



EPISODE 27:
HOW TO FOCUS

Full Episode Transcript

WITH YOUR HOST LAUREN CASH

YOU ARE LISTENING TO THE EFFECTIVE ENTREPRENEUR PODCAST WITH LAUREN CASH, EPISODE 27: HOW TO FOCUS.

Hey, you ready to focus this week? I hope so, and I hope this podcast helps you do more of that. Last week, we were talking about the Anatomy of a Calendar, and I hope that you're starting to build in time set aside for really deep, focused work, and we're going to talk about how to do that more in this episode.

Recently, my team and I have been working diligently on something really exciting that's coming soon for you. I cannot wait until I can reveal it to you. If you're not following us on Instagram, or if you're not on our email list yet, I highly recommend getting on that, because in the next few weeks and months, we have a lot of exciting things rolling out that are going to help you focus, help you build your business, and achieve all of the goals that you're wanting to achieve, even if they're not goals, maybe you think more about intention and what you want to embody and create for your long game. Whatever it is for you, I would love to help you with it through what we have to offer you, so stay tuned. There's lots of exciting things coming. You won't want to miss it.

I want to tell you about an awesome review I got. This is one of the ones I had done a call for a giveaway a few months ago, and someone that entered left this review, so I want to shout her out because she gave us permission to tell you her name and her Instagram handle so we can connect on Instagram with her, which is so fun. If you want us to connect with you on Instagram and have The Effective Entrepreneur community connect with you, definitely leave a review and then fill out the form at vivere.co/review so I can shout out your name and your Instagram handle, and all the amazing things.

So, Tracy Hoth, thank you so much for this review. She said, "Can't wait for more. I love how the very beginning, you were very vulnerable and real in your own "perfectionism." I've already learned why I'm not as "effective" as I want to be, and I can't wait to learn more. My favorite are the real-life examples. Thank you, Lauren." Thanks, Tracy, yeah, I love to interweave my real-life examples as much as possible into the podcast, so I'm glad that some of you are really enjoying that. Tracy on Instagram is just her name, so @tracyhoth, t-r-a-c-y-h-o-t-h, and Tracy helps disorganized, "Behind, overwhelmed folks" in her Organized Life Academy for you to create an organized life, so awesome. I bet a lot of our listeners would love your help organizing for sure, so connect with Tracey over there, and until then, let us focus here on How to Focus.

How focused are you when you're working? Do you have a lot of pings, dings, notifications? Do you have your screen lighting up? Is your computer set up for deep, focused work, or do you have things sliding across your screen? Do you have that little dock, if you have a Mac, with a bunch of different apps and the little red badges jumping and adding numbers to them as you're trying to work and focus? If you're like most people I've worked with, you do. You have not cultivated your space for deep focus.

We teach you in Monday Hour One that it's really important to set aside time for deep, focused work, and I also have done a lot of reading of Cal Newport's work that informs a lot of that deep, focused work as well. I'll link in the show notes some of his books that I highly recommend as well, if you want to dive deeper into this. But I also teach this more in-depth in Cultivate Margin, which a version of that is coming to you really soon, so again, that's why you need to stay on our list and follow us on Instagram. But today, I want to invite you to assess your focus and see what it might not feel as good as maybe adding a deep, focused work practice into your life may feel.

So, the first question I have for you is, do you have a time set aside for this deep, focused work? This is work that is your deeper work, so let's think about this in terms of if you run a digital company. It might be writing content. It might be writing emails, might be writing a book, an article, writing a workbook for your clients outlining a program, developing your client journey for an upcoming program, and the backend timelines to support all of that to make sure you're delegating to your team and everything is running seamlessly for a delightful front-end experience for your clients. It can be working on the business rather than in the business, and you want to have this work regardless of if you are a founder CEO, or if you're one of those that's more of supporting a founder CEO.

You want to be able to have this, at least if you work like eight hours a day, maybe like two hours a day is what we recommend in Monday Hour One. But you want to have a good chunk of time in your day for this deep, focused work to create results, and not just activitying and being interrupted by the pings, dings, notifications, split focus, completely unable to make progress in a flow state.

So if you don't have time, I want to invite you to start to carve that out, even if it's starting with 30 minutes a day, to have your phone put away. They say in studies too, you don't just want your phone on your desk off or in airplane mode, you want it not even within eyesight or within, yeah, your field of vision. So I've been doing this, where I just keep my phone in my bedroom while I do my deep focus work in my office. I love to do it first thing in the morning as much as possible. That's my favorite time. After I do a little morning routine, is to do my deep, focused work right after that.

But figure it out for you, if you have a family, you might find maybe later at night is better for you, or maybe during afternoon nap. Whenever it is for you, just start to carve that out and protect it, and design your digital space to focus. And if you want more tips for how to do that, I have a lot of recommendations on my website under the Articles, and we go deeper into this, as I said, in Cultivate Margin.

So, my second question for you is, now that you have it, this focus time set aside, how committed are you to honoring it? I've worked with a lot of clients that are like, "Yeah, it's on my calendar, but I never follow it." Why not? Why don't you follow it? And even if you follow it, are you allowing yourself to check email during it, get distracted by other things, etc? Get really curious, what are you thinking and feeling that then you distract yourself with it? We'll be talking more in the next episode about distracting yourself.

Notice how I said distracting yourself rather than getting distracted. It comes back to that time ownership that I talked about in our About Time episode, in Episode 25, I believe it is. So bring it back, why are you committed or not committed, what are you thinking and feeling that drives that following through? And if you're struggling to follow through, why do you think that is? Maybe you'll need a coach to help you with learning how to follow through on your commitments to your focus time.

The third thing of these items around focused work I want to walk you through is I want to invite you, for your focus time, to pick what you're going to create during that time, and setting yourself up ahead of time to not have to open communication platforms, oh my goodness. I still don't always do this myself, and whenever it happens, it's like an invitation for focus disaster.

So if you are working on something, let's say you had to give feedback to a team member on a Google Doc, and they had shared it with you via email or they pasted the link to you in Slack, and then you now have on your calendar that you are going to complete your revisions during the first hour of your focus time, and you don't have the link in your calendar. You're going to have to go rescue that in the email or communication and try to put the blinders on to not have to look at anything else. It's very difficult to do for the mind, so I recommend as you receive things from team members that you want to review, or there are documents that you'll need for your focus time, set yourself up ahead of time with those links in the calendar time block. You can have it in the little notes section, just have them right on in there. That way, you don't have to go looking for them and waste time either, it's just immediately from your workflow of your Slack or your email, into the time block where it belongs.

You also want to be planning for the result that you will create, what is the outcome, how will we know that it's done at the end of that time? You don't want it to just be super vague, that's a huge problem I see with people trying to implement this time blocking, not just for focus time, but for all time, they're super, super vague of like, "I will work on X project," but what does that mean, how do you break it down? We go into that a lot in Cultivate Margin, how to break things down to get your mind on board with creating the entire project in smaller bite-size chunks that are calendarizable, as I call them.

Number four is set up your tech for focus during this time, and really, I want you to set up your, if I had my way, I would have you set up your computer for focus the entire day. How many tabs do you have open, how many applications do you have open on your screen? What are the files like on your desktop? What's bouncing around, dinging, visually interrupting your focus? I don't see a lot of people cultivating this, and I really want to invite you to cultivate the space and organize your files in a way that they're not all over your desktop. That'll also help speed up your computer.

But also to not have things notifying you, or even the number on the badge of the icon is this thing that your mind is having to think of, like, "I still have 5,000 things to do and still outstanding, and I..." It'll offer you lots of thoughts just because of that trigger there, so let's eliminate as many triggers as possible, and I have a lot of ideas for exactly how to do that, so stay with me, take Cultivate Margin, have private coaching, check out the articles on my website. I have all the ideas for you.

It's funny, I've had a lot of clients that are thinking that they potentially have ADHD or something like that, and yeah, some of them do have that diagnosed, but some of them, I don't even know if they do, because they haven't even tried just seeing if it's their mind doing what mind things do, like distracting them based on this technology that was designed to steal our attention. So what if you took back control of your attention on purpose, not only during focus time but also throughout your workday?

What would your work be like if you knew you could have at least 5 to 10 hours a week of deep, focused work, creating actual results? What would change, what would your impact be like? How would you feel? I think it would be so incredibly amazing if you could have that if you could gift that to yourself. It also will help you feel a lot more grounded, centered, calm when you're directing your attention that way. So as you practice this, make notes for a week of how you distract yourself, and we'll talk more about that in next week's episode.

If you want more of a walkthrough of how I set up my computer for focus, as I keep alluding to, go to vivere.co/clear-space-desktops, the link will be in the show notes, of course, and I'm also thinking about sharing more details about how I Slack, so if that's something that would interest you, email us, let us know, or send me a DM on Instagram to let me know there's demand for how to Slack and how to manage your Slacks, etc., because I'd love to develop that for you if I receive enough invitations for that, so let me know.

But deep, focused work is a practice, and it's something that a lot of us have a lot of mind drama around and a lot of obstacles that we need coaching on, that we can't even see for ourselves what we're doing. I was watching somebody type a couple months ago, and I pointed out to them, they're only using one finger of one of their hands as they're typing, and they had no idea that that's what they had been doing, and that's how mindset coaching works for anything, but especially for time management, focus, all these things. We can't see what we can't see. So I'd invite you, if you want to get private coaching by one of our Vivere Co coaches, head to our website, we'll have the links in the show notes. We would love to coach you in helping you focus more.

Thanks, and I will talk to you next week. Make it an amazing one, bye.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "xo, L." with a period at the end.

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