

Productivity principles



What is productivity and why do we care so much about it?

Get more done in less time.
Get more of *what* done in less time?

“Productivity is the **amount of useful output created** for every hour of work we do ...

Did I spend my day producing enough benefit for all the time invested?”
Seth Godin

<https://seths.blog/2018/07/busyness/>



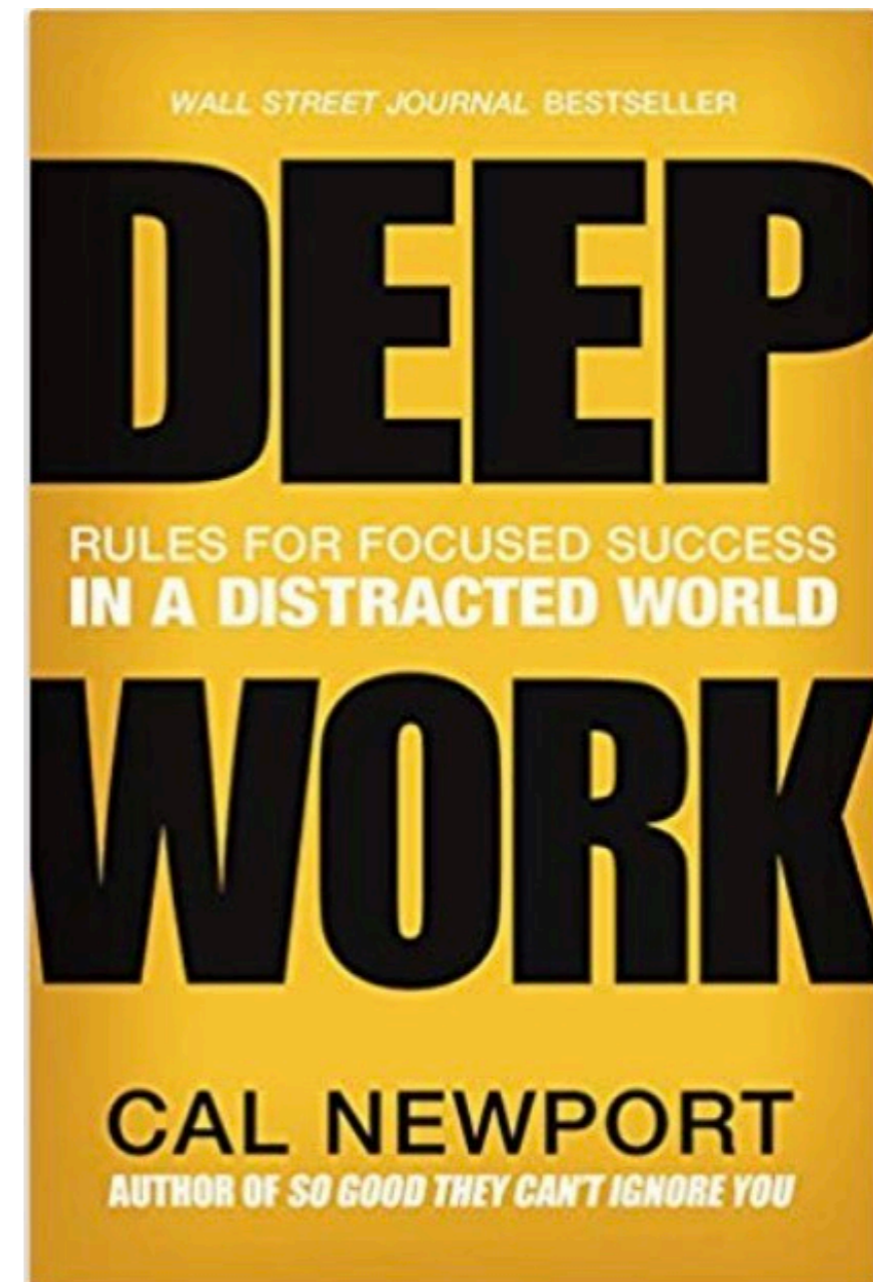


Why is productivity so important for writers?

- **Writers write.** You become a better writer by writing
- You need to fit the writing around the rest of life, so **optimizing that one hour** you have is critical
- Finished product out in the world only happens through writing
- **If you want it**, the reality of making a living writing - or even just reaching readers is to have multiple books
- **Lots of little bets** - more likely to have success with many books than working on one book over and over.

“If you don’t produce, you won’t thrive — no matter how skilled or talented you are.”

Cal Newport, Deep Work: Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World





Be self-aware. What is stopping you from being productive?

I don't have the time to write

I don't know what to do when I have the time. What is the best use of the time I have?

I know what I have to do, but I end up procrastinating and wasting time on things that don't really matter.

I spend too much time on things I need to do, like marketing, but never seem to have enough time to get everything done.

WHY: I measure my life by what I create. I want to leave my job and be a writer.

GOAL: Finish writing first draft of my book

DEADLINE: 6 months time

PROCESS:
Write 500 words per day 5x per week

TIME:
45 mins per day 5x per week, in evening instead of 2nd hour of TV

HABIT:
Writing 5-.5.45am daily in chair by window

WHY:

GOAL:

DEADLINE:

PROCESS:

HABIT:

TIME:

Downloadable
PDF that you
can write on in
the download
area.



Why are *you* doing this?

What is the 'why' driving you to the page?

You don't need discipline if you have a 'why.'

My own 'why' comes from 13 years of time wasted in a job with nothing to show for it. I want to hold the work I have done in my hand at the end of the year and say "I made this" and to make a living from my creativity.

What's your why? Is it big enough to drive you through the hard times?

Your **self-definition** will help you create e.g. “I am a writer.” Then you must write, or you are not a writer.

Who are you? What do you do with your time? With your life? What do you want them to look like? What do you love? Are you a writer? What do writers focus on?

“Who you are, what you think, feel, and do, what you love—is the sum of what you focus on.”

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Goal = the specific result you are aiming for

“I want to write the first draft of my novel, Pentecost, by my birthday 2011.”

It helps to have a direction. Helps to keep you accountable. Should be integrated with your ‘Why.’

Make it specific. Put a date on it.
Write it down.

Of course, you can change your goal and life *will* happen, but if you make a specific goal, you have a direction.



Different stages of being an author = different goals, different types of productivity issues

New author = write book, publish, get more words per hour, or more pages per month

For established author = make more money, run a better business, working with freelancers, contract deadlines, outsourcing, marketing tasks + more time to write, more words on the page per hour :)

What specific goals do you have?

<https://www.thecreativepenn.com/arc-of-the-indie-author>





Starting energy, pushing through energy and finishing energy

You need to be productive at all stages of the process.

Different skills required e.g.
deep creative focus for first draft vs minutiae of editing vs dealing with agent/publisher/freelancers for the finishing energy

Goals will differ per stage e.g.
productivity might mean 2000 words written or 20 pages edited or learning how to publish or design meeting for book cover

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Work out your timeline and then set a deadline to aim for.

If you're traditionally publishing, you will have a contract date (external deadline).

If you're an indie, you may have deadlines to get the manuscript to editors ... or you will need to impose your own deadline. Or you may never finish!

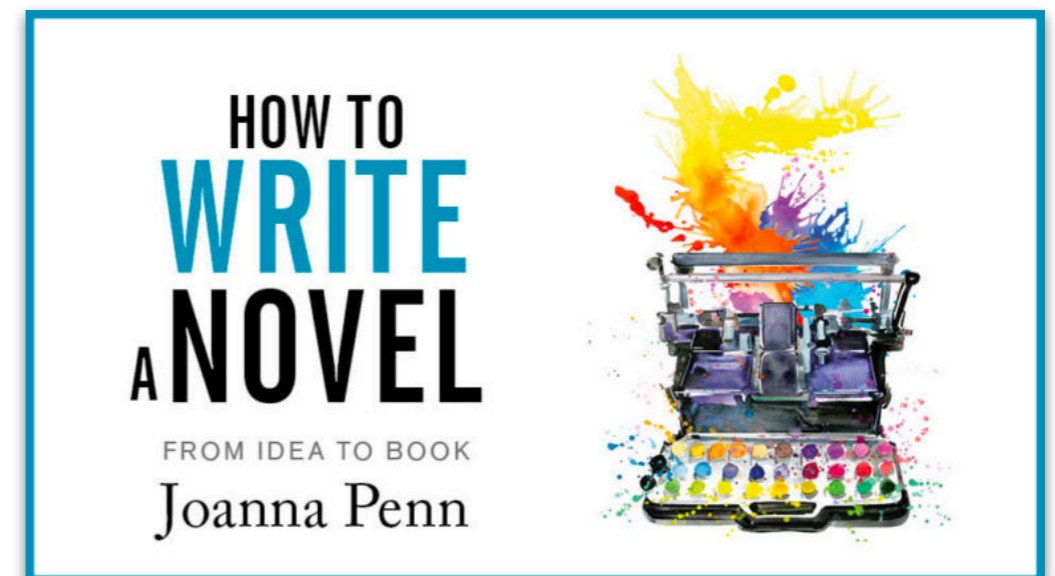
Make it memorable e.g. my birthday, and **write it down** somewhere you can see it.



Helps you prioritise and make choices about your time because you have a measurable date to aim toward.

“I will publish Pentecost by my birthday (March) 2011.”
(Took me 14 months and published in April 2011)

You can **use that date to work backwards** to other points along the way e.g. first draft by X, 2nd draft by Y, edits by Z etc



<https://www.thecreativepenn.com/firstnovel>

Accountability

Make yourself accountable. Surround yourself with other writers.

- Find a writing group that focuses on results and actual writing, not just talking about writing! (or a FB group)
- Join www.nanowrimo.org (November) or another writing sprint
- Join a local course in person e.g. I did 'Year of the Novel' in 2010
- Start a blog and document your journey (that's how I started The Creative Penn)



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What process (or series of steps) will get you to that goal?

How do you have to behave in order to achieve that?

e.g. To write my book, I have to write a certain number of words per day/week, so I need to allocate 30 mins per day for 6 months. I'll make an appointment with myself to go to the cafe and write 5x a week.

Become the verb.

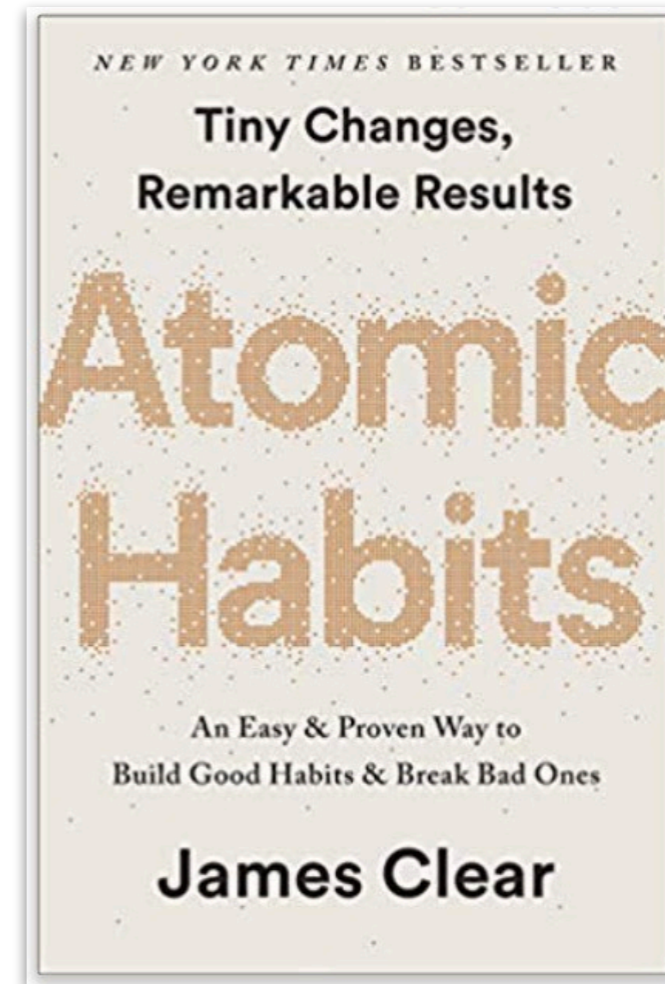
More detail in the other videos!

“Success is the product of daily habits – not once in a lifetime transformations.

Habits often appear to make no difference until you cross a critical threshold and unlock a new level of performance.

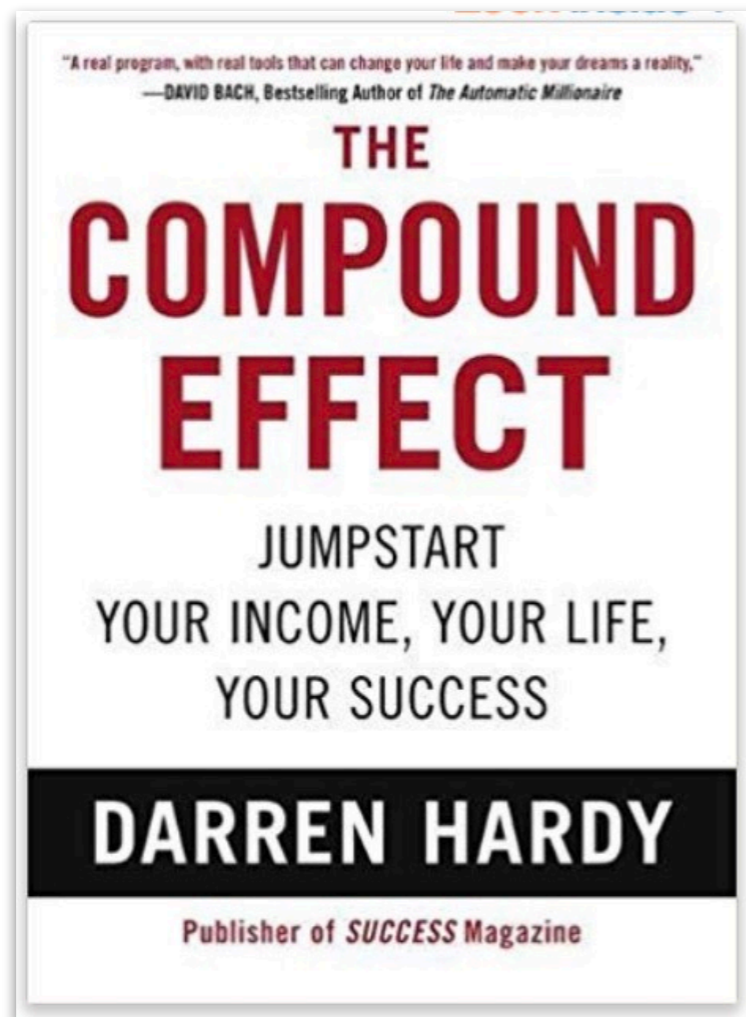
We often expect progress to be linear. At the very least, we hope it will come quickly. In reality, the results of our efforts are often delayed.”

James Clear, Atomic Habits



“Small, Smart Choices +
Consistency + Time = Radical
Difference”

*Darren Hardy, The Compound
Effect*



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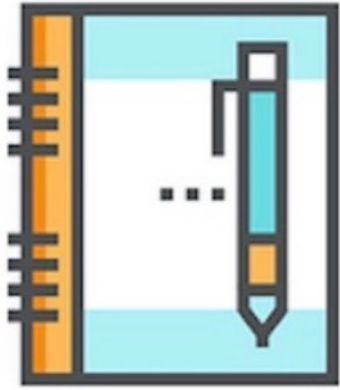
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Finding **time to write** and then **making the most of your writing time** is the only way you will achieve the goal of writing this book (or any other goal).

More detail in the other videos.

Exercise: Productivity principles



WORKBOOK

- What is your why? What is driving you towards your goal? What will keep you going when things get tough?
- What is stopping you from being productive right now? What do you need to address in order to move forward?
- What is your specific goal and the date by which you want to achieve it? [Write it down!]
- What can you put in place to stay accountable?

We'll get to process, habits, time etc in further videos.