



How To Focus On Things Others Might Find Boring

With Nick Isaac

www.PeakPerformanceProductivity.co

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Fluent
Focus



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<https://peakperformanceproductivity.co/podcast/nick-isaac-how-to-focus/>

Contents

- On Learning Foreign Languages
- How To Process Large Volumes Of Information
- The Core Principles of Speed Reading
- Why Structuring Your Work Around Your Best Time Of Day Makes You Productive
- How To Close Off Your Day So You'll Sleep Better At Night
- How Focus And Concentrate More Effectively
- Why Your Attitude Towards Your Work Is Crucial
- How To Make The Things You Do Look And Feel Effortless
- How To Engage Others To Help You Become More Productive

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On Learning Foreign Languages

- When you are travelling to another country, knowing at least a few words of the local language makes the experience so much richer and enjoyable.
- Practicing a language with a native speaker is the best form of practice to fine tune your linguistic skills.
- The more languages you speak, the more used you get to identifying patterns, the easier it is to learn even more languages.
- If you are going to learn a language, or indeed learn anything new, then you're going to have to lose your embarrassment. This is because making mistakes and getting things wrong is part of the learning process. There is no need to worry about getting things wrong because by doing so, you are more likely to get it right the next time.
- One rough and ready way to speak a language is to learn the 800 most frequently used words in that language and just enough grammar to be able to string a sentence together. It is quick and very basic but allows you to communicate well enough to get by and hold a conversation.
- Immersion is a very powerful way of learning anything, but especially languages.

How To Process Large Volumes Of Information

- Switching between different modes of work evolves as you do the work. The more systems and processes you can put in place, the more flexibility you will have to react to emerging work.
- When you are processing significant amounts of information, understanding how it is structured will help you process it more effectively. You are also helped if you are very clear on what you are looking for. That clarity will help things jump out at you off the page.
- A powerful way of keeping track of a significant volume of information (in this case for Nick it is the bundle of papers related to a particular court case), is to keep a chronology of the relevant facts. Capture the date, the document title/reference and then the key points from the document relevant to the case. It will help build a narrative and give a structure to the content that will help you remember it better.

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The Core Principles of Speed Reading

- Speed reading is one way to develop more effective reading skills though just the demands of reading in the work environment will adjust your skills to what's required.
- [NOTE - there are two phases to developing "speed reading". The first is to remove the habits taught in school that actually make you an ineffective reader. The second is then to give you strategies to accelerate the rate at which you process and understand information.
- A common misconception is that people should remember what they have read. That is only true if active steps have been taken to memorise the content].

Why Structuring Your Work Around Your Best Time Of Day Makes You Productive

- It is important to understand what is the best time of day for you to do your work. Broadly speaking people are either "larks", meaning they work better in the morning, or "owls" meaning they'll get into their rhythm towards the latter part of the day.
- When you know which you are, it makes sense to structure your working day around your best and most productive times. You target and schedule your important work to coincide with the availability of your energy.
- So if you are a lark you'll do your important work in the morning and perhaps spend the latter part of the day on activities that require less mental energy e.g. admin.

How To Close Off Your Day So You'll Sleep Better At Night

A very effective way of closing off your day is to review what you have done during the day and reflect on what needs to be done tomorrow. Then plan tomorrow by writing down the list of what you intend to achieve, making the description as clear as possible.

How To Focus On Things Others Might Find Boring - Nick Isaac

- This closes off your day and will allow you to shut off overnight. It also primes your subconscious mind to process things overnight so you'll get ideas to help you in the morning.
- Separating work from home is important and is easier to do if you travel to a workplace to do that work. The physical act of commuting allows you to wind down at the end of the day and helps your brain make the distinction .
- If you find yourself working from home then one way of doing that is to allocate a specific part of your home to work that you can shut the door on when you finish your day. If you work from a laptop you can close the lid. If you work from a desktop then shutting it down will help too. These rituals will help you make the mental shift from “work” to “personal”

How Focus And Concentrate More Effectively

The biggest three productivity challenges faced by most people are:

- Focus
- Distraction
- Procrastination

When you need to focus on important work, part of the skill of developing that concentration is to eliminate potential distractions that might throw you off course. These might include:

- Turning off your phone
- Turning your emails off
- Closing any unnecessary tabs on your browser
- Physically removing yourself from any usual office or home distractions
- Committing to working on just the task you need to focus on to the exclusion of everything else.

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- Setting yourself a specific “hard” deadline by which you intend to complete something and then using a time to keep track of that time, will help you get focused. Doing this will create a sense of urgency that ups your mental game to help you meet your deadline.
- You can train yourself to concentrate - it just takes practice, a willingness to discipline yourself and shutting out any external distractions.
- A secret to developing focused concentration is to become very interested in the subject matter you are dealing with. A high level of interest will allow intense levels of focus. Develop the habit of generating that interest. You can make anything interesting. The harder you study anything, the more you understand something, the more interesting it becomes. And that ultimately will develop your ability to concentrate on it.

Why Your Attitude Towards Your Work Is Crucial

Muhammed Ali once said that he was the greatest boxer in the world. Apparently he also said that even if he was a bin man collecting rubbish all day, he'd be the best bin man in the world. It is attitude that makes a difference. Committing to something means you'll be more interested in it which means you'll become better at it.

How To Make The Things You Do Look And Feel Effortless

Practice, Practice, Practice.

How To Engage Others To Help You Become More Productive

One of the most powerful ways of holding yourself to account for the things you want to achieve is to make a public commitment of your intentions. Making this declaration to family, friends or colleagues is a great way to force yourself into a corner so you'll do it. The mechanism at play is the avoidance of the embarrassment if you don't do it.

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