

DEEP WORK

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. **Deep work is valuable, rare, and meaningful.** It's becoming increasingly rare at exactly the same time it is becoming increasingly valuable in our economy. The few who cultivate this skill at their core will thrive.
2. **To thrive master hard things and produce at an elite level in terms of quality and speed.** Those that will reap a disproportionate amount of the benefits of the Intelligent Machine Age are:
 - a. **The High-Skilled Workers:** great oracular ability + skilled with intelligent machines.
 - b. **The Superstars:** the best at what they do, sought after and compensated like-wise.
 - c. **The Owners:** those with large amounts of excess capital to invest.
3. **Distracted masses** → **focused few:** deliberate practice * time = expert performance
 - a. Work on single tasks with your full concentration, free from distraction.
 - b. Put hard bounds on attention and time dedicated to certain tasks. Reduce task-switching.
 - c. Impose artificial limits on work tasks and days to boost productivity.
4. **Be irresponsible and say 'No'.** When approached with shallow work, make a clean break without consolations.

TOP QUOTES

1. *The best moments usually occur when a person's body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile.* - Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi
2. *A wheel is not noble but it's shaping can be.* [91]

THE RULES

1. **Work deeply.**
 - a. Our willpower is depleted the more we use it. Utilize routines and rituals to minimize demands.
 - b. How to work: ban the internet, maintain a metric (ie. words per 20mins), and/or leverage grand gestures (ie. Rowling renting a lavish hotel room to finish the last Harry Potter).
2. **Embrace boredom.**
 - a. Take a walk and think deeply about a problem.
3. **Quit social media.**
 - a. Adopt a tool only if its positive impacts far outweigh its negatives → does this tool offer substantially positive, negative, or little impact? Act accordingly.
 - b. Apply Pareto's principle and focus exclusively on the top 2-3 activities that draw you closer to your goal (ie. 4.0 from CUNY SPS → assignments / practice problems and building a project portfolio).
4. **Drain the shallows.**
 - a. Start the day by scheduling it out in 30min time chunk blocks to capture tasks and priorities.
 - b. Determine deep v. shallow tasks and measure time spent on each. Aim to bring the deep work to ~4hrs/day and the ratio to about 1:1 for an 8 hr day (ie. 4 deep, 4 shallow).
 - c. Practice fixed schedule productivity: don't work after 5:30. Work backward from this time and find productive strategies to meet it.