

INTENSITY AND FOCUS

HOW TO INTENSELY FOCUS

Dear friend,

Another key to success: INTENSITY x FOCUS.

What is intensity and focus?

- **Intensity:** The degree in which you output your creative work or power.
- **Focus:** Your ability to single-task at what you intend to work on, and your ability to avoid distraction.

Why intensity and focus?

I see the dual input of intensity and focus like a jackhammer: if you want to put indentations into the earth, drill deep, and break through resistance and concrete, you need both intensity and focus.

- **Intensity:** The magnitude of power of your creative jackhammer, to dig deep.
- **Focus:** To know what spot to drill into.

Zen Capitalism

In today's world, I think intensity and focus can be your two best allies and mates. But trust me, cultivating intensity and focus in today's distracted world is one of the most difficult things to do.

Personally, I have studied a lot of Zen Buddhism and looked up to my hero Steve Jobs to cultivate intensity and focus. I am easily distracted, thus I had to prune away all sources of my distractions in order to focus on the intensity of my creative

production. I pruned out email, text messaging, I got rid of my phone, I stopped reading distracting websites/blogs by blocking them on my browsers, and started to subtract negative energy from my life.

It has been a difficult journey-- probably about 2-3 years in the making. But I would say that these last 2-3 years have been phenomenal: the most creatively productive, happy, and uplifting years of my life.

Intensity

Sometimes when I get into deep conversations with friends, family, or other people, they tell me that I often get "too intense." I cannot help it-- when I am deeply passionate about something, I get "into the zone", and cannot help but be intense.

Similarly, when I get into a zen-like intense focus in my creative work, I also get intense. I get drunken off the Dionysian wine of creation, and usually type in a frenzy, and produce things in some sort of intense frenzy. I often like to listen to pretty heavy hip hop music and dance around with the bass-heavy melodies while at it.

I feel that if I weren't so intense, I wouldn't have the courage to say what I really desire to say, and if I weren't so intense-- I wouldn't leave an impact/imprint on others.

Focus

To be honest, I don't think you can just practically "will" yourself to focus. I think the best strategy is to be like Ulysses: tie yourself to the mast, knowing that you will be distracted by the sweet songs of the (distracting) sirens. One strategy I have used successfully in the past is to use the "[Freedom](#)" app on my laptop to block out the internet for certain intervals: let's say 3 hours in the morning, so I forced myself *NOT* to get distracted online, before doing creative work. Other ways

you can prevent distracted is by making a hard-set rule: DON'T check your email first thing in the morning (this puts you into 'defensive' mode, not offensive/creative mode, which is more desirable).

When you wake up in the morning, that is when you are the most fresh, energized, and powerful. Why waste your creative power answering emails, checking social media, or the news? I suggest the following: take an icy cold shower (to ramp up your metabolism/mitochondrial-energy production), drink some very strong black coffee, and do your best creative work in the morning. You can use your mornings to write blog posts/essays, make photos, paint, write poetry, shoot video, edit video, make music, or edit your photography projects.

Or you can use your mornings to build up your business on the side (assuming you have a full-time job). Use the mornings to contact potential clients, work on your website/blog, write a free ebook to attract more followers/subscribers, or hash out some ideas for monetization, or start working on a rough business plan.

Why waste your most fruitful hours in the morning to others? Why not dedicate/devote that time to yourself?

Life hacks/Tools for intense focus

Personal tools I use:

1. **IA WRITER**: The best writing app, period, for focusing. I use the 'focus mode' to write, and I use 'markdown' to format as I write. I have used IA WRITER successfully to write 20+ ebooks, and 3,000+ blog posts.
2. **iPad Pro 10.5 Inch**: If I get distracted opening and closing too many web browsers, or I get distracted from multi-tasking, the iPad has helped me be more productive by focusing on only one thing at a time.
3. **Music**: To get into a zen-focused/intense zone of creative working, I usually listen to the same 1 song or 1 album on repeat, over and over again. Albums I personally have loved: Kendrick Lamar's "DAMN" album, his new "Black Panther" album, JAY-Z's "4:44" album, Kanye West's "YEEZUS x Life of Pablo" album, Cyhi da Prynce "No Dope on Sundays", and Dr. Dre's "Compton".

4. **RICOH GR II x ERIC KIM NECK STRAP:** To stay focused on making photos, I just shoot with RICOH GR II (one camera, one lens, with the integrated 28mm lens). I just shoot high-contrast color positive film JPEG, and quickly select/edit my photos in Lightroom. This helps me prevent from getting too distracted by having too much gear.
5. **Working out:** Exercise is power for the mind. When I have access to a gym, I usually do heavy "1-rep max" powerlifting style deadlifts, squats, and dumbbell press. When on the road or I don't have access to a gym, I will do chin-ups at the park, "dive-bomber" pushups at home, or some yoga stretching while I'm reading books. Getting a blood-flow pump from working out and (short and intense) physical exercise helps me gain more creative energy, power, and focus for my work.
6. **Wearing the same all-black outfit everyday:** Less distraction on my daily wardrobe-- I wear the same all-black outfit everyday, so I have to expend less brainpower on choosing what to wear for the day. Now I just wear a black merino wool t-shirt, black merino wool leggings, black athletic shorts, and black NIKE Free Flyknit RN shoes.
7. **No breakfast or lunch:** I practice "intermittent fasting"-- only big meals in the evening (lots of meat, eggs, green leafy veggies/herbs, and no carbohydrates, sugars, or starch). By not eating breakfast or lunch (I just drink black coffee/water/green tea during the day), I don't get the infamous "food coma" during the day, which helps me be more intense and focused on my work. And in the evenings, I relax, read books, walk around the town, chat with Cindy, and have leisurely dinners with her-- and will usually cook a 6-10 "egg snack" in the evenings. Essentially I follow a mostly "ketogenic" diet.
8. **No phone:** This is probably the best "life hack"-- not owning a smartphone. I got rid of my phone around a year ago, and it has probably been the best thing ever. Now, I have been insanely more focused and productive, because I'm less distracted. And no more worrying about upgrading to the next new new smartphone. I use all that extra brainpower to once again, focus on my creative work.
9. **Don't read blogs/websites, read great books from the past:** I have stopped reading blogs/websites, and instead have been reading a lot of great literature from the past. The last several months I have read Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, a few plays by Euripedes, all of Nietzsche's work, the works of Fernandinho Galiani (I recommend "On Money", but I had to Google translate his Italian), and started to read Immanuel Kant's "Critique of Practical Reason". Reading great literature/philosophy from the past will give you better, richer, and more intense

- ideas-- that will augment your mind, and give birth to new creative ideas that you can use to aid your business, entrepreneurial pursuits, and life.
10. **Don't use social media:** Don't use Facebook/Instagram/Snapchat/Twitter to have intense focus. Most of the stuff you see on social media nowadays is either political nonsense, toxic cultural negativity, or advertisements. You know who your real friends are-- just keep in touch with them via phone calls, Google Hangouts, or FaceTime.
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Cut out one distraction, everyday

To be frank, I think the extreme measure of complete 100% abstinence is easier than "moderation". Moderation is not objective. For example, if you want to lose body fat, it is hard to say that I will only "moderately eat sugar"-- what does that even mean? 1 teaspoons of sugar a day, 5 teaspoons of sugar a day, 50 teaspoons of sugar a day? It is easier to cut out sugar all together (including fructose).

Thus I encourage you to completely cut out one distraction everyday, if your goal is to intensely focus on what is really meaningful and important in your life.

When I had my phone, a daily practice I had was to **uninstall one app from my phone everyday**. Eventually I got to the point where I literally had no apps left on my phone, and I just ended up getting rid of my phone (ultimate zen). I found that most apps that I thought I needed, I really didn't. And of course, if you end up uninstalling an app you really need, you can always reinstall it.

And when I encourage you to intensely focus-- remember, the decision is up to you. I have just found that intense focus has been beneficial to me in my photography life, entrepreneurial life, and personal-philosophical life. It works for me, it might not work for you.

So just experiment with yourself. Create your own lifestyle that accords with you.

But realize if you want to create something truly great, you must be intensely passionate about it, and you must be able to focus and carve out immense chunks of time to dedicate/devote yourself to that creative project.

The world is waiting for you.

BE BOLD, ERIC