

Focus

by Daniel Goleman

A printable to-do list of the most effective habits from this book. Check one off each day you do it.

MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN

⁰¹ **Schedule one daily monk hour**

Block 60 uninterrupted minutes - same time each day, no notifications, no tabs, no switching. Goleman's research shows the compound benefit of sustained daily focus sessions is non-linear: three weeks in, recovery speed and depth both improve measurably.

MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN

⁰² **Practice the attention return exercise**

Ten times each day, the moment you notice your mind has wandered, gently return your attention to what you intended to focus on. Don't judge the drift - just return. This is the rep. Over time, the return becomes faster and the drift becomes shorter.

MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN

⁰³ **Set a listening intention before important conversations**

Take three slow breaths and silently commit to hearing the other person fully before formulating your response. Goleman's empathy research shows this single move shifts you from cognitive empathy (understanding) to affective empathy (actually feeling with). The quality of the conversation changes visibly.

MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN

⁰⁴ **Run a weekly attention audit**

Each Sunday, list the three biggest attention drains from the previous week - apps, habits, environments, or people. Choose one to reduce or remove. Goleman frames this as environmental design: willpower is finite, but architecture is structural.

MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN

⁰⁵ **Practice open awareness outdoors for 10 minutes daily**

Let your senses expand rather than fixate. No destination, no music, no phone. This activates Attention Restoration Theory: natural environments refill directed-attention capacity passively. Goleman cites it as one of the most robust attention interventions with the lowest barrier to entry.