

# Finding FOCUS



“People think focus means saying yes to the things you've got to focus on. But that's not what it means at all. It means saying no to the hundred other good ideas that there are. You have to pick carefully.

I'm actually as proud of the things we haven't done as the things I have done. Innovation is saying no to 1,000 things.”

— *Steve Jobs*

# Welcome

In this age of infinite inputs, focus has become our most valuable asset. This workbook helps you develop this crucial capability, transforming the constant stream of information into clear priorities and sustained attention—helping you build systems for truly focused work.

At its core, this is about reclaiming control of our attention in a world that increasingly demands it. We've partnered with Nir Eyal to translate his breakthrough research into practical tools, combining his insights with reMarkable's understanding of focused work. The result is a systematic approach to strengthening your attention and making deliberate choices about where it goes.

## **The tools inside**

Inside this workbook, you'll find three essential tools: a clear framework for understanding your attention patterns, proven exercises for building focus habits, and foundational insights from Nir's pioneering work on becoming "indistractable." A bonus chapter from his bestseller *Indistractable* shows you how to put these focus principles into practice through better relationship scheduling. While these tools complement each other, each can also stand on its own—apply what resonates most with your needs.

## **Why this works**

Traditional approaches to focus fail because they ignore the root causes of distraction. This framework does the

opposite. Based on Nir's research, it helps you identify what pulls your attention away and build systems to protect it. The result is sustained concentration, rather than a constant struggle.

### **The exercises**

Nine carefully crafted exercises guide you through this transformation. Each exercise builds on the previous one, helping you identify your attention patterns, establish effective boundaries, and make intentional choices about where you focus your time and energy.

### **How to use this workbook**

Whether you're using your reMarkable tablet, another device, or printed pages, what matters is engaging fully with each exercise. Take time with each step. Be honest about your distractions and current habits. Return to earlier insights as your understanding deepens.

### **Before you begin**

Consider turning off your phone and finding a quiet space. The most valuable insights often emerge when we remove the possibility of interruption.

You have everything you need right here on these pages. Give your mind the space it needs to engage fully with each exercise and discover your path to stronger focus.

# About the collaborators

## Nir Eyal

The biggest insights emerge in moments of true focus, when our attention is free to wander deliberately.

Nir Eyal learned this firsthand while co-founding two tech startups, where it was eye-opening to him how powerful and habit-forming products could be. As constant connectivity grew, he appreciated the increasing tension between innovation and distraction. This led him to study human behavior at the intersection of psychology and technology.

That journey led Nir to teach at Stanford, write for The New York Times and Harvard Business Review, and ultimately author two bestselling books, *Hooked* and *Indistractable*.

While *Hooked* showcased how products can be designed to keep us coming back, *Indistractable* presented the flip side of the coin: how do we stay focused when everything fights for our attention?

Today, his frameworks help everyone from CEOs to families reclaim their attention, and do their most meaningful work. His research is foundational to this workbook's practical approach to focused living.

[nirandfar.com](http://nirandfar.com)

## reMarkable

Throughout history, the simple act of pen meeting paper has sparked world-changing ideas. This timeless truth led Magnus Wanberg to create reMarkable in 2013, after experiencing firsthand how paper helped him think better during his studies at Harvard University. Magnus found laptops invited distraction, while paper created space for thought—it also remained limited by its physical nature.

reMarkable bridges this gap. Our paper tablets combine the distraction-free experience of paper with the power of digital tools. By eliminating notifications, apps, and digital noise, we create a haven for thought in an increasingly complex world.

What started as a quest for better thinking has transformed how millions work and think. From scientists to CEOs, authors to musicians, and knitters to inventors, they've rediscovered what we all know: removing digital distractions while maintaining the tactile experience of paper leads to deeper focus and clearer thinking.

[remarkable.com](https://remarkable.com)

## **The power of this collaboration**

True mastery requires both knowledge and environment. This union between Nir Eyal's research and reMarkable's expertise creates something uniquely powerful.

Together, they offer a complete system—combining proven strategies for managing attention with an environment designed for clear thought. The pages that follow reveal why we get distracted and guide you step by step toward taking back control.

When principles meet practice, your best work isn't just possible—it becomes inevitable.

Turn the page to begin.

# The most important skill

Your journey from distraction to indistractable.





I know how distractions work from the inside. For over a decade, I've helped tech companies build products to keep you clicking. In fact, I wrote the book about it in 2014: *Hooked: How to build habit-forming products*. I wrote *Hooked* for companies who wanted to help their customers build healthy habits, like going to the gym regularly and eating right. But in the process of researching the book, I found that some products drew some people in too much, including me.

I remember sitting with my daughter one afternoon doing activities from a book written to help daddies and daughters bond. One exercise consisted of asking each other the following question: "If you could have any superpower, what would it be?" Between the moment I asked the question and when my daughter could answer, I felt a buzz in my pocket. A work email diverted my attention.

"Daddy?" she queried.

"Just a second," I grunted. "I need to respond to one thing." My eyes were glued to my phone, my fingers were tapping away at a response.

I wish I could tell you what she said in that moment, but I can't. While she was telling me her dream superpower, I was busy staring at my phone. By the time I looked up, she had left the room.

I'd blown a perfect daddy-daughter moment because I was distracted. At that moment, I knew I needed to learn how to manage distraction. I wanted to get the best out of my tech gadgets, without letting the tech gadgets get the best of me.

If you asked me what superpower I'd want, I know the answer: I want the power to be indistractable. It's the skill of the future.

We bemoan the fact that technology is becoming more pervasive and persuasive and complain that our devices are "hijacking" our brains. On top of all that, we just can't seem to disconnect from work.

Hoping and waiting for tech companies to change their products or for your boss to finally learn to respect your time may take longer than you're willing to wait. Although distractions aren't necessarily your fault, they are your responsibility. It's time to equip yourself to manage your distractions.

Let's start with a definition of distraction.

According to the American Psychological Association Dictionary of Psychology, distraction is "the process of interrupting attention" and "a stimulus or task that draws attention away from the task of primary interest." In other

words, distractions draw us away from what we want to do, whether it's to accomplish a task at home or work, enjoy time with a loved one, or do something for ourselves.

If distraction becomes a habit, we may be unable to sustain the focus required for creativity in our professional and personal lives. Worse, if we're constantly pulled away from friends and family by distractions, we miss out on cultivating the relationships we need for our psychological well-being.

Digital distraction might manifest in looking at notifications that pop up on your phone — even during conversations with family, friends, or colleagues, interrupting focused work to check email — chatting with coworkers who pop by your desk when you intended to do focused work, or scrolling through your social media feeds when you planned to read a book.

The opposite of “distraction” is “traction.” Traction is any action that moves us towards what we really want. Traction is actions done with intent. Any action, such as working on a big project, getting enough sleep or physical exercise, eating healthy food, taking time to meditate or pray, or spending time with loved ones, are all forms of traction if they are done intentionally. Traction is doing what you say you will do.

What prompts us to traction or distraction? All human behavior is cued by either external or internal triggers.

External triggers are cues from our environment that tell us what to do next. That can mean dings and pings that prompt us to check our email, answer a text, or look at a news alert. Competition for our attention can come from a person as well, such as an interruption from a coworker. Even an object can be an external trigger: your television set seems to urge you to turn it on by its mere presence.

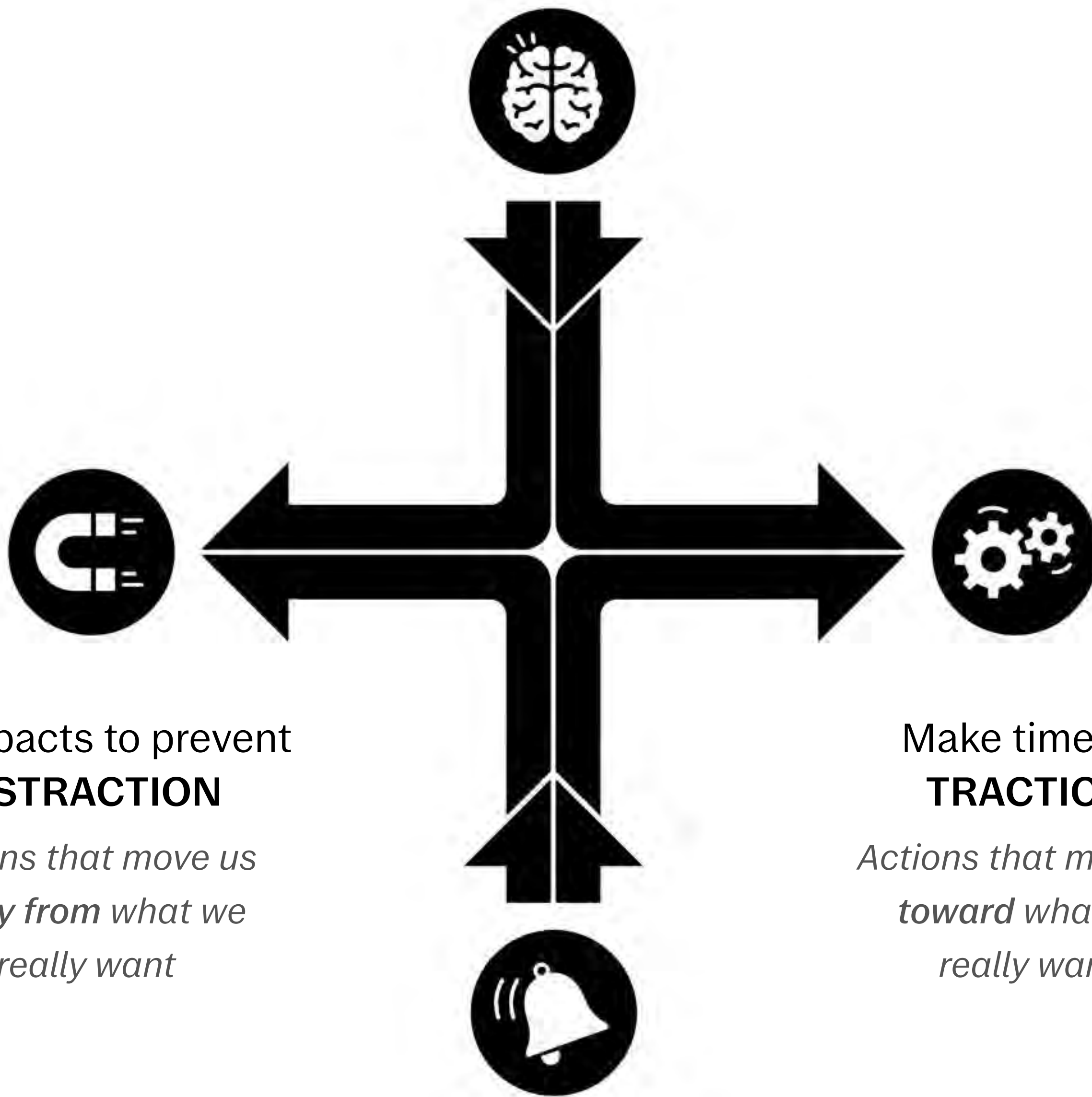
Internal triggers are cues that come from within. When we're hungry, we are cued to get something to eat; when we feel a chill, we put on a sweater. When we're stressed or lonely, we might call a friend for support. Even the desire to feel pleasure is itself a state of uncomfortable craving. Internal triggers are negative feelings.

Since all behavior is prompted by either external or internal triggers, then both the actions we intend to take (traction) as well as those that veer us off course (distraction) originate from the same two sources.

Now we can draw a complete picture of what I call the "Indistractable model":

Master  
**INTERNAL TRIGGERS**

*Uncomfortable feelings  
we seek to escape*



Make pacts to prevent  
**DISTRACTION**

*Actions that move us  
away from what we  
really want*

Make time for  
**TRACTION**

*Actions that move us  
toward what we  
really want*

Hack back  
**EXTERNAL TRIGGERS**

*Outside cues that  
demand response*

## **Step 1: Master internal triggers**

In order to overcome distractions, you need to understand what drives your behaviors — what prompts you to compulsively look at your phone or read one more email.

The root cause of human behavior is the desire to escape discomfort. Even when we think we are seeking pleasure, we're actually driven by the desire to free ourselves from the pain of wanting.

The truth is, we overuse video games, social media, and our cell phones not just for the pleasure they provide, but also because they free us from psychological discomfort.

Distraction, then, is an unhealthy escape from bad feelings. Once you can recognize the role internal triggers like boredom, loneliness, insecurity, fatigue, and uncertainty play in your life, you can decide how to respond in a healthier manner. You can't control how you feel, but you can learn to control how you react to the way you feel.

To start, you can change how you think about the bad feelings that can lead to distraction. Studies show that not giving into internal triggers can backfire. Resisting a craving or impulse can trigger rumination and make the desire grow stronger. When you finally give in, relieving that tension of wanting increases the reward, reinforcing

a bad habit. Thankfully, there are smarter ways to cope with discomfort.

Dr. Jonathan Bricker, of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, has developed a set of steps we can take when faced with a distracting temptation. His techniques help patients reduce health risks through behavioral change.

- 1. Identify the feeling or thought behind your urge:** When you find yourself about to become distracted, find the internal trigger that is prompting you to do so. Are you feeling anxious, restless, maybe even poorly qualified for the task?
- 2. Write it down:** Bricker advises that you write down that feeling, along with the time of day and what you were doing when you felt that internal trigger. Keeping a log of distractions will help you link behaviors with their internal triggers. The better you become at noticing the thoughts and feelings that precede certain behaviors, the better you will become at managing them over time.
- 3. Explore the sensation:** Bricker advises getting curious about the sensations that precede distraction. Do you get butterflies in your stomach? A tightening in your chest? Bricker recommends that you stay with that feeling before following your impulse. He recommends

trying the “leaves on a stream” method. Imagine yourself beside a stream, on which leaves gently float by. Place each thought and negative feeling in your mind on one leaf and watch them float away.

## **Step 2: Make time for traction**

In this day and age, if you don't plan your day, someone else will! Without knowing what it is you want to do with your time, everything is a potential distraction. To make time for the things that really matter, follow these steps.

- 1. Don't pick your goals, pick your values:** Values are the attributes of the person you want to become. Examples of values might include being a contributing member of a team, being a loving parent, being in an equitable marriage, seeking wisdom, taking care of your physical fitness, or being a generous friend. Only you can decide which values are important to you.
- 2. Turn your values into time:** Many people talk a good game about what's important to them — family, health, friends. But when it comes to investing time in these areas of their lives, they get distracted and don't follow through. They don't live up to their values because they don't make time for them in their day.



**3. Timebox your schedule:** The most effective way to make sure you'll make time for your values is timeboxing. Timeboxing means deciding what you're going to do and when you're going to do it. The goal is to create a template for how to spend your time each day, eliminating all white space in your calendar.

It doesn't matter what you do as long as you do what you planned to do. Go ahead and scroll through social media, but at allotted times — not at the expense of other things you planned to do, like spending time with your family.

Decide how much time you want to devote to each domain of your life, according to your values. Make sure that you schedule enough time for yourself and for your relationships. After all, the most important people in your life deserve better than the leftover time in your day. Then, create a weekly calendar template for your perfect week. You can use a blank template and our free schedule maker. Next, include 15 minutes per week to reflect and refine your calendar for the week ahead.

### **Step 3: Hack back external triggers**

Tech companies use external triggers to hack our attention. The pings and dings from our devices often distract us by pulling us away from what we really want to do. We may

try to ignore those triggers, but research shows that ignoring a call or message can be just as distracting as responding to one.

Not all external triggers are distractions, however. If used to help you accomplish tasks, external triggers can remind you to do what you planned. The right approach is to ask whether the external trigger is serving you, or whether you are serving it. If the prompt leads you to traction, keep it. If it leads you to distraction, eliminate it.

External triggers are all around us. One of the most potentially troublesome sources of unhelpful external triggers is, of course, our smartphones. Whether it's to keep in contact with family, navigate around town, or listen to audiobooks, this miracle device in your pocket has become indispensable. It can also be a major source of distraction, but you can take back your smartphone in four steps:

- 1. Remove:** Uninstall apps you no longer need.
- 2. Replace:** Shift where and when you use potentially distracting apps, like social media and YouTube, to your desktop computer instead of your phone.
- 3. Rearrange:** Move any apps that may trigger mindless checking from your phone's home screen.
- 4. Reclaim:** Adjust your notification settings for each app to make sure only apps worthy of interrupting you can send external triggers.

Make sure to also “hack back” external triggers in other environments, both online and off. Whether the external trigger comes from a notification on your phone or laptop, or the interruption is a coworker taking you off track when you planned to do focused work, the consequences are the same.

#### **Step 4: Prevent distraction with pacts**

Finally, the last step to becoming indistractable is to prevent distraction with pacts. This technique involves making a “precommitment” — removing a future choice — in order to overcome distraction.

Precommitments are decisions we cement well in advance of the temptations we know might come. As such, this step should only be taken after we have followed the first three steps and learned to manage our internal triggers, made time for traction, and hacked back the external triggers that pull us to distractions.

There are three types of pacts:

An **effort pact** is a kind of precommitment that involves increasing the amount of effort required to do something you don’t want to do. Adding additional effort forces you to

ask if a distraction is really worth the extra effort. There are numerous apps designed to help you make effort pacts with your digital devices. (Good examples include Self Control, Forest, and Freedom, but there are many others.)

A **price pact** puts money on the line. If you stick to your intended behavior, you keep the cash. If you get distracted, you forfeit your funds. This kind of technique has had astounding results when used to help smokers quit. I used a price pact to finish the first draft of my book, promising my accountability partner \$10,000 if I did not finish the draft by deadline. Fortunately, I kept my money and finished writing my book.

Finally, an **identity pact** is another way to change your response to distractions. Your self-image has a profound impact on your behavior. By taking on a new identity, you empower yourself to make decisions based on who you believe you are. Consider how people who call themselves “vegetarians” don’t have to expend much willpower to avoid eating meat.

To become indistractable, you can stop telling yourself you are a person with a “short attention span” or an “addictive personality” and instead tell yourself, “I am indistractable.”

If you tell yourself you are the kind of person who is easily distracted, it instantly becomes true. However, if you believe

that you are indistractable, you empower yourself to respond more healthily to whatever distractions get in your way.

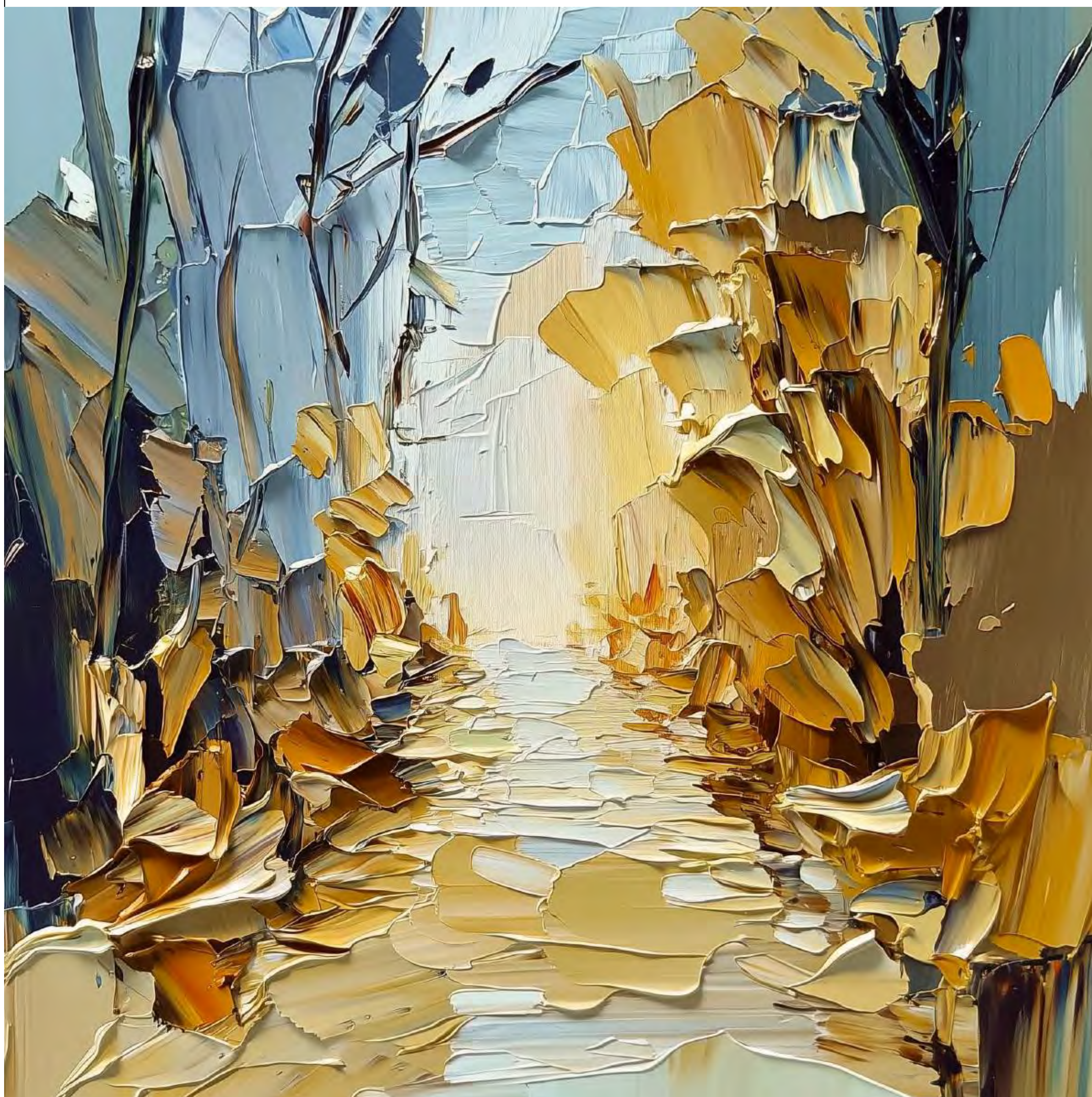
### **Mastering the most important skill of the future**

Becoming indistractable is not some mysterious formula. It's as easy as following the four steps above. Mastering your internal triggers, making time for traction, hacking back your external triggers, and preventing distractions with pacts are all powerful tools that can reshape your life.

The world is splitting into two types of people: those who allow their attention and their lives to be manipulated by others, and those who proudly call themselves indistractable. When you become indistractable, you influence others to do the same. You can influence colleagues and coworkers to try these techniques. You can inspire your friends and family to pursue the lives they envision. You can help your children learn what is sure to be the skill of the century: the power to become indistractable.

# Your path to forward

Spot distractions. Build focus. Stay sharp.



# How to use this workbook

This workbook offers a systematic approach to strengthening your focus and becoming undistractable.

Think of it as a practical toolkit - each exercise builds on the last, helping you identify what pulls your attention away and gives you specific tactics to stay on track.

You don't need any special preparation—everything you need is right here.

## **1. Follow the sequence**

Each exercise builds naturally on previous ones, creating a solid foundation.

## **3. Set your own pace**

Some prefer one exercise per day, others work in longer sessions. Choose what suits you best.

## **2. Be direct**

The most valuable insights come from within, reflect honestly about your habits and goals.

## **4. Track progress**

Small improvements compound. Focus isn't about perfection—it's about consistent progress.

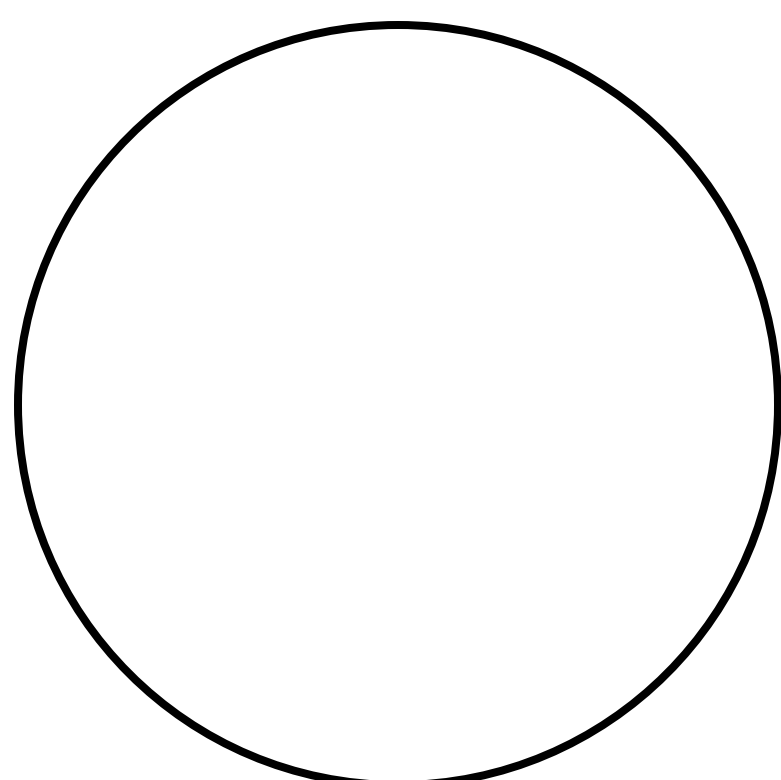
# Prep your focus

Neuroscience reveals a valuable insight: mental focus follows visual attention.

By focusing your eyes for 60 seconds on a single point on the surface where you will be doing your deep work, you prepare and calibrate your brain's focus system. This simple technique helps align your neural networks, priming your cognitive resources for deeper focus.

When you have a task that requires your undivided attention and clarity of thought, make it a habit to warm up with this simple exercise.

**Draw a point in the center of the circle below.  
Then, fix your gaze on the point for 60 seconds.**





# Plan your ideal day

The first step to finding focus and becoming indistractable is understanding what "traction" means for you - what activities move you toward your values and goals. This exercise helps you envision your ideal day to identify what truly matters.

## What activities would make your ideal day meaningful?

For each part of your day (morning, afternoon, evening):

1. Write an activity that would make that time meaningful
2. In "Why it matters," reflect on the value this brings to your life
3. Circle activities you wish happened more often in your current routine

### Morning activity

1. 30 minutes of focused writing
2. Drop kids off at school without rushing
3. Strategic planning hour

### Why it matters

1. Creates creative space before the rush
2. Starts day with calm connections
3. Sets direction before emails flood in

Imagine your ideal. Once you see the destination, you can walk the path back to today.

**Afternoon activity**

- 1. Team strategy meeting*
- 2. One hour of uninterrupted deep work*
- 3. Volunteer at local food bank*

**Why it matters**

- 1. Aligns team efforts and builds bonds*
- 2. Advances projects without interruption*
- 3. Serves community and gains perspective*

**Evening activity**

- 1. Device-free dinner with family*
- 2. Exercise class with friends*
- 3. Read industry publications*

**Why it matters**

- 1. Creates genuine connection and presence*
- 2. Combines social connection with physical health*
- 3. Stays current with field without daily pressure*

# Identify your internal triggers

You've mapped out meaningful activities for your ideal day. Whether these are activities you're already doing, or ones you wish happened more often, let's understand what pulls you away from them. Distractions often start with internal discomfort we are trying to escape.

## What feelings trigger your distractions?

Think of three recent times when you were pulled away from something important. For each one, record:

1. The activity you intended to do
2. What you did instead
3. What you were feeling right before you were pulled away

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1. Intended

*Family dinner time*

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2. Instead

*Checking work chat messages*

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3. Feeling

*Worried about being out of the loop*

“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response.”

— *Viktor Frankl*

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1. Intended

*Strategic planning hour*

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2. Instead

*Organizing old files*

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3. Feeling

*Impostor feelings creeping in*

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1. Intended

*Morning writing time*

---

2. Instead

*Answering non-urgent emails*

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3. Feeling

*Mind craving easy wins*

# Know your triggers

In the previous exercise, you identified feelings that trigger distraction. Instead of trying to escape those feelings, let's get to know them better. When we observe our triggers with curiosity rather than judgment, they often lose their power over us.

## What happens if you observe your feelings instead of acting on them?

Choose one feeling and imagine being in that situation. Picture it clearly - what's happening, who's there, what do you see and hear. Then:

1. Notice where in your body you feel it
2. Describe the physical sensations
3. Observe these feelings for 30 seconds without trying to change them

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Trigger feeling

*Worried about being out of the loop*

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1. Location

*Chest, neck, jaw*

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2. Sensation

*Tightness, shallow breathing, clenched teeth*

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3. After observing

*Urge to check phone lessened*

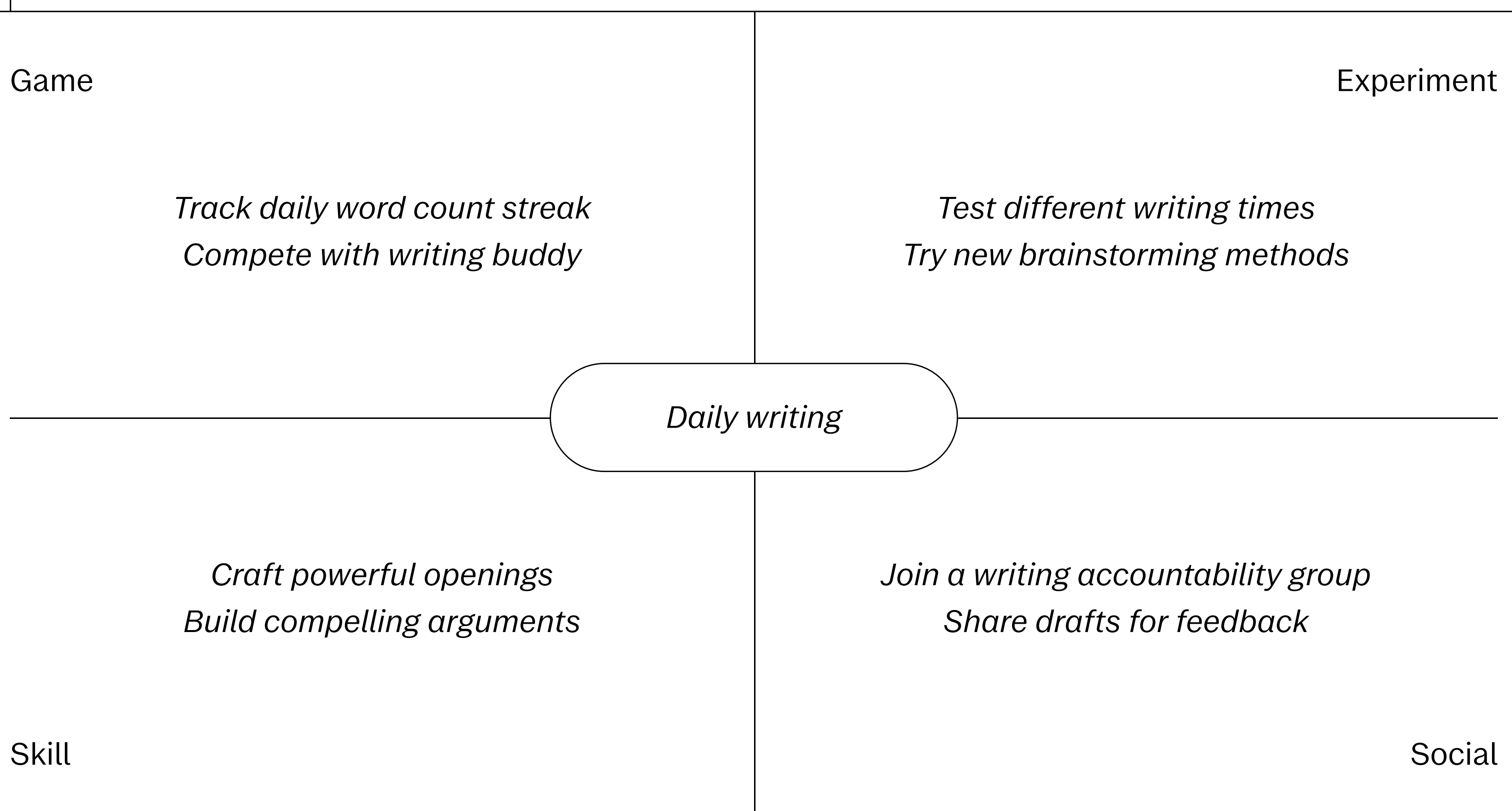
# Rethink boring

You've identified your ideal activities and the triggers that pull you away. Sometimes these triggers arise because tasks feel tedious. But what if you transform boring into interesting?

## What would a boring task look like through a different lens?

Choose one routine task and reimagine it as:

1. A game or challenge (Game)
2. An experiment to learn from (Experiment)
3. A skill to develop (Skill)
4. A way to connect with others (Social)

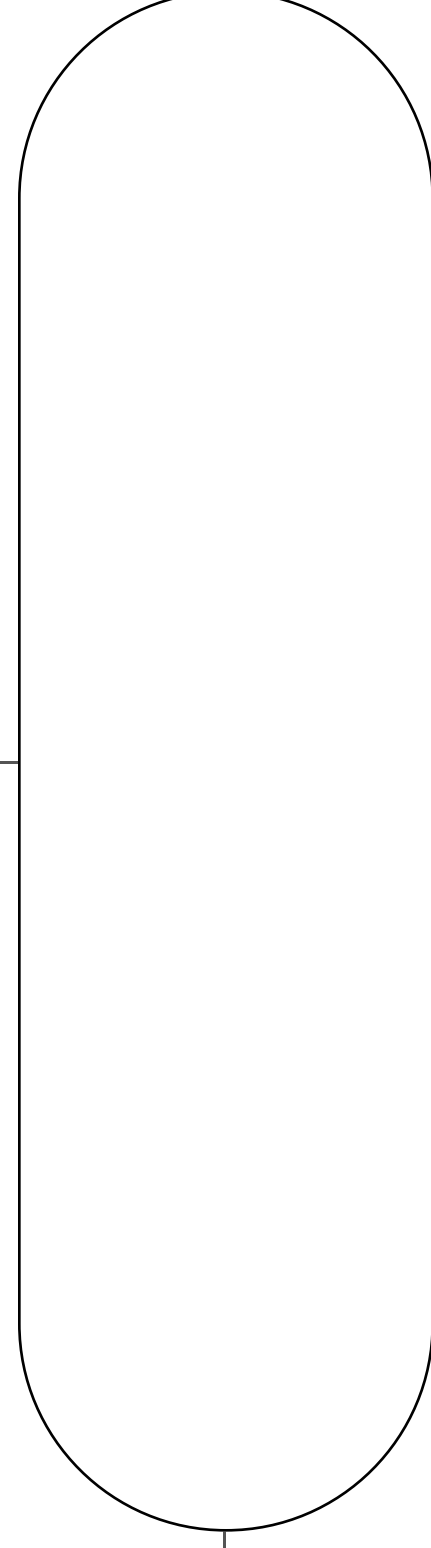


Experiment

Social

Game

Skill



# Craft your time blocks

You've identified your meaningful activities, understood what pulls you away, and learned to handle triggers. Now let's turn these insights into concrete time commitments.

## What activities deserve protected time in your week?

Consider these domains:

1. **You:** growth, health, recharge
2. **Relationships:** family, friends, community
3. **Work:** impact, creation, collaboration

For each domain, define and plan one essential activity (examples below):

- **Activity:** what the activity is
- **Time:** when it works best
- **Why:** why this timing matters

You	<p><i>Deep reading</i> 8:00-9:00am daily <i>Mind is clear, house is quiet</i></p>	<p><i>Bouldering</i> 7:00-8:30pm Tuesday/Thursday <i>Practice problem solving while building strength</i></p>
Relationships	<p><i>One-on-one kid time</i> 4:00-5:00pm weekdays <i>Before dinner rush</i></p>	<p><i>Write and send three thank-you notes</i> 9:00-9:30am Sunday <i>Quiet morning perfect for meaningful connection</i></p>
Work	<p><i>Creative planning</i> 10:00-11:30am Tuesday/Thursday <i>Team is focused, before meetings</i></p>	<p><i>Team learning session</i> 11:00-12:00pm Friday <i>End week sharing knowledge, building culture</i></p>



“The key is not to prioritize what's on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.”

— *Stephen Covey*

You	Activity
	When
	Why
Relationships	Activity
	When
	Why
Work	Activity
	When
	Why

**Think of this as the kick-off to your framework.**

Add more time blocks whenever you're ready to protect new commitments.

# Make it real

You've defined your essential time blocks. Now let's anchor them in reality by giving them a permanent home in your week.

**What's the best way to protect these commitments?**

1. Place your time blocks in the weekly calendar below
2. Add these same blocks to your digital calendar
3. Set them to repeat weekly

Hour	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
6am							
7am							
8am							
9am							
10am							
11am							
12pm							
1pm							
2pm							
3pm							
4pm							
5pm							
6pm							
7pm							
8pm							
9pm							
10pm							

# Hack those external triggers

Your environment is often stronger than your willpower. Now that you've learned to handle internal triggers, let's tackle the external ones - those pings, notifications, and interruptions that compete for your attention.

## What external triggers steal your focus most?

Look around your workspace and list:

1. Three things that regularly grab your attention
2. One specific solution for each
3. Choose one solution and implement it now

External trigger

Solution

1. *Slack notifications popping up*
2. *Email constantly open*

1. *Turn off Slack during deep work hours (9-11am)*
2. *Close the tab, check it only 3 times a day*

“Distractions will always exist;  
managing them is our responsibility.”

— *Nir Eyal*

External trigger

Solution

1. *Chatty colleague popping by your desk*
2. *Visible phone or devices*

1. *Wear headphones or block off time in calendar*
2. *Put devices in a drawer or another room*

External trigger

Solution

1. *Stack of messy papers*
2. *Window facing busy street*

1. *Clear desk, store papers out of sight*
2. *Draw the curtains or adjust the desk*

# Design your focus ritual

You've identified important activities, managed triggers, and created time blocks. Now, let's craft a routine to help you transition into deep focus—and stay there.

## What does your complete focus ritual look like?

Create your focus ritual in three parts:

1. **Before:** How you prepare for focus
2. **During:** How you guard your focus and stay locked in
3. **After:** How you close and reset

### Before

*I'll start with a quick stretch and three deep breaths, then prepare my environment—clear my desk, start my focus playlist, and fill up my coffee. Finally, I'll remove distractions by closing apps and placing my phone in another room.*

“Done enough times, done with sincerity and feeling, routine becomes ritual.”

— *Ryan Holiday*

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## During

*I'll work in focused sprints, using a timer to stay on track. To stay immersed, I'll take brief movement breaks, and if my mind drifts, I'll reset with a few deep breaths. If distractions arise, I'll jot them down and return to my task.*

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## After

*I'll save my work, clear my space, and take a moment to recognize the effort I put in. Then, to reset, I'll stretch or take a short walk, letting my mind recharge before moving on.*

# Dial it in

Lasting focus isn't about working harder—it's about working intentionally. The key is to reflect daily on what's working and what needs to change.

## How will you track your focus and stay accountable?

Take a few moments each day to reflect:

- **Morning:** What needs my focus? How will I protect it?
- **Afternoon:** How's my focus doing? What needs adjusting?
- **Evening:** What worked? What would I do differently?

Use the template on the next page, or create your own three-section journal with these prompts.

**Pro tip:** Set daily reminders to check in with your focus journal.

# Examples

## Morning

*I want to be fully present today. My focus is on deep work in the morning, and quality time with family tonight. I'll turn my phone off when it's time for family.*

## Afternoon

*Feeling distracted. My mind keeps jumping to other tasks. Took three deep breaths—this helped me refocus for the last hour. Will do the same before my next session.*

## Evening

*Caught myself reaching for my phone at dinner again. Tomorrow, I'll leave it in another room as a reminder that this time matters.*

## Morning

*Today is all about making progress, not perfection. My priority is finishing the strategy deck. I'll block two hours, close Slack, and trust that a rough version is better than none.*

## Afternoon

*The morning started strong, but I lost focus after my first break. Next time, I'll adjust by moving my next session to a quieter space and setting a timer.*

## Evening

*Draft is done. Not perfect, but it exists. I'm working best with deep blocks—tomorrow, I'll schedule them earlier before distractions creep in.*



# Focus journal

Date:

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S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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**Morning**

What's my focus? How will I protect it?

**Afternoon**

How's my focus? What needs adjusting?

**Evening**

What worked? What will I do differently?

# Commit to my focus

You've explored what pulls your attention, designed systems to protect your focus, and built habits to stay undistractable. Now, it's time to commit.

What three insights will most improve your focus?

1

2

3

What's one change you will implement immediately?

When will you revisit this workbook to check your progress?

*I commit to protecting my focus, applying what I've learned, and refining my approach over time. A year from now, this moment will mark the beginning of my more intentional, focused life.*

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*Place, date, and signature*

# Share and give feedback

You've built a foundation for managing your attention and becoming undistractable. These skills grow stronger with practice, reflection, and community.

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# Connection matters

The journey to becoming indistractable shapes every part of our lives, but nowhere does it matter more than in our relationships with others.

As a special bonus, the following chapter from *Indistractable* reveals how to nurture these vital connections.

**As you read on, consider:**

- What do your time choices reveal about your relationships?
- Which relationships deserve more protection in your schedule?
- How could simple routines strengthen your important connections?

If you find these insights valuable, *Indistractable* offers even more strategies for mastering distraction in every area of your life.

# Schedule relationships

Prioritizing connections to strengthen your focus.



Family and friends help us live our values of connection, loyalty, and responsibility. They need you and you need them, so they are clearly far more important than a mere “residual beneficiary,” a term I first heard in an Economics 101 class. In business, a residual beneficiary is the chump who gets whatever is left over when a company is liquidated—typically, not much. In life, our loved ones deserve better, and yet, if we’re not careful with how we plan our time, residual beneficiaries are exactly what they become.

One of my most important values is to be a caring, involved, and fun dad. While I aspire to live out this value, being a fully present dad is not always “convenient.” An email from a client informs me that my website is down; the plumber texts to tell me that his train is stalled and he needs to reschedule; my bank notifies me of an unexpected charge on my card. Meanwhile, my daughter sits there, waiting for me to play my next card in our game of gin rummy.

To combat this problem, I’ve intentionally scheduled time with my daughter every week. Much like I schedule time for a business meeting or time for myself, I block out time on my schedule to be with her. To make sure we always have something fun to do, we spent one afternoon writing down over a hundred things to do together in town, each one on a separate little strip of paper. Then, we rolled up all the little strips and placed them inside our “fun jar.” Now, every

Friday afternoon, we simply pull an activity from the fun jar and do it. Sometimes we'll visit a museum, while other times we'll play in the park or visit a highly rated ice cream parlor across town. That time is reserved just for us.

Truth be told, the fun jar idea doesn't always work as smoothly as I'd like. It's hard for me to muster up the energy to head to the playground when New York's temperatures fall below freezing. On those days, a cup of hot cocoa and a couple of chapters of *Harry Potter* sound way more inviting for us both. What's important, though, is that I've made it a priority in my weekly schedule to live up to my values. Having this time in my schedule allows me to be the dad that I envision myself to be.

Similarly, my wife, Julie, and I make sure we have time scheduled for each other. Twice a month, we plan a special date. Sometimes we see a live show or indulge in an exotic meal. But mostly, we just walk and talk for hours. Regardless of what we do, we know that this time is cemented in our schedules and will not be compromised. In the absence of this scheduled time together, it's too easy to fill our days with other errands, like running to the grocery store or cleaning the house. My scheduled time with Julie allows me to live out my value of intimacy. There's no one else I can open up to the way I can with her, but this can only happen if we make the time.

Equality is another value in my marriage. I always thought I behaved in a way that upheld that value. I was wrong. Before my wife and I had a clear schedule in place, we found ourselves bickering about why certain tasks weren't getting done around the house. Several studies show that among heterosexual couples, husbands don't do their fair share of the housework, and I was, I'm sad to admit, one of them. Darcy Lockman, a psychologist in New York City, wrote in the Washington Post, "Employed women partnered with employed men carry 65 percent of the family's child-care responsibilities, a figure that has held steady since the turn of the century."

But like many men Lockman interviewed in her research, I was somehow oblivious to the tasks my wife handled. As one mother told Lockman,

*He's on his phone or computer while I'm running around like a crazy person getting the kids' stuff, doing the laundry. He has his coffee in the morning reading his phone while I'm packing lunches, getting our daughter's clothes out, helping our son with his homework. He just sits there. He doesn't do it on purpose. He has no awareness of what's happening around him. I ask him about it and he gets defensive.*

It was as if Lockman had interviewed my wife. But if my wife wanted help, why didn't she just ask? I later came to



realize that figuring out how I could be helpful was itself work. Julie couldn't tell me how I could help because she already had a dozen things on her mind. She wanted me to take initiative, to jump in and start helping out. But I didn't know how. I had no idea, so I'd either stand there confused or slink off to do something else. Too many evenings followed this script, ending in late dinners, hurt feelings, and sometimes tears.

During one of our date days, we sat down and listed all the household tasks that each of us performed; making sure nothing was left out. Comparing Julie's (seemingly endless) list to mine was a wake-up call that my value of equality in our marriage needed some help. We agreed to split the household jobs and, most important, timeboxed the tasks on our schedules, leaving no doubt about when they would get done.

Working our way toward a more equitable split of the housework restored integrity to my value of equality in my marriage, which also improved the odds of having a long and happy relationship. Lockman's research supports this benefit: "A growing body of research in family and clinical studies demonstrates that spousal equality promotes marital success and that inequality undermines it."

There's no doubt scheduling time for family and ensuring they were no longer the residual beneficiary of my time

greatly improved my relationship with my wife and daughter.

“The people we love most should not be content getting whatever time is left over. Everyone benefits when we hold time on our schedule to live up to our values and do our share.”

This domain extends beyond just family. Not scheduling time for the important relationships in our lives is more harmful than most people realize. Recent studies have shown that a dearth of social interaction not only leads to loneliness but is also linked to a range of harmful physical effects. In fact, a lack of close friendships may be hazardous to your health.

Perhaps the most compelling evidence that friendships affect longevity comes from the ongoing Harvard Study of Adult Development. Since 1938, researchers have been following the physical health and social habits of 724 men. Robert Waldinger, the study's current director, said in a TEDx talk, “The clearest message that we get from this seventy-five-year study is this: good relationships keep us happier and healthier. Period.” Socially disconnected

people are, according to Waldinger, “less happy; their health declines earlier in midlife; their brain functioning declines sooner; [and] they live shorter lives than people who are not lonely.” Waldinger warned, “It’s not just the number of friends you have ... It’s the quality of your close relationships that matters.”

What makes for a quality friendship? William Rawlins, a professor of interpersonal communications at Ohio University who studies the way people interact over the course of their lives, told the Atlantic that satisfying friendships need three things: “somebody to talk to, someone to depend on, and someone to enjoy.” Finding someone to talk to, depend on, and enjoy often comes naturally when we’re young, but as we grow into adulthood, the model for how to maintain friendships is less clear. We graduate and go our separate ways, pursuing careers and starting new lives miles apart from our best friends.

Suddenly work obligations and ambitions take priority over having beers with buddies. If children enter the picture, exhilarating nights on the town become exhausted nights on the couch. Unfortunately, the less time we invest in people, the easier it is to make do without them, until one day it is too awkward to reconnect.

But as the research reveals, by allowing our friendships to starve, we’re also malnourishing our own bodies and minds.

If the food of friendship is time together, how do we make the time to ensure we're all fed?

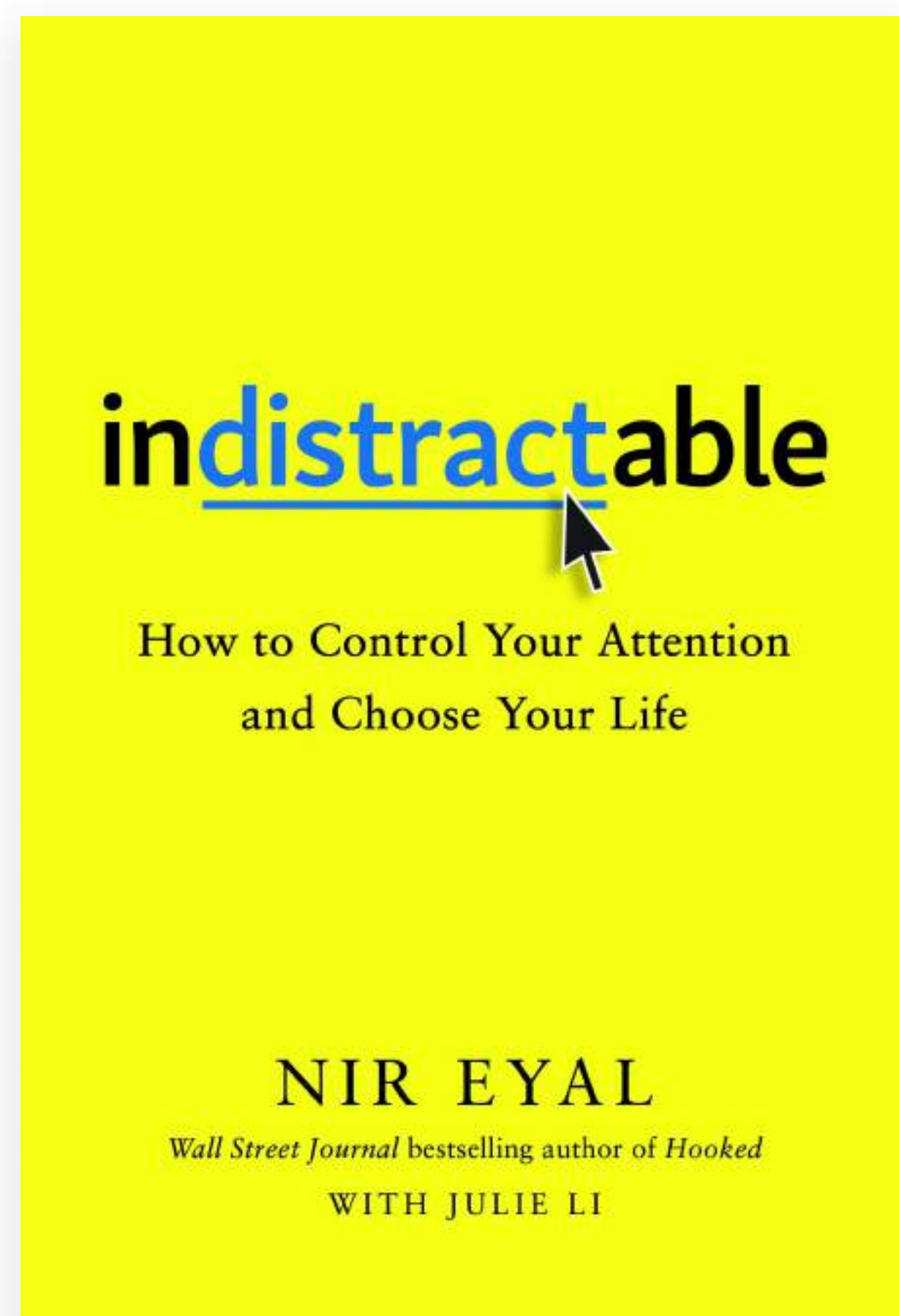
Despite our busy schedules and surfeit of children, my friends and I have developed a social routine that ensures regular get-togethers. We call it the “kibbutz,” which in Hebrew means “gathering.” For our gathering, four couples, my wife and me included, meet every two weeks to talk about one question over a picnic lunch. The question might range from a deep inquiry like, “What is one thing you are thankful your parents taught you?” to a more practical question like, “Should we push our kids to learn things they don't want, like playing the piano?”

Having a topic helps in two ways: first, it gets us past the small talk of sports and weather, giving us an opportunity to open up about stuff that really matters; second, it prevents the gender split that often happens when couples convene in groups—men in one corner, women in another. Having a question of the day gets us all talking together.

The most important element of the gathering is its consistency; rain or shine, the kibbutz appears on our calendars every other week—same time, same place. There's no back-and-forth emailing to hammer out logistics. To keep it even simpler, each couple brings their own food so there's no prep or cleanup. If one couple can't make it, no big deal; the kibbutz goes ahead as planned.

The gathering lasts about two hours, and I always leave with new ideas and insights. Most important, I feel closer to my friends. Given the importance of close relationships, it's essential we plan ahead. Knowing there is time set aside for the kibbutz ensures it happens.

No matter what kind of activity fulfills your need for friendship, it's essential to make time on your calendar for it. The time we spend with our friends isn't just pleasurable—it's an investment in our future health and well-being.



*Indistractable* is available at [bit.ly/getindistractable](https://bit.ly/getindistractable)

# Deepen your resolve

Additional resources and tools to support your practice



# More tools for focus

## Nir Eyal

- [nirandfar.com](http://nirandfar.com): Learn all about the intersection where psychology, technology and business meet.
- [nirandfar.com/remarkable-bonuses](http://nirandfar.com/remarkable-bonuses): Try the newsletter, where more than 150,000 readers receive Nir's latest science-backed insights on building better habits. *Bonus: reThink readers receive exclusive Indistractable resources and a course discount when signing up.*
- [nirandfar.com/distraction-tracker](http://nirandfar.com/distraction-tracker): Track distractions, identify patterns, and regain focus with this free, easy-to-use Distraction Tracker Template.
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## reMarkable

- [remarkable.com](http://remarkable.com): The digital notebook scientifically proven to enhance focus. Join millions replacing paper with reMarkable's distraction-free writing experience.
- [remarkable.com/rethink](http://remarkable.com/rethink): A newsletter for better thinking —science-backed insights, tools, and workbooks to help you reflect, sharpen your mind, and take action.

# Sharing guidelines

Focus is the foundation of meaningful work and deeper connections. This workbook offered a structured path through the noise of modern life, helping you identify key distractions, build powerful focus habits, and create space for what matters most.

In an age where attention is constantly pulled in multiple directions, having practical tools, frameworks, and systems for maintaining focus is invaluable.

**Know someone who would benefit from this systematic approach to stronger focus?**

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“What you focus  
on grows, what  
you concentrate  
on multiplies.”

— *Arianna Huffington*