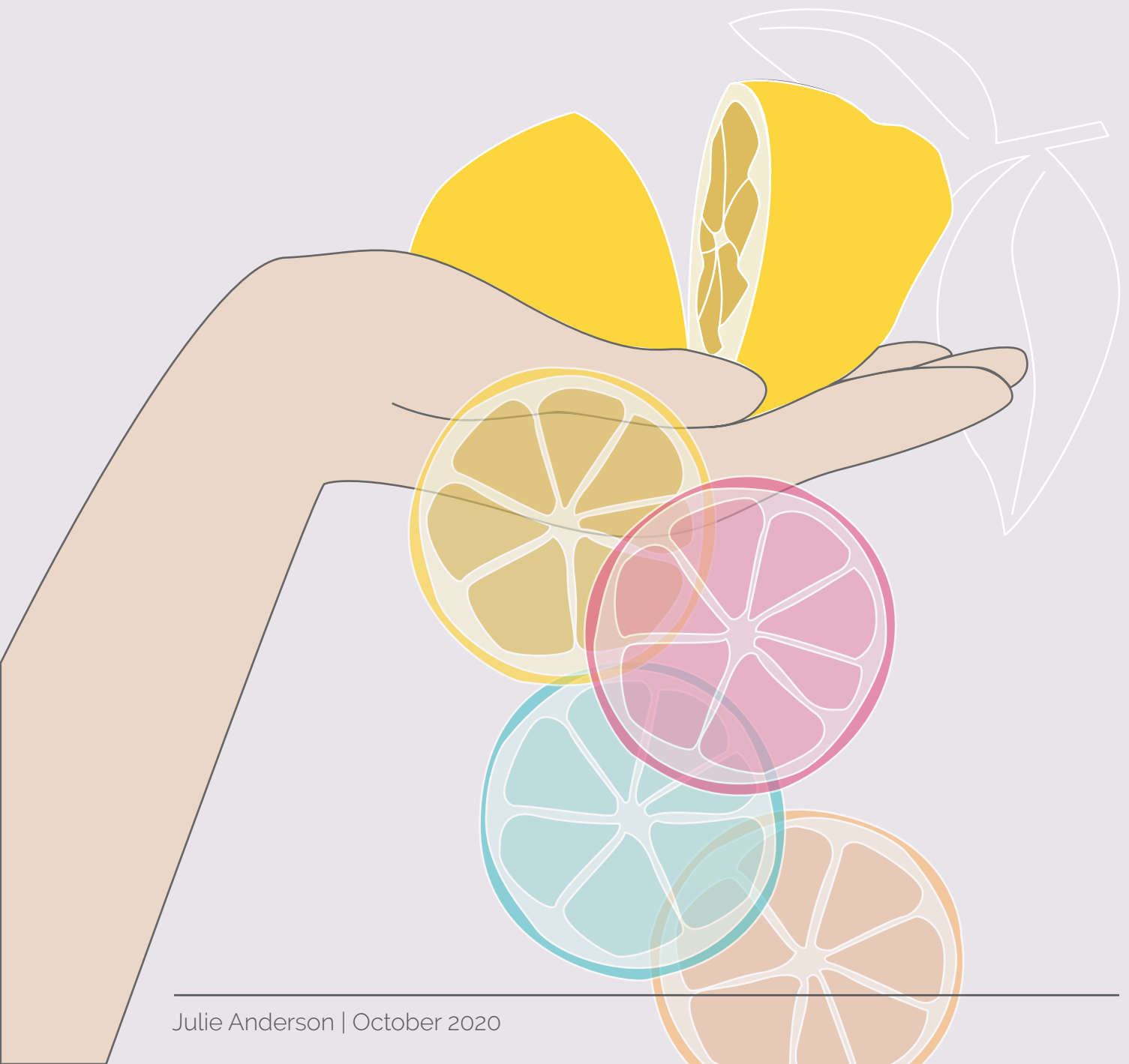


MEANINGFUL MOTIVATION:

KEEPING UP
IN THE
DISTRACTION ECONOMY



Executive Summary

Intrinsic

Motivation:

Activities are done because the work is enjoyable and brings the satisfaction and love of the task to fruition.

Meaningful motivation is the incentive to stay inspired by thoughts and actions that are valuable. Creating and developing work in the distraction economy makes it increasingly difficult to work successfully and fully, meaning the work's satisfaction decreases. With the vast advancement of technology and smart devices within the last decade, finding access to distraction has become much more comfortable.

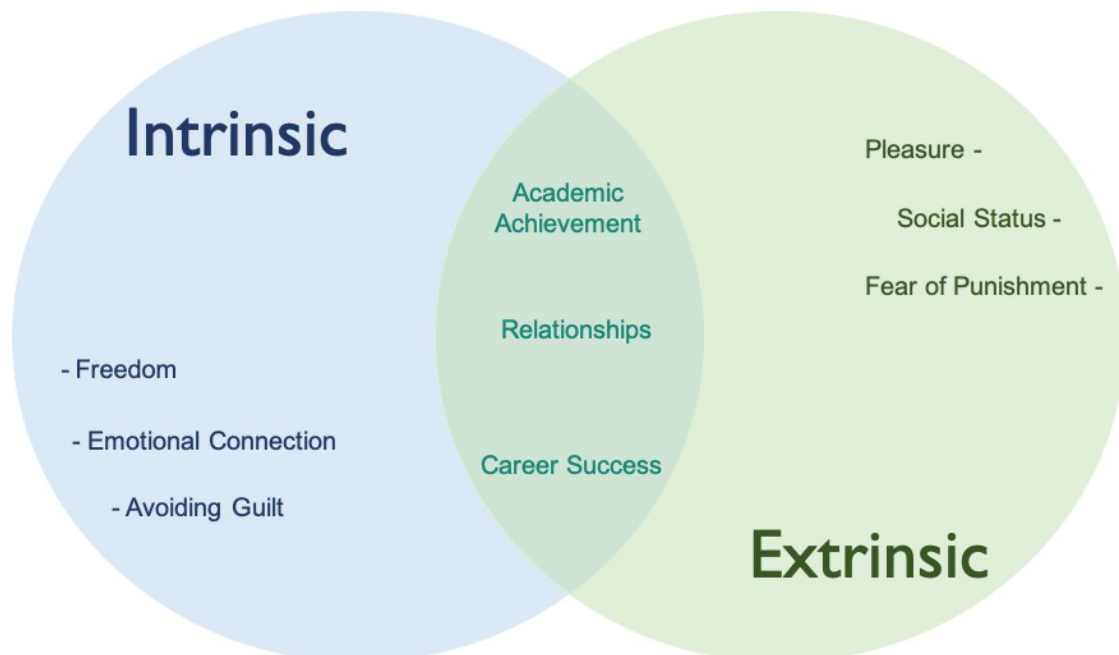
Those with busy and inspired lifestyles, or leaders looking to expand their teams' satisfaction and endurance further may find inspiring motivation difficult to keep up. Obstacles like time, constant connection, and losing values in finding meaningful work stand in the way of achieving the greatness of the inspirational work-life balance.

Through this paper, we'll talk about different kinds of motivations, the issues at hand for keeping up with motivation, an introduction to deep work, and how to take action on the ever-changing world.

Extrinsic

Motivation:

Reasons to do the work other than the joy of doing the work, such as the promise of a bonus afterward.



The Problem

What is the Distraction Economy?

The distraction economy is the act of being sucked into social media sites, games, email, and all other digital advancements that ask for attention. Smartphones have become necessities in the world today, but with that has come the constant demand that they have on just about everyone. This economy relies greatly on smartphones and smart devices that value in physical interaction has taken a toll. With distraction are the feelings that come with it: feelings of less individuality, finding less time each day, and fulfillment being hard to obtain.

Workspace Evolution

As the world and technology advance, the way work happens follows suit for change. Open workspaces that promote collaborative environments so their employees can serendipitously learn from each other, as well as instant messaging, have been incorporated for faster and "more effective" work, similarly to Facebook's 2012 plans for the "largest open floor plan in the world." In addition to these novel incorporations, businesses have increasingly valued multitasking within their employees so that they can manage multiple projects at a time.

Multitasking is often a skill listed on job postings of employers looking for in their potential employees. This incorporation of multitasking in the workplace actually leads to attention residue, making work less elite, and coming off as if the person doing the project was distracted. However, the workplace's concept continues to advance towards distractedness by working on multiple projects simultaneously and communicating with others as much as possible, making work less valuable. Despite the added distractedness that comes with these work environments, there's no easily accessible way to determine if the open concepts, instant messaging, and multitasking objectives negatively affect individual contributions because this is difficult to measure, which defines the metric black hole.

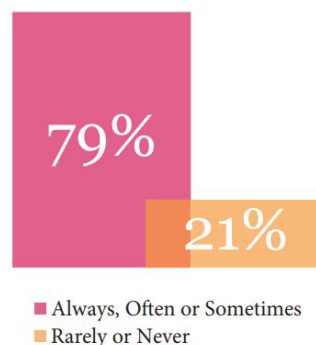
Attention Residue:

An effect that comes with multiple projects or moving quickly from one project to another. The residue leftover from a previous task is often passed onto the next job, making the quality of work less valuable.

Metric Black Hole:

An area in our system that makes it hard to measure individual contributions.

**HOW OFTEN ARE YOU DISTRACTED OR
FIND IT DIFFICULT TO CONCENTRATE
BECAUSE OF YOUR WORK
ENVIRONMENT?**



Source: <https://www.mhanational.org/sites/default/files/-Mind%20the%20Workplace%20-%20MHA%20Workplace%20Health%20Survey%202017%20FINAL%209.13.pdf>

Smart Technology

In 2007, Apple's iPhone first made it to stores for the masses. Incredibly quickly, the smart objects were seamlessly incorporated into our society, almost as if they had always been there. These devices so vastly became everything needed within one gadget: contacts and addresses, music, GPS, and even money. Because of the rapid increase in technology and social media, Silicon Valley has discovered ways to keep users going back to their devices and Apps called "Brain Hacking." In short, big tech companies are attempting to wire individuals' brains by algorithms created for each person to keep users addicted to the networks.

Technology's Effects

With the advancement of smartphones and additional smart devices like Android phones and iPads, the younger generations have become more affected by the regular use and normalcy that comes with it. The new way that young individuals' use their time is significantly different from those of earlier generations, who would spend time outside and interact in person for most of their time. Now, smartphones make it easy to stay home and communicate with others on their devices while losing most in-person contact with friends and family members. Though the amount of time spent on these devices isn't necessarily what's to worry about, it's more so how they're used and how much control a person has. Control is becoming much more difficult due to the increase in algorithms and attention grabbers that Silicon Valley has incorporated.

While the ease of use and accessibility to smartphones are prevalent, this has also advanced the feeling of wanting this distraction. When sitting on a bus or waiting in line at the grocery store, finding the content on the smart devices has become even more appealing, feeding boredom. The short-lived entertainment that comes from the technology that lives in jean and sweatshirt pockets is hard to resist, and likely the desire to fight it isn't there



Deep Work

What is Deep Work?

Deep Work: Rules for Focused Success in A Distracted World is a book written by author and computer science professor at Georgetown University, Cal Newport. Through the reading, Newport diligently describes examples, scenarios, rules, and tips for a thorough understanding of the subject.

To indulge in deep work is to use distracted-free concentration to push cognitive abilities to its limits, creating innovative and challenging to replicate work. In contrast, there's also shallow work, which is nearly deep work's downfall. Shallow work requires non cognitively demanding work, performed while distracted, and is easy to replicate.

Deep Work: A Scenario

John is an entrepreneur and is his own boss. He owns a business that sells home goods and has 26 employees, including sales, designers, product and account managers, and marketing departments. A year ago, he struggled with juggling the tasks of owning his business, being the main point of contact for presidential issues, and managing his team while having a good work-life balance. Within the year, John discovered a new way to incorporate all aspects of his daily tasks while addressing the core responsibilities first and foremost. By doing this, he could end his day on a more positive note and spend time with his family and friends.

John built a shed in his backyard meant to be a space that he could go to focus. He decided to integrate a routine where every morning for the first three hours of his workday, he goes to his shed, without his smartphone and other smart devices besides his laptop so that contacting him is not an option during that time. For those first hours, John works without distraction and can focus on the most essential tasks at hand. Once those three hours are up, he then uses the rest of his day addressing issues or questions brought on by his employees or retailers. John learned that he could not solve all problems and trained the right employees to solve simpler complications at hand, where then only the major ones would be brought to his attention.

Shallow Work: A Scenario

Jane works for a company as a senior software engineer, where her main responsibilities are to develop operating systems and commercial software packages. While her main tasks are essential, most of her work days are spent in meetings and responding quickly to email and instant messages from employees and clients.

By the end of each day, she's left to scrape up what she can with her primary duties vastly, but feels burnt out from using her energy elsewhere. She often works over hours because most of her time goes to less critical activities, and she takes a longer time to complete the essential responsibilities at the end of the day because she feels so drained.

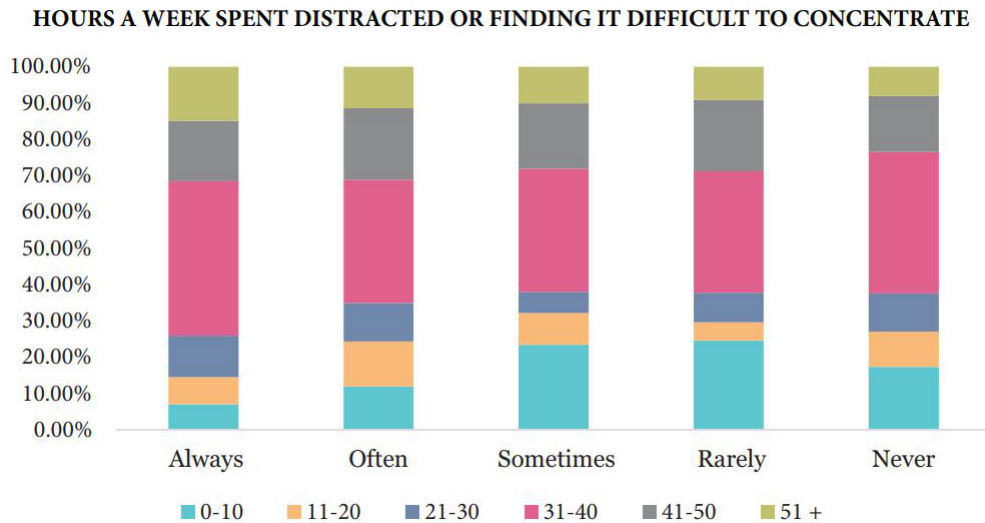
Deep Work:

The act of distracted-free concentration, which can create new and unrepeatable value to content in this world..

Shallow Work:

Logistic-style knowledge work with not much need for cognitive ability, which doesn't add much value to this world's content.



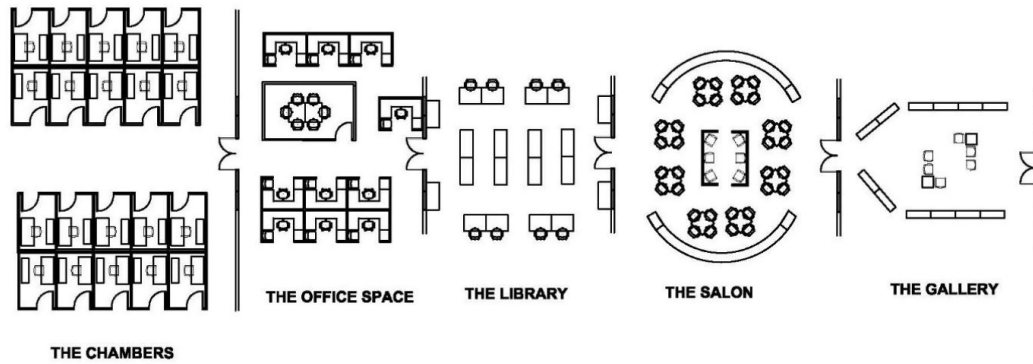


The scenarios depicted are to illustrate an image of how deep work and shallow work are different. While shallow work like meetings and emails are essential, according to Cal Newport, deep work is valuable, rare, and meaningful; and it is necessary to integrate into the shallow work life like Jane's.

Eudaimonia for Deep Work: A Visual

The Eudaimonia Machine is a rectangular building with five rooms and no hallways, meaning to get to any place within the structure. A person would need to go through each room to get to the next, with the intent that each room would trigger a different mental state. This concept of the machine was invented by David Dewane, an architect, entrepreneur, educator, and journalist. The idea, inspired by Newport's deep work concept, and the term "eudaimonia," describing the highest state of flourishing, was made to put a person in the condition necessary for deep work.

- 1. The Gallery.** A space that acts as an introductory room with examples of work produced within the building. The area is a means for anyone's inspiration.
- 2. The Salon.** A social space with a coffee bar, full bar, seating, and WIFI, meant for discussion and argumentation.
- 3. The library.** "The hard drive" space with a record of everything created within the area, copiers, and scanners helps collect information.
- 4. The Office.** A space with a conference table, whiteboard, and some other desks or cubicles. Typically meant for some of the shallow-type collaboration and thoughts.
- 5. The Deep Work Chambers.** 6'x10' rooms that are soundproof, meant for uninterrupted work and total focus. Dewane mentions that the process should be go-minute intervals of being in and out of these rooms.



Office Layout of the Eudaimonia Machine

SOURCE: <https://blog.fentress.com/blog/the-eudaimonia-machine-a-space-concept-for-the-21st-century>

Deep Work Philosophies

Philosophies to achieve deep work are necessary and should integrate into specific work or personal circumstances to succeed. While schedules can be busy and fitting in all professional and personal work, goals, family, friends, and others, these philosophies are meant for a fluid transition of deep work integrated into that life.

The monastic philosophy. This philosophy encourages maximizing deep efforts by removing shallow obligations. An excellent example to understand this is by making a tremendous and impactful change on routines - such as deleting email altogether when work can be justified without it.

The bimodal philosophy. This philosophy asks to dissect time with stretches for deep pursuits, and the remaining time is open to everyone and can also be shallow. Large stretches of time can be split by indulging in deep work for a month, and then the next month would be meant for shallow activities.

The rhythmic philosophy. Using this strategy is the easiest way to implement deep work in daily life. An example of this is as simple as setting aside time each day specific for deep work.

The journalistic philosophy. Doing the deep work needed to complete a project can be done at any given moment, possibly going as far as socializing with friends, then actively working away from them, then back with friends after a few hours.

Deep Work Hypothesis:

Deep work is becoming rarer and more valuable, and anyone with this skill who makes it their core of work and life will thrive.

Come Out On Top:

How to Effectively Use Deep Work

There are many benefits to using deep work, and they will show themselves significantly once getting started. Incorporating deep work into practice personally and professionally helps to grow speed, accuracy, quality, as well as desirability and motivation.

Deep work is meaningful for well-being, particularly for busy and inspired lifestyles or leaders looking to expand their team's further satisfaction and endurance. A few justified arguments for depth are neurological, psychological, and philosophical. Neurologically, where attention is given and choosing to focus on a subject's positive areas promotes concentration in the most effective places. Psychologically, when a person is in a state of work where they can have goals, challenges, and structure makes them happier. Philosophically, craftsmanship comes with the work, as long as there's meaning and care put into it.

Four strategies to accomplish deep work

While using one of the deep work philosophies, monastic, bimodal, rhythmic, or journalistic, integrating the four strategies will encourage the neurological, psychological, and philosophical arguments for deep work.

Identifying Values, Goals, and Their Support

Personal and professional values, goals, and the activities to support them are vital in understanding if motivation will come to completion. Acknowledging these elements also helps to identify the shallow obligations that are less important and, therefore, should be modified.

Value Experimentation

Values contribute to the neurological effects of happiness, sadness, pain, and so on. Understanding one's values can go a long way for determining intrinsic motivation and if a task will give satisfaction. In hand, understanding one's values can benefit not only the individual but a team as well, in recognizing if values correlate or contrast. While most may believe they have values already identified, it's possible that the values chosen don't particularly match how a person relates or acts in a given situation; it's also possible that values change over time as a person experiences more growth. Reflection and experimentation is a principal way to implement values into everyday living, but more essential in this context: implement values into the craftsman work.



Completing a [values worksheet](#) is an experiment for reflecting the values a person believes they hold and helps to refine them for implementation. Once the worksheet is finished, and values clarified, it's also essential to sort them out into verbs to use in daily situations. Rooting work in values, encourages the neurological argument of choosing to focus on the positive and meaningful actions that come from the values.

"If we don't approach situations with values that are right for us, it's hard to feel good about what we do."
- Joe Edelman

Friendships	Motivation	Risk Taking	Inspiration	Balance
maintain meaningful friendships	pursue what brings motivation	take risks when possible	multiply inspiration	support balance

Goals and Activities

Recognizing goals and the activities that support those goals aids in identifying the necessary and unnecessary actions to achieve them. The purpose is to understand where high-level priorities are in personal and professional settings and to use the activities to support those goals. It's encouraged to have two to three goals about specific life values, such as being a friend, family member, professional, etc.

<p>Goal: A specific and prominent objective without giving too much detail, such as a regular task like building credibility in a particular field.</p>
<p>Activities that support the goal: Two to three activities that will significantly contribute to the goal listed above, such as deeply researching and analyzing in the specified field subject.</p>

After determining the goals and activities, the next essential step is to identify shallow activities that don't support the goals and refine them. Many identifiable shallow activities live in the distraction economy, where attention goes to the internet and low entertainment value from social networks. A good opportunity at this point would be to pinpoint where distractions come from and how to reduce them. For example, If a social media App is giving too much distraction to get a task done, something needs to be done - possibly deleting it off the device.

Deliberate Practice

Deliberate practice is another term Cal Newport originated with, which is when attention is focused on a specific skill or idea to master. Additionally, receiving feedback to correct the approach and keep the effort where it's most productive.

Rank Projects

Continuous ideas and tasks are common and can be challenging to manage, mainly when there appears to be an equal break between shallow and deep activities. Projects and tasks can rank in order by making a list and distinguishing the amount of value and depth needed within each one. Whichever project ranks highest in depth should remain the most important as it will take the most cognitive ability to complete.

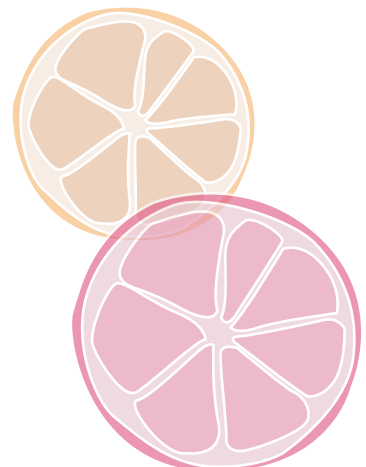
Deadlines also make a difference in ranking projects. If a task involves less depth but has a sooner time limit, the list can be rearranged. Allowing separate time for depth and shallow work is helpful to lay structure to the projects at hand.

One at a Time

Working on one task simultaneously proves essential for developing skills and mastery of a subject, preventing attention residue. The dedication to one job at a given time helps to keep the focus on the best outcome. Time used to master one task aids in building the next one's skills. Maintaining focus and practicing the most productive approach will also lead to turning jobs around faster.

Deliberate Practice:

Where attention is focused on a specific skill or idea to master and receive feedback to correct approach and keep attention where it's most productive.



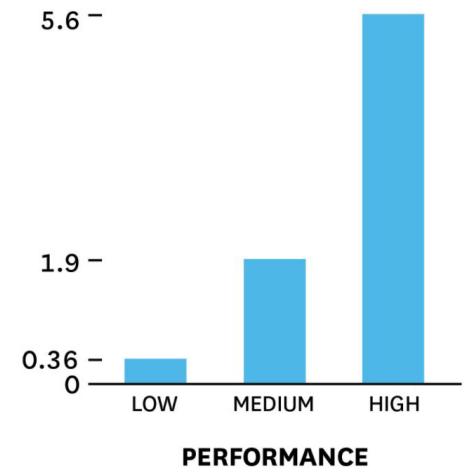
Benefits of Critiques

Resources can be available through networking, outsourcing, and asking questions. With building mastery comes getting feedback and refining work for the ultimate conclusion to a project. Critiques can be brutal, but promote growth and accelerate intrinsic or extrinsic motivation on completing jobs.

Making changes to processes or how work gets done is another potential benefit to receiving feedback and asking questions. How jobs are approached should update according to times, trends, and technologies as change resumes, and adapting is critical.

A LITTLE CRITICISM GOES A LONG WAY

Top performing teams give each other more than five positive comments for every criticism.



SOURCE: <https://hbr.org/2013/03/the-ideal-praise-to-criticism>

Break the Distraction Compulsion

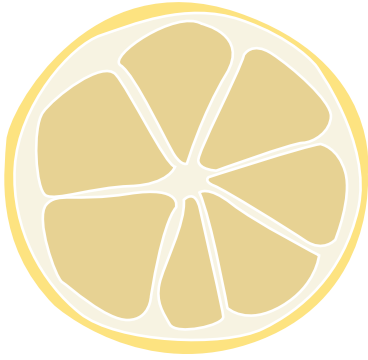
A distraction-free workspace is part of the definition of deep work, so being distracted is not an option. Freedom from distraction includes turning off or removing smart devices from the space. Also, having an enclosed area where being reached is almost not an option, similar to John's shed in the deep work scenario; however, this can be as simple as a home office space. Access to internet options, such as email and social networking sites, should be removed. Choosing not to access such examples may be easier said than done; this is where Apps like Freedom may come in handy.

Another good practice is to identify time suckers, particularly on the smart-phone. Social media was designed to be addictive, and understanding the repercussions of being on the device(s) and network(s) is primary.

The Social Sabbatical

Taking part in a social sabbatical is a big commitment. A social sabbatical is an extended period, like a month, going without the internet or a particular networking site. The experiment's purpose is to understand afterward how necessary the removed subject is, correlating to deep work. Documenting the data helps identify specific pain points of the topic at hand and issues that need a resolution. The data can also help assess if the subject in question is necessary - possibly justifying a permanent removal.

A shorter and much easier quest to accomplish is a digital detox, which is a more frequent day to week-long interval of removing any cyber substance. Like the sabbatical, the digital detox documentation can also help analyze the importance of the topic, while being less intense.



Whatever the choice for the course of action, temporary to possible permanent removal of a distraction source is essential in determining its necessity. The time without the app or internet also provokes more thought into leisure time, making more flow for structured hobbies or other endeavors that continue to get pushed aside. By having an almost extended time, values can become more invested, and tasks that have more meaning can become accomplished, resulting in more fulfillment.

Make Time for Distraction

In contrast to removing distracting smart devices from the vicinity of work areas, another routinized experiment can take its place or fit into a schedule differently. Planning for timed distraction is a beneficial way to feed the distraction compulsion, while still having the time for depth. Having disruptions and the feeling to be social in the distraction economy has become increasingly craved, and removing that craving entirely is more challenging to achieve.

Setting up times, for example, in fifteen-minute intermissions, say every two hours, can help the brain realize that it will soon have it when it wants that distraction. This means that the distraction will be more comfortable to ignore because the brain knows it will happen later.

Schedule Each Day

Scheduling each day at the start of each morning is beneficial to ensure that what needs to get done is done. The schedule adds psychological arguments for deep work that uplifts meaning through structure. While plans can easily change and modify throughout the day, managing the schedule with updates is acceptable and encouraged. If a sudden insight happens through the day which proves to be much more paramount, schedules can be diminished for the day, giving a sense of freedom from the plans.

Psychology Practices and Building Routines

Routines and practices also help to add structure to days, projects, and time. Like the deep work philosophies that aid in incorporating deep work into daily lives, routines keep the days consistent, so practices don't get lost. A chunking process is a psychological tool to divide large pieces of information or jobs into smaller sections, promotes the feeling of accomplishment that can spread over several days or weeks. While chunking is well known for its memory advancement, it also advances the ability to get tasks done in a timely and less stressful manner. Adding plans to each day using the chunking method would help keep schedules on track.

Another beneficial daily process is referred to as the Seinfeld strategy, a strategy developed by comedian Jerry Seinfeld on expanding jokes. His method involves a small but significant mission to complete each day, using a calendar to mark off when the task is done. Identifying a short and straightforward job into each day helps advance the deep work jobs at hand. Visually marking it off is an excellent indicator to the brain that the structure is succeeding.

Meditative Breaks

While working on a project, breaks add usefulness to that project. Breaks help give the brain time to rejuvenate itself and return to the job with fresh insight.

Aside from regular breaks like eating lunch, meditative breaks have a different composition. These breaks encourage making time to be occupied physically, but not mentally, such as walking, biking, showering, etc. in a non-busy place. During the time occupied physically, it's required that the project still inhabits the mind. By actually taking a break from work, using the fresh mind to incorporate new ideas increases professional productivity instead of taking time away from work.

Ending the Workday

Another one of Newport's terms: fixed-schedule productivity, is a firm goal of ending the workday at a particular time, and then looking back to determine what of the time spent was truly necessary. To achieve fixed-schedule productivity, a person must set their limits on a time or a certain amount of hours to be finished working and then do this each day. Looking back to Jane's scenario, where she often worked over hours to get the meaningful work done after a full day of shallow work, this practice has significant efforts to alter this.

"Once everyone has less time to get their stuff done, they respect that time even more."

- Cal Newport

By following the strategies above and focusing more time for depth and less on shallow work, fixed-schedule productivity can successfully be incorporated, and add satisfaction without the burnt-out brain. In addition to refining the shallow work and awarding more time to depth, the fixed-schedule productivity also encourages working more effectively by knowing time is limited. Having a specific end to any task can raise the intensity of work and result in longer days for other meaningful jobs that support those high-level goals.

Once that time comes to stop working, a psychological shut down at the end of the day adds extra value to the remaining and following day. Adding a ritual by tidying up what was completed, what wasn't accomplished, and how to achieve those at a later time would promote effective thought to shut down. Doing this shutdown ritual will create an easier transition from work to another mindset, leaving more peacefully and having more prominent days.

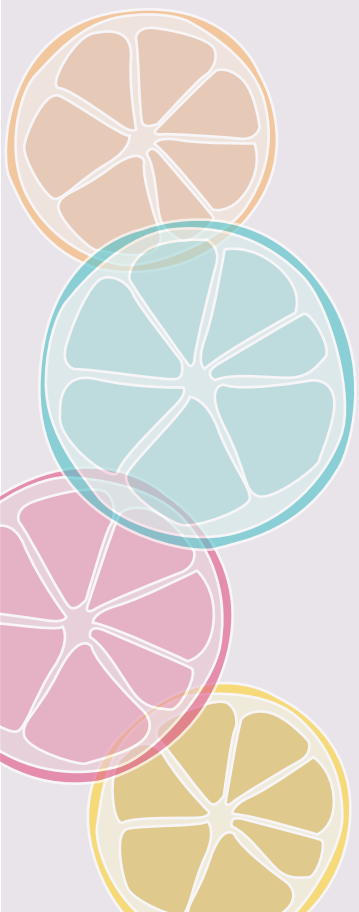
Keep The Motivation Going

Using deep work while also implementing deliberate practice is beneficial when on the quest to motivation and producing successful and meaningful work. The purpose is to stay motivated and achieve the end goal; to be a craftsman in creation.

Following the steps for intense depth that develops an elite worker, and breaking the desire for distraction will help acquire meaningful motivation. Keeping up with the distraction economy is essential in adapting with it, and overcoming it.

While the distraction economy is prevalent and likely won't go away any time soon, it needs to be understood that social networking sites add value depending on the subject and individual accessing those sites, but there also comes an understanding that they are not always a friend. Therefore, it's best if moderation to the digital realm is applied.

Once the steps have been implemented, it's important to continue to use them. A break in the cycle can be detrimental as the addiction to distraction doesn't disappear; it just becomes controlled.



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