

CHAPTER 10 • MARGIN MOVE

The Weekly Deep Block

One recurring appointment, built to specification.

A protected block is only real estate. The vault has four walls, and this page builds each one. Your assignment is a single recurring appointment.

One block. Two to three hours. Once a week, to start.

Build the four walls

WALL	THE SPECIFICATION	MINE
Time	Placed at your cognitive peak, not your leftover hours.	
Place	A consistent location the brain can learn.	
Signal	Socially real: door, headphones, calendar, a word to the people around you.	
Entry	A small ritual that becomes automatic.	

The treaty with yourself

Most focus advice assumes the threat comes from outside. Mostly it does not. The most important wall of the vault is not the closed door.

- A capture pad within reach, for every intruding loop. Write it down, let it go, return.
- The phone genuinely out of the room. Not face-down. Out.

A floor, not a purity test. Depth has a floor and the floor is low. Three genuinely protected hours a week is enough to change the quality of your thinking. You do not need monastic mornings. If the block is 90 minutes, the block is 90 minutes.

Measure it correctly

Do **not** measure the block by how much you produced in it. Depth’s real product is not output. It is judgment, and judgment shows up later. So ask the question that actually reads the return:

In the week following my deep block, what did I decide well that I would otherwise have decided badly, or not at all?

WEEK OF	DID THE BLOCK HAPPEN?	WHAT I DECIDED WELL BECAUSE OF IT

The payoff of depth is real but delayed and diffuse, and we are very bad at valuing anything real but delayed and diffuse. Value it anyway.

What I noticed

One or two lines, written now while it is fresh. Reflection is a deposit — Chapter 7 — and this is the cheapest place in the book to make one.

Photocopy-friendly. From Thought Margin: Reclaiming the Capacity to Think in the Age of AI by Rachael-Renée Rychling. Free to print for personal use.