

- A 2012 McKinsey study found that the average knowledge worker now spends more than 60 percent of the workweek engaged in electronic communication and Internet searching, with close to 30 percent of a worker's time dedicated to reading and answering e-mail alone.
- Our work culture's shift toward the shallow (whether you think it's philosophically good or bad) is exposing a massive economic and personal opportunity for the few who recognize the potential of resisting this trend and prioritizing depth—an opportunity that, not too long ago, was leveraged by a bored young consultant from Virginia named Jason Benn.
- To remain valuable in our economy, therefore, you must master the art of quickly learning complicated things. This task requires deep work. If you don't cultivate this ability, you're likely to fall behind as technology advances.
- Deep work is so important that we might consider it, to use the phrasing of business writer Eric Barker, "the superpower of the 21st century."
- This type of fierce concentration permeated the atmosphere during my student years. Not surprisingly, I soon developed a similar commitment to depth.
- 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.
- In a seminal 1981 paper, the economist Sherwin Rosen worked out the mathematics behind these "winner-take-all" markets.
- Hearing a succession of mediocre singers does not add up to a single outstanding performance
- A venture capitalist in today's economy can fund a company like Instagram, which was eventually sold for a billion dollars, while employing only thirteen people. When else in history could such a small amount of labor be involved in such a large amount of value?
- In this new economy, three groups will have a particular advantage: those who can work well and creatively with intelligent machines, those who are the best at what they do, and those with access to capital.
- If you don't produce, you won't thrive—no matter how skilled or talented you are.
- In a 2009 paper, titled, intriguingly, "Why Is It So Hard to Do My Work?," Leroy introduced an effect she called attention residue.
- when you switch from some Task A to another Task B, your attention doesn't immediately follow—a residue of your attention remains stuck thinking about the original task.
- We encourage people to stay out in the open because we believe in serendipity—and people walking by each other teaching new things," Dorsey explained.

- The Principle of Least Resistance: In a business setting, without clear feedback on the impact of various behaviors to the bottom line, we will tend toward behaviors that are easiest in the moment.
- Assuming the trends outlined here continue, depth will become increasingly rare and therefore increasingly valuable.
- The thesis of this final chapter in Part 1, therefore, is that a deep life is not just economically lucrative, but also a life well lived.
- Gallagher set out to better understand the role that attention—that is, what we choose to focus on and what we choose to ignore—plays in defining the quality of our life.
- the skillful management of attention is the sine qua non of the good life and the key to improving virtually every aspect of your experience.
- As Gallagher summarizes: “Who you are, what you think, feel, and do, what you love—is the sum of what you focus on.”
- A workday driven by the shallow, from a neurological perspective, is likely to be a draining and upsetting day, even if most of the shallow things that capture your attention seem harmless or fun.
- In short, I’ll live the focused life, because it’s the best kind there
- Free time, on the other hand, is unstructured, and requires much greater effort to be shaped into something that can be enjoyed.
- To build your working life around the experience of flow produced by deep work is a proven path to deep satisfaction.
- Craftsmanship, Dreyfus and Kelly argue in their book’s conclusion, provides a key to reopening a sense of sacredness in a responsible manner.
- “The purpose of the deep work chamber is to allow for total focus and uninterrupted work flow,” Dewane explains. He imagines a process in which you spend ninety minutes inside, take a ninety-minute break, and repeat two or three times—at which point your brain will have achieved its limit of concentration for the day.
- You have a finite amount of willpower that becomes depleted as you use it.
- The key to developing a deep work habit is to move beyond good intentions and add routines and rituals to your working life designed to minimize the amount of your limited willpower necessary to transition into and maintain a state of unbroken concentration.
- Email is a wonderful thing for people whose role in life is to be on top of things. But not for me; my role is to be on the bottom of things.
- The productivity equation is a non-linear one, in other words. This accounts for why I am a bad correspondent and why I very rarely accept speaking engagements. If I organize my life in such a way that I get lots of long, consecutive, uninterrupted time-chunks, I can write novels.

But as those chunks get separated and fragmented, my productivity as a novelist drops spectacularly.

- On the other hand, if you're inside this pool—someone whose contribution to the world is discrete, clear, and individualized\*—then you should give this philosophy serious consideration, as it might be the deciding factor between an average career and one that will be remembered.

- the rhythmic philosophy. This philosophy argues that the easiest way to consistently start deep work sessions is to transform them into a simple regular habit. The goal, in other words, is to generate a rhythm for this work that removes the need for you to invest energy in deciding if and when you're going to go deep.

- Isaacson was methodic: Any time he could find some free time, he would switch into a deep work mode and hammer away at his book.

- In a New York Times column on the topic, David Brooks summarizes this reality more bluntly: “[Great creative minds] think like artists but work like accountants.”

- (As Nietzsche said: “It is only ideas gained from walking that have any worth

- the grand gesture. The concept is simple: By leveraging a radical change to your normal environment, coupled perhaps with a significant investment of effort or money, all dedicated toward supporting a deep work task, you increase the perceived importance of the task.

- The dominant force is the psychology of committing so seriously to the task at hand.

- Jack Dorsey justified the open layout of the Square headquarters by explaining: “We encourage people to stay out in the open because we believe in serendipity—and people walking by each other teaching new things.”

- Separate your pursuit of serendipitous encounters from your efforts to think deeply and build on these inspirations.

- It's often straightforward to identify a strategy needed to achieve a goal, but what trips up companies is figuring out how to execute the strategy once identified.

- Lead measures, on the other hand, “measure the new behaviors that will drive success on the lag measures.”

- lead measures turn your attention to improving the behaviors you directly control in the near future that will then have a positive impact on your long-term goals.

- When I shifted to tracking deep work hours, suddenly these measures became relevant to my day-to-day: Every hour extra of deep work was immediately reflected in my tally.

- The 4DX framework is based on the fundamental premise that execution is more difficult than strategizing.

- 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 ... it is, paradoxically, necessary to getting any work done.

- Dijksterhuis's team isolated this effect by giving subjects the information needed for a complex decision regarding a car purchase. Half the subjects were told to think through the information and then make the best decision. The other half were distracted by easy puzzles after they read the information, and were then put on the spot to make a decision without having had time to consciously deliberate. The distracted group ended up performing better.

- A shutdown habit, therefore, is not necessarily reducing the amount of time you're engaged in productive work, but is instead diversifying the type of work you deploy.

- Another key commitment for succeeding with this strategy is to support your commitment to shutting down with a strict shutdown ritual that you use at the end of the workday to maximize the probability that you succeed.

- The concept of a shutdown ritual might at first seem extreme, but there's a good reason for it: the Zeigarnik effect. This effect, which is named for the experimental work of the early-twentieth-century psychologist Bluma Zeigarnik, describes the ability of incomplete tasks to dominate our attention.

- So we have scales that allow us to divide up people into people who multitask all the time and people who rarely do, and the differences are remarkable. People who multitask all the time can't filter out irrelevancy. They can't manage a working memory. They're chronically distracted. They initiate much larger parts of their brain that are irrelevant to the task at hand ... they're pretty much mental wrecks.

- You're justified in using a network tool if you can identify any possible benefit to its use, or anything you might possibly miss out on if you don't use it.

- The notion that identifying some benefit is sufficient to invest money, time, and attention in a tool is near laughable to people in his trade.

- The Craftsman Approach to Tool Selection: Identify the core factors that determine success and happiness in your professional and personal life. Adopt a tool only if its positive impacts on these factors substantially outweigh its negative impacts. Notice that this craftsman approach to tool selection stands in opposition to the any-benefit approach. Whereas the any-benefit mind-set identifies any potential positive impact as justification for using a tool, the craftsman variant requires that these positive impacts affect factors at the core of what's important to you and that they outweigh the negatives.

- The Law of the Vital Few\*: In many settings, 80 percent of a given effect is due to just 20 percent of the possible causes.

- you both should and can make deliberate use of your time outside work,

- Fewer official working hours helps squeeze the fat out of the typical workweek. Once everyone has less time to get their stuff done, they respect that time even more. People

become stingy with their time and that's a good thing. They don't waste it on things that just don't matter. When you have fewer hours you usually spend them more wisely.

- 37signals' experiments highlight an important reality: The shallow work that increasingly dominates the time and attention of knowledge workers is less vital than it often seems in the moment. For most businesses, if you eliminated significant amounts of this shallowness, their bottom line would likely remain unaffected.

- The implication is that once you've hit your deep work limit in a given day, you'll experience diminishing rewards if you try to cram in more. Shallow work, therefore, doesn't become dangerous until after you add enough to begin to crowd out your bounded deep efforts for the day.

- On some days, you might rewrite your schedule half a dozen times. Don't despair if this happens. Your goal is not to stick to a given schedule at all costs; it's instead to maintain, at all times, a thoughtful say in what you're doing with your time going forward—even if these decisions are reworked again and again as the day unfolds.

- How long would it take (in months) to train a smart recent college graduate with no specialized training in my field to complete this task?

- call this commitment fixed-schedule productivity, as I fix the firm goal of not working past a certain time, then work backward to find productivity strategies that allow me to satisfy this declaration. I've practiced fixed-schedule productivity happily for more than half a decade now, and it's been crucial to my efforts to build a productive professional life centered on deep work. In

- I, too, am incredibly cautious about my use of the most dangerous word in one's productivity vocabulary: "yes." It takes a lot to convince me to agree to something that yields shallow work.

- If you have an offer, opportunity, or introduction that might make my life more interesting, e-mail me at [interesting \[at\] calnewport.com](mailto:interesting[at]calnewport.com). For the reasons stated above, I'll only respond to those proposals that are a good match for my schedule and interests.

- When it comes to e-mail, they believed, it's the sender's responsibility to convince the receiver that a reply is worthwhile.

- Nothing really good would happen if you did respond and nothing really bad would happen if you didn't.

- This tip can be uncomfortable at first because it will cause you to break a key convention currently surrounding e-mail: Replies are assumed, regardless of the relevance or appropriateness of the message.

- As the author Tim Ferriss once wrote: "Develop the habit of letting small bad things happen. If you don't, you'll never find time for the life-changing big things."

- The approach suggested here responds aggressively to both issues—you send fewer e-mails and ignore those that aren't easy to process—and by doing so will significantly weaken the grip your inbox maintains over your time and attention.