WORKSHEET + WORKED EXAMPLE

Make Focus Possible

A protected working session with a clear aim, useful feedback, and support for interruptions.

10 minutes | Conditions for focused work

Use it in three moves

1. Choose a useful stopping point and gather what the task needs.
2. Agree how other responsibilities will be covered.
3. Try one session and revise the conditions from what you learn.

What piece of work needs attention?

Choose a bounded task, not the whole role.

What would a useful stopping point look like?

Make progress recognizable without requiring perfection.

What information or help is needed first?

Name the gap rather than assuming a motivation problem.

Make Focus Possible

YOUR WORKING NOTES / CONTINUED

What is likely to interrupt the session?

Include legitimate responsibilities.

How will those needs be covered?

Agree an arrangement with others; do not simply disappear.

When and where will you try it?

Leave recovery and transition time around the session.

What will you notice afterward?

Ask about the conditions, not just how much was produced.

A question for me

Whose attention am I borrowing to protect my own?

See one way through

FICTIONAL WORKED EXAMPLE / NOT THE ANSWER TO YOUR SITUATION

What piece of work needs attention?

Draft the first version of the grant budget.

What would a useful stopping point look like?

A complete first estimate, with uncertain costs marked for checking.

What information or help is needed first?

Last year's costs and ten minutes with the finance coordinator.

What is likely to interrupt the session?

The advice desk normally calls me about every unfamiliar request.

How will those needs be covered?

A colleague covers routine desk questions for 45 minutes. Urgent matters still reach me by phone.

When and where will you try it?

Wednesday, 10-10:45, in the quiet room; ten minutes afterward for desk questions.

What will you notice afterward?

Did I have the information I needed, and did the cover arrangement work for my colleague?

The thinking behind it

A protected hour for one person should not become an invisible burden for another. Make the support arrangement part of the plan.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's work on flow explored deep involvement in an activity. This original planning tool focuses on conditions you can discuss and change. It does not promise a flow state or treat attention as a character test.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi · TED talk on flow

Read You Have a Culture Problem by Nic Payne