

# Focus

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Silicon Straits Saigon  
13 April 2016

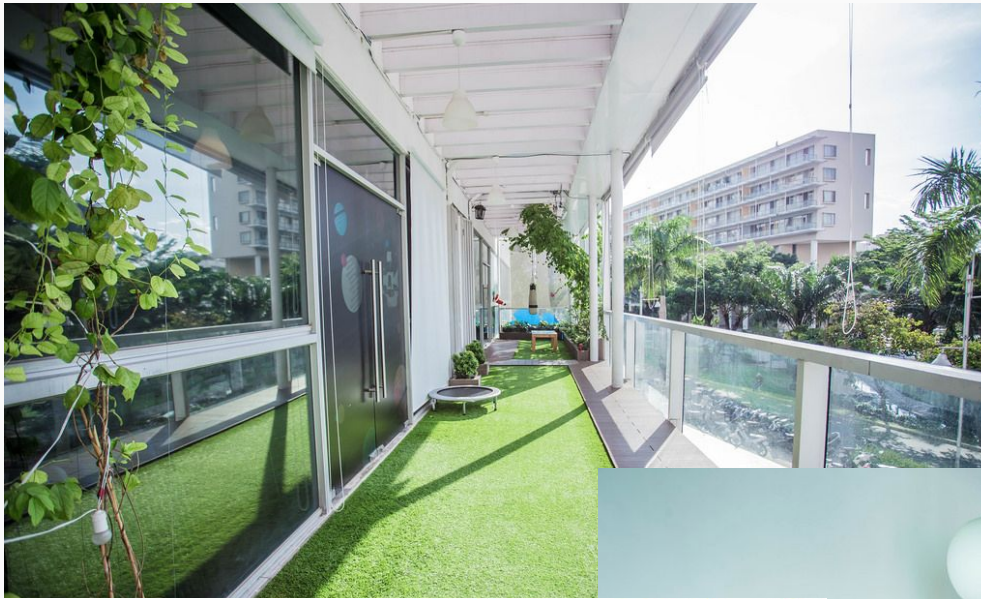
*“Lack of focus is the most common killer of making things happen.”*

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*- someone on the internet -*

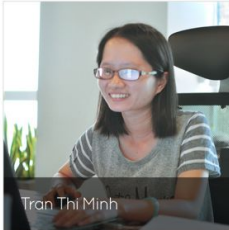
Lack of focus is a real problem





## Beauty Pirates

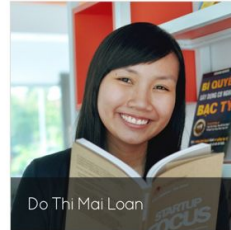
SSS's Girl Team



Tran Thi Minh



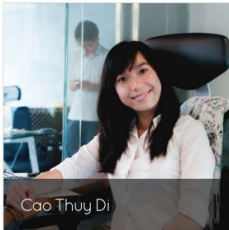
Pham Dinh Duy Thanh



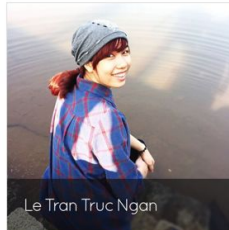
Do Thi Mai Loan



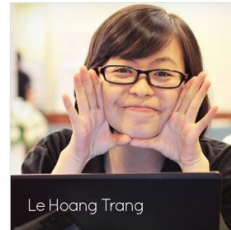
Le Thi Doan Trang



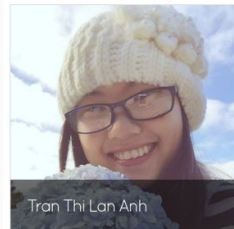
Cao Thuy Di



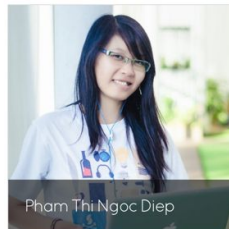
Le Tran Truc Ngan



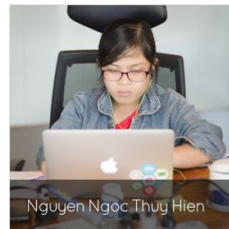
Le Hoang Trang



Tran Thi Lan Anh



Pham Thi Ngoc Diep



Nguyen Ngoc Thuy Hien



Le Thi Thuy



“Morden office has become an interruption factory.”

From the authors of the *New York Times* bestseller *Rework*



“Modern office has become an interruption factory.”

- Jason Fried, *Remote* -

interview



Focus is hard, on so many levels!



Focus is hard, on so many levels!



Focus is just like any other skills you have, it  
needs practice to really get good.

*“Control your focus become one of the most important skill you must have!”*

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- Me -

Let's start with small scale

# Focus in “micro scale”



# Meditation at Barcamp 2015











Human brains are full of thoughts,  
distractions, worries...

“Micro focus” is ability to focus on **one thing** in short amount of time”

“Micro focus” is ability to focus on **one thing** in short amount of time”

- Me -

Is there any real life use case for “micro focus”?



English listening test



Driving car



Fixing bugs in production?



*Transient attention* is a short-term response to a stimulus that temporarily attracts/distracts attention. Researchers disagree on the exact amount of human transient attention span; some say it may be as short as **8 seconds**.

**Fun fact:** attention span of a goldfish is 9 seconds



Improve “micro focus”

## Improve “micro focus”

- It depends on each case

## Improve “micro focus”

- It depends on each case
- Be prepared
- Practice a lot

# Improve “micro focus”

- It depends on each case

- Be prepared
- Practice a lot

- Drink More Fluids

Men should drink 13 cups of total beverages a day while women should drink nine cups.

- Exercise

- Meditation

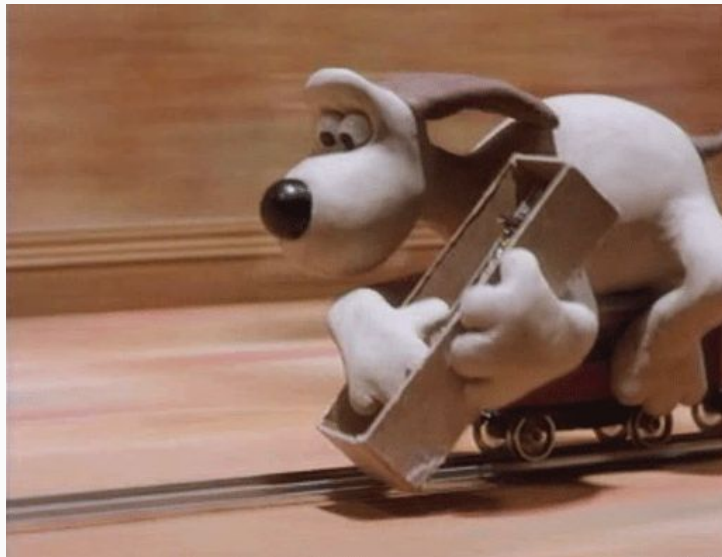
Exercise for your brain

# Focus in “micro scale”

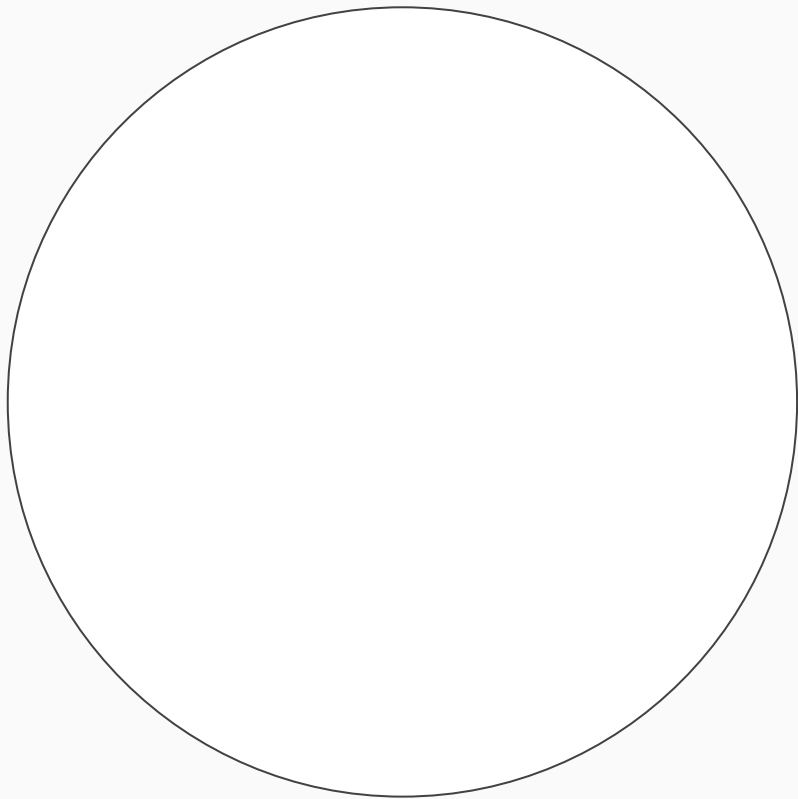


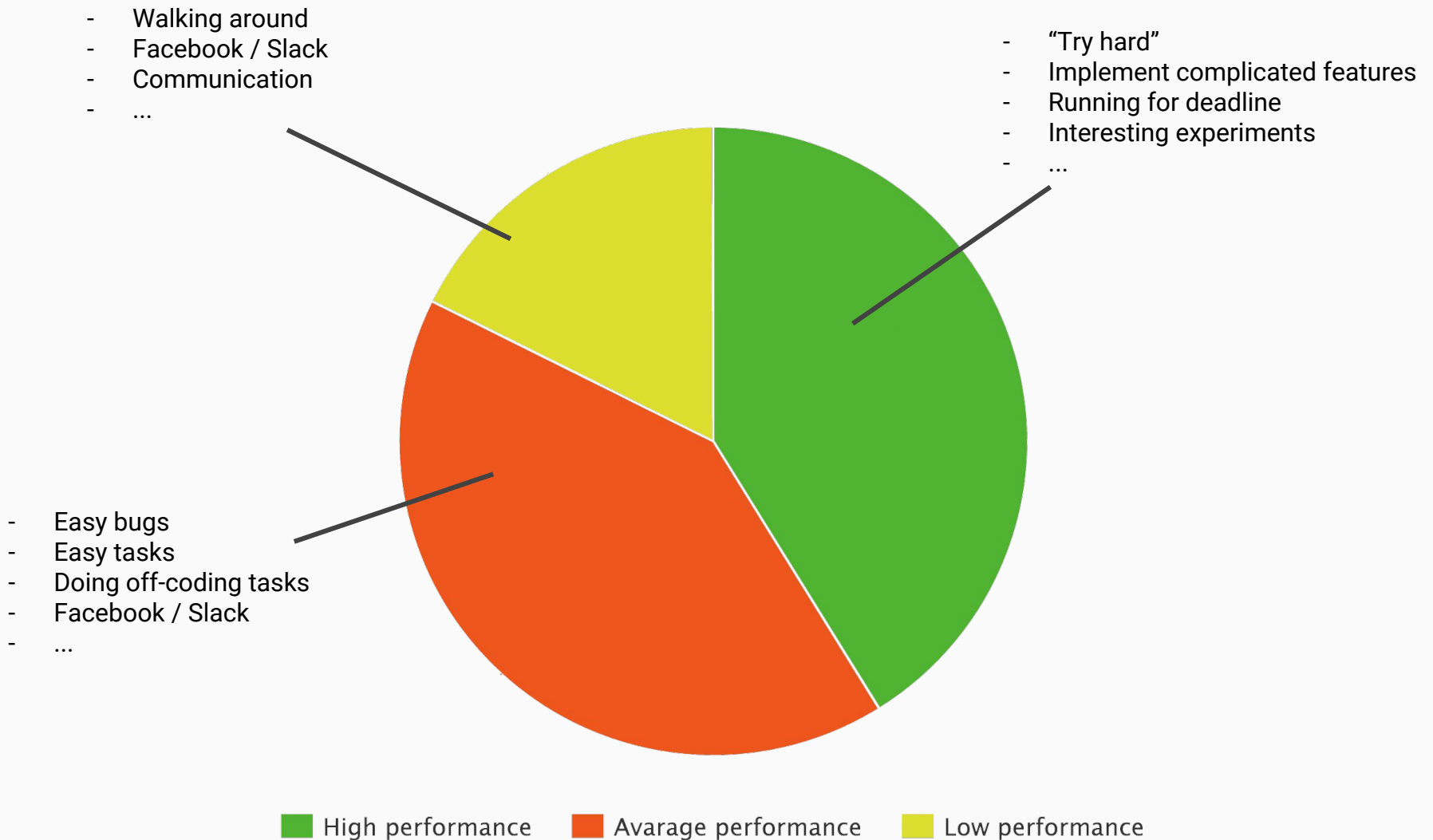
# Focus in normal work

“High performance mode”

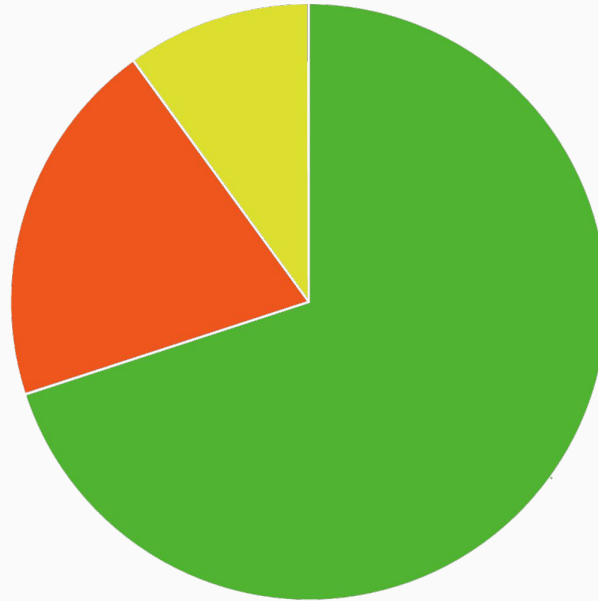








*\* Chart used is for illustration purposes only*



More “High performance” span



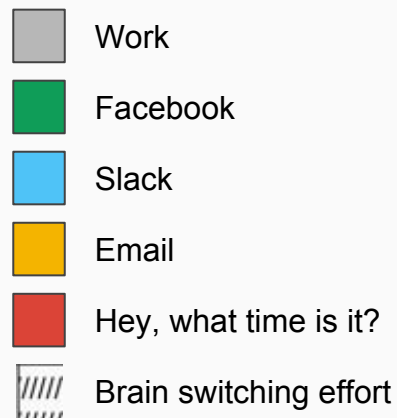
More effective work

How?

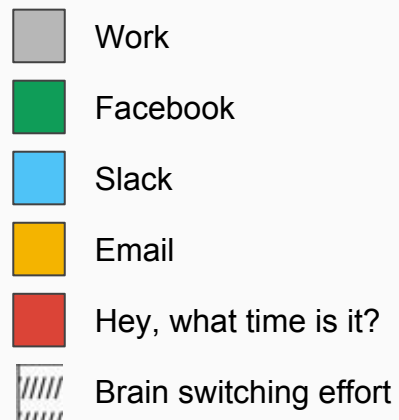
The brain is not capable of multi-tasking. We can talk and breathe, but when it comes to higher level tasks, we just can't do it.

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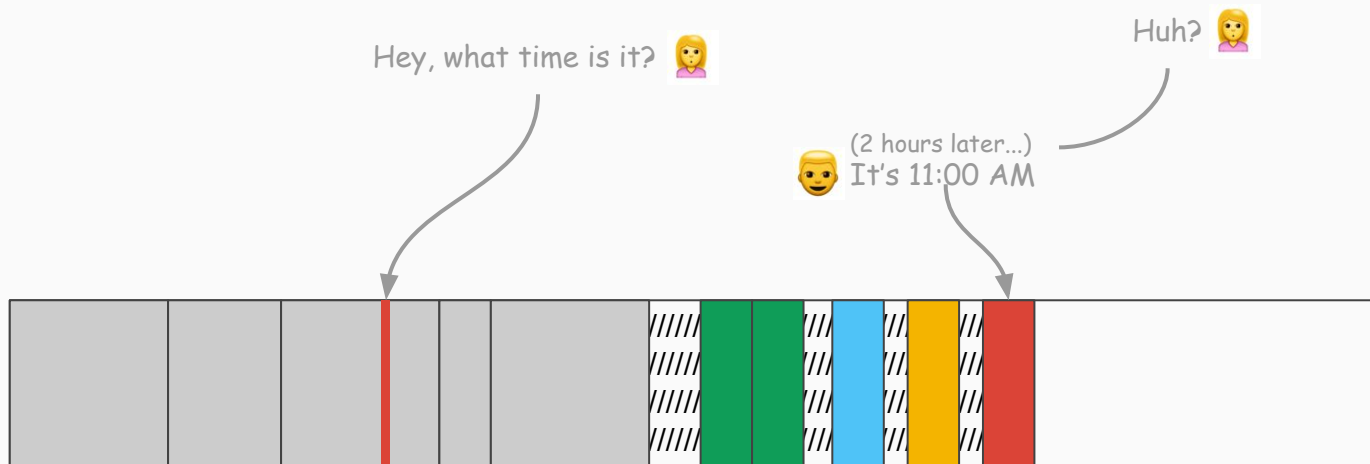
### The “Yeah I can do it all” model



## The “It can wait” model



## But not everything can wait...

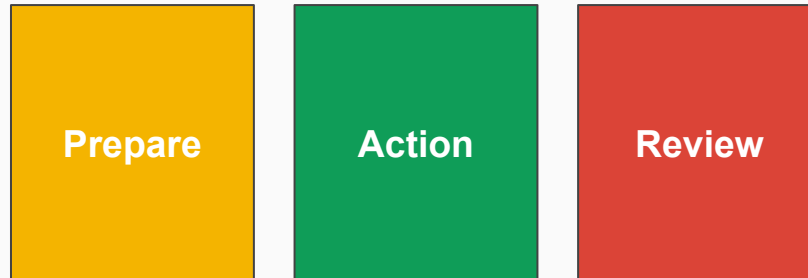


- Work
- Facebook
- Slack
- Email
- Hey, what time is it?
- Brain switching effort



# Suggestions

Set up a “high performance” session



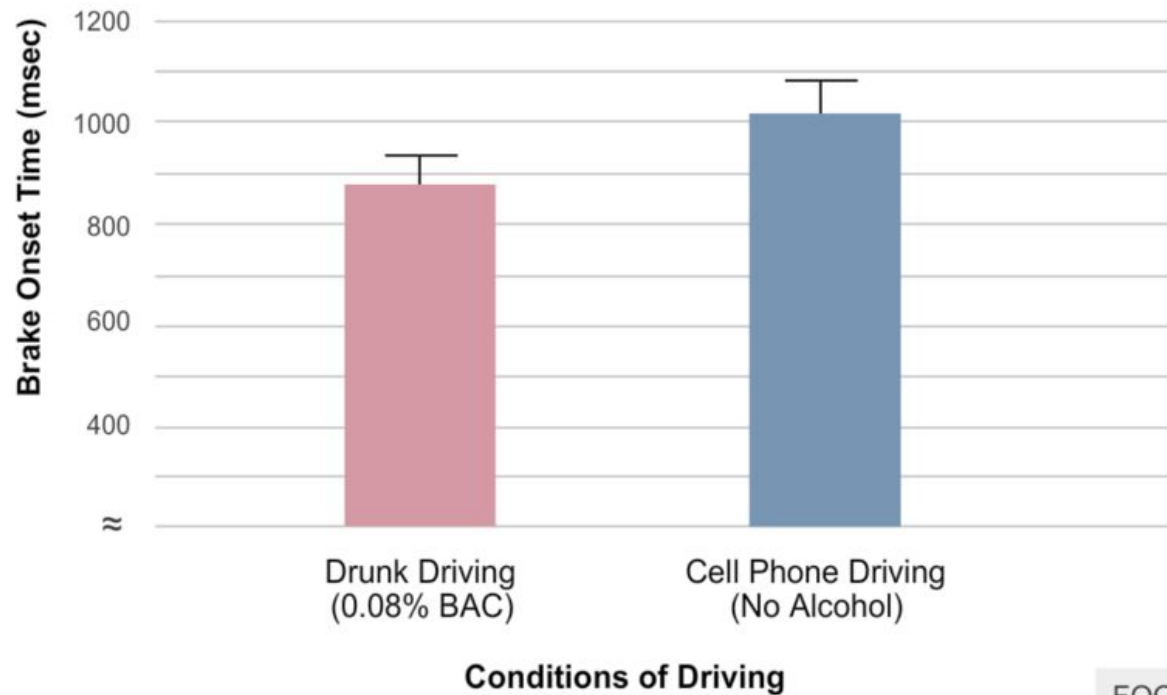
# Prepare

- Make sure you know exactly what to do when begin a session.
- Get to a place that have less distractions.
- Face to a wall, or windows or wherever have less distraction.
- Listen to your favorite song?
- **Don't spent too much time to prepare.**

# Action

- Focus on a single task

### effects of alcohol vs. cellphone on mean reaction times



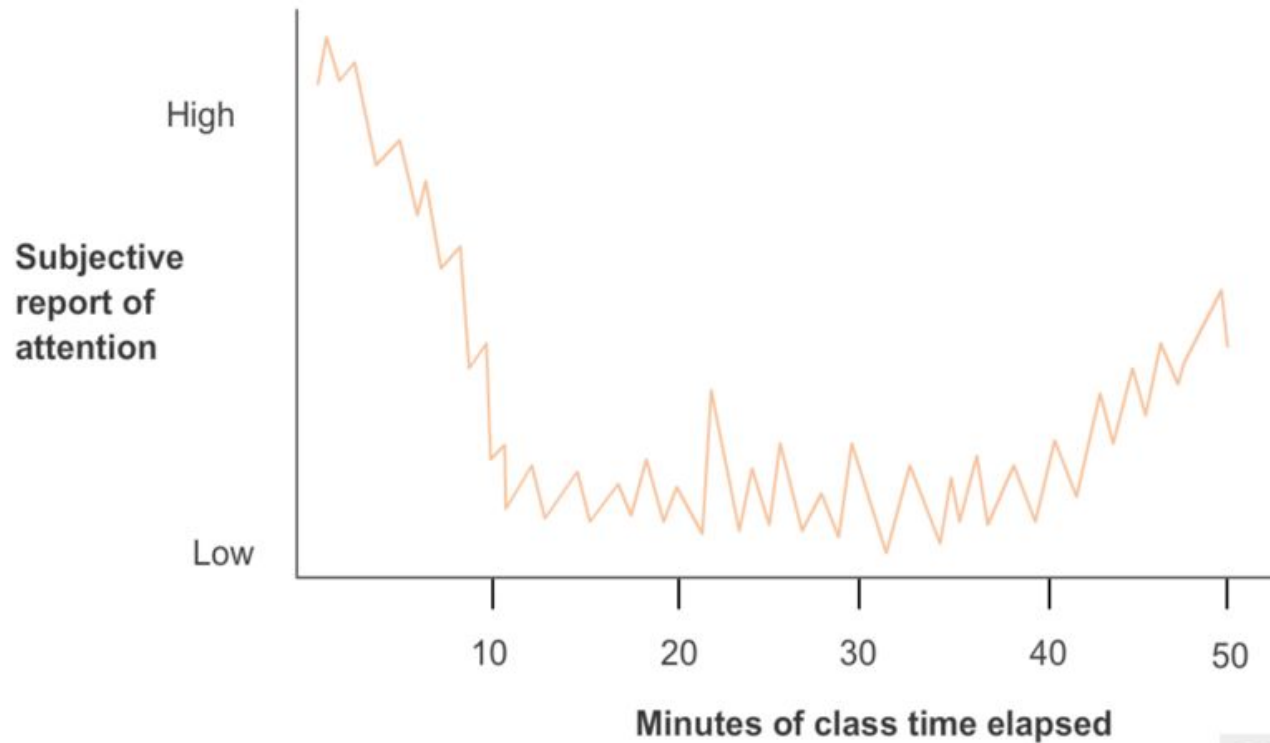
FOOTNOTES

Strayer, DL, Drews, FA & Crouch, DJ (2006)  
Fatal distraction? A comparison of the cellphone driver and the drunk driver  
Human Factors 48(2): 381 - 391

# Action

- Focus on a single task
- Break big tasks into 10-minute tasks

## the 10 minute rule



FOOTNOTES

Hartley, J., & Davies, I.  
Note-taking: A critical review.  
Programmed Learning and Educational Technology, 1978, 15, 207-224.

# Action

- Focus on a single task
- Break big tasks into 10-minute tasks
- Avoid blocking works. (project build, slow connection...)
- Fullscreen coding IDE.
- Manage the distractions / interruptions.

Are you a strong person? Can you **ignore** the distractions when you see it? Do you need to **close all of your email, facebook** to get to work? How fast can you **prioritize the distractions** to know if it really worth to stop you doing what you are doing?

(If you are not a strong person, don't worry, that's why you need to practice.)



# Review

- How effective was it?
- Why it wasn't effective?
- What was the distractions / interruptions?

*“I want to maintain my focus, but I am also interested in identifying what distracts me.”*

*The Inner Game of Work: Focus, Learning,  
Pleasure, and Mobility in the Workplace*

*By W. Timothy Gallwey*

Manage your focus sessions  
(Ex: with pomodoro technique?).



# The Pomodoro technique



## **1. CHOOSE A TASK YOU'D LIKE TO GET DONE:**

Something big, something small, something you've been putting off for a million years: it doesn't matter. What matters is that it's something that deserves your full, undivided attention.

# The Pomodoro technique



## 2. SET THE POMODORO FOR 25 MINUTES:

Make a small oath to yourself: I will spend 25 minutes on this task and I will not interrupt myself. You can do it! After all, it's just 25 minutes.

# The Pomodoro technique



## **3. WORK ON THE TASK UNTIL THE POMODORO RINGS**

Immerse yourself in the task for the next 25 minutes. If you suddenly realize you have something else you need to do, write the task down on a sheet of paper.

# The Pomodoro technique



## **4. WHEN THE POMODORO RINGS, PUT A CHECKMARK ON A PAPER**

Congratulations! You've spent an entire, interruption-less Pomodoro on a task.



# The Pomodoro technique



## **5. TAKE A SHORT BREAK**

Breathe, meditate, grab a cup of coffee, go for a short walk or do something else relaxing (i.e., not work-related). Your brain will thank you later.

# The Pomodoro technique



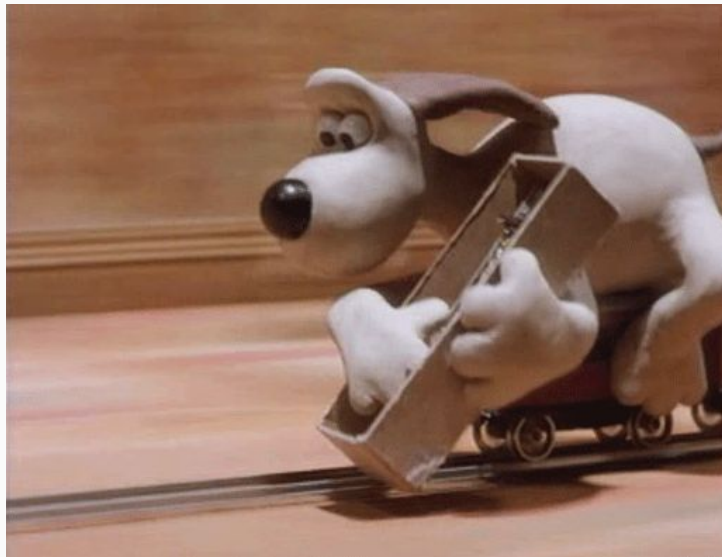
## **6. EVERY 4 POMODOROS, TAKE A LONGER BREAK**

Once you've completed four pomodoros, you can take a longer break. 20 minutes is good. Or 30. Your brain will use this time to assimilate new information and rest before the next round of Pomodoros.



# Focus in normal work

“High performance mode”



# Focus in group work





*Human brains are full of distractions, thoughts, worries... remember?*



It becomes worse when there is more than 1 brain in the room.

“Group focus” is ability to be focus when working in group.



Group focus is important

## Common scenarios:

- A **scrum daily meeting** turn into a **technical discussion**.
- A **technical discussion** turn into a **business analysis meeting**.
- A **team-building planning meeting** turn into a **travel business discussion**.
- ...

It's more difficult when there are more people

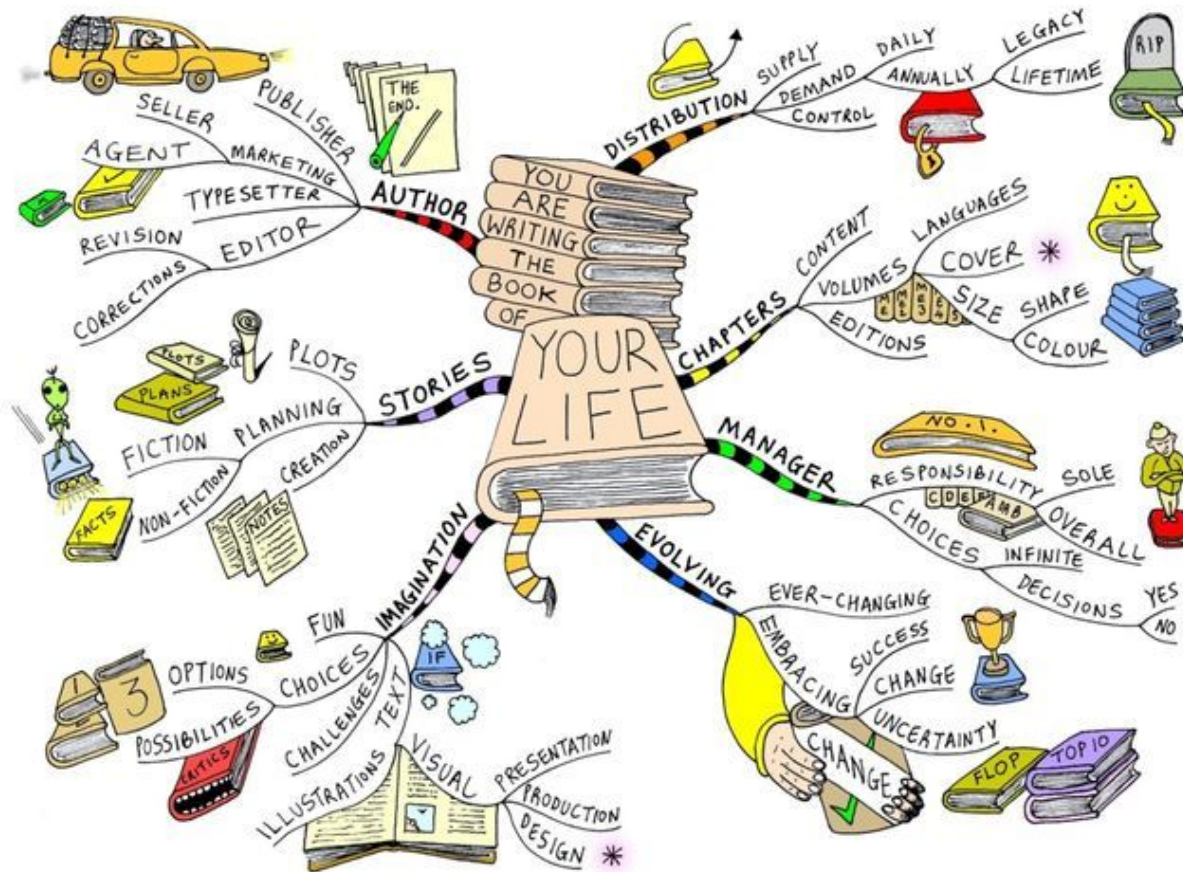
# Solution

- Increase the awareness of focus.
- Clearly identify target of the discussion/meeting
- Take note for the irrelevants

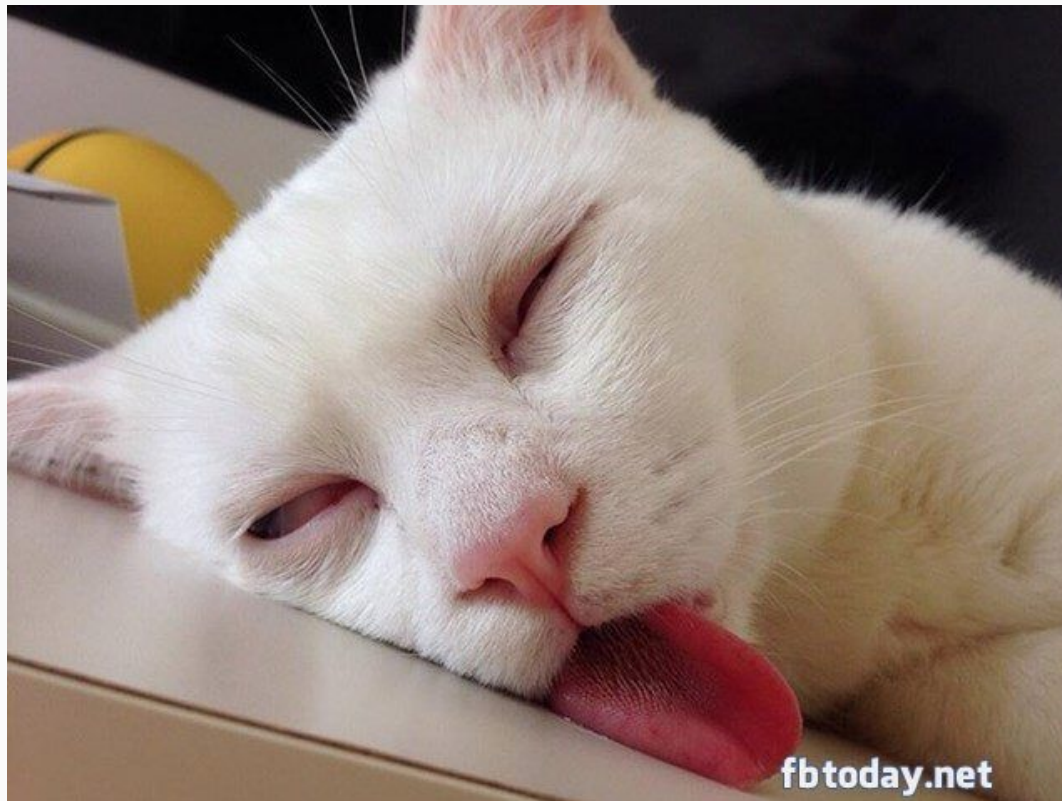
# Focus in group work



## Focus in “macro scale”



Did you ever find that you have too many important things to do but then you decided just to do nothing and go to sleep instead?



## **My reasons:**

- Well, first, sleep is good for your health
- Everything is important, I cannot decide what to do first
- If I chose to do one thing, I couldn't keep my head to stop thinking about the others
- I don't want to drop any one of them, but I don't have enough time/effort to do them all

## **That's when you need to:**

- Drop one (or several) of them.

Or

- Focus, and manage your life more efficient.

# Life Goals



**Everything** you do **everyday** is **someway, somehow** have **affects** on what **you want to do** or what **you want to be** in your life goals. This is **focus in macro scale**.

*Ofcouse everything can affect your life (buffterfly effect), but how effective is it?*

- I was a game addict for ~3 years (when I was younger).
- In college time, I tried to earn money by teaching.
- Others even find a waiter part-time job.

It's never too late

How focus can help you identify your life path, and achieve your life goals better.

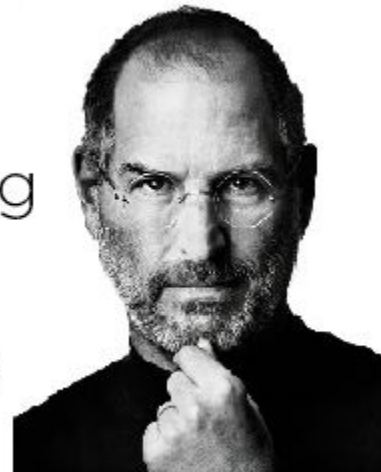
*(from a 23-year-old youngster's perspective)*

- Always know exactly what are you **doing** and how **effective** is it in the path to your life goal.
- **Drop things** that don't related or **ineffective**.
- Human nature is greedy. There are too many things you want to do. So, **prioritize them!**
- When there is **too many things** to be prioritize, **manage them**.

## Never lose focus


“Deciding what not to do is as important as deciding what to do.”








- Steve Jobs



How to manage your “macro focus”?

Silently manage it in your head, think about  
it every night










# NOTES

134 notes Options ▾

Todo  
10/15/15  
[unclear] dependencies install npmC 10/15 Can check if  
[unclear] Can on (Git) name, [unclear] can [unclear] [unclear]

HAC Next  
10/12/15  
- Song post/approve system. - Add song to  
database - Display un-approved songs: Only  
you can see this. This artist is not exist, add? -

npm get killed  
10/10/15  
<https://www.digitalocean.com/community/questions/npm-gets-killed-no-matter-what> 6  
andeersgOctober 31, 2014 I found a solution



trungdq88's notebook New tag...

Todo  
[unclear] dependencies  
[unclear] install npmC 10/15  
Can check if [unclear] [unclear]  
Can on  
[unclear] name, [unclear] can [unclear] [unclear]

Todo list



Take a note...

**Code for food**  
  
+ 18 checked items

**Mini project**  
  
☐ Super Paint  
☐ MAC TODO  
+ 1 checked item

**School activities**  
  
+ 10 checked items

**Off-school activities**  
  
☐ Self training iOS Development  
+ 7 checked items

**Personal**  
  
☐ Tu sensei website  
☐ Brief thinking  
☐ Next health check  
☐ Update FSoft works in CV  
+ 7 checked items

**HAC - Long term task**  
  
☐ HAC PHP man  
☐ iOS Duy Phuc  
☐ Linh: Guitar man  
+ 2 checked items

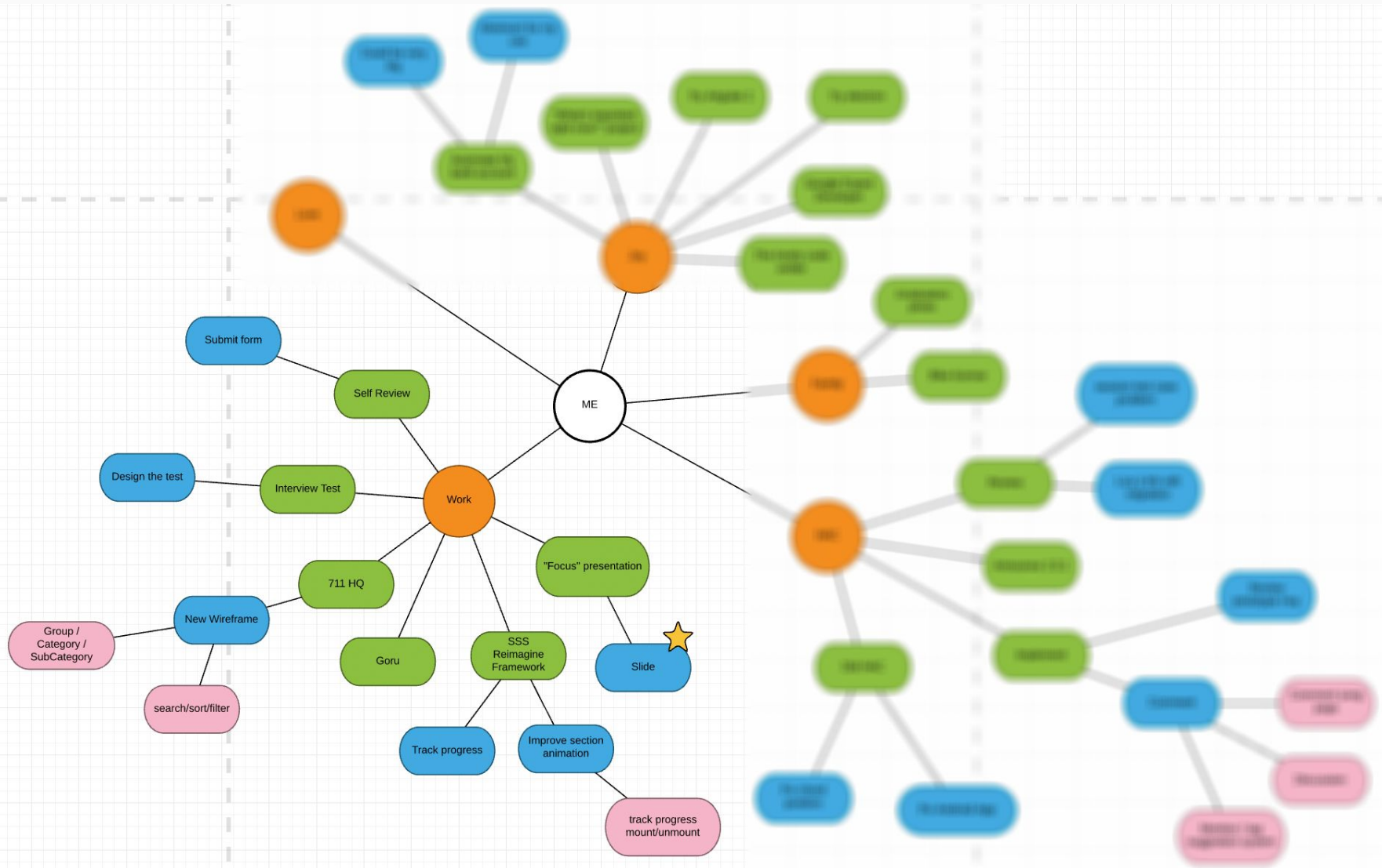
**HAC**  
  
☐ Phuc Thanh: design iOS  
☐ iOS database document for Duy Phuc  
☐ Text Logo  
☐ Database Design  
☐ Screen design  
+ 11 checked items

**HAC WP**  
  
☐ User bugs

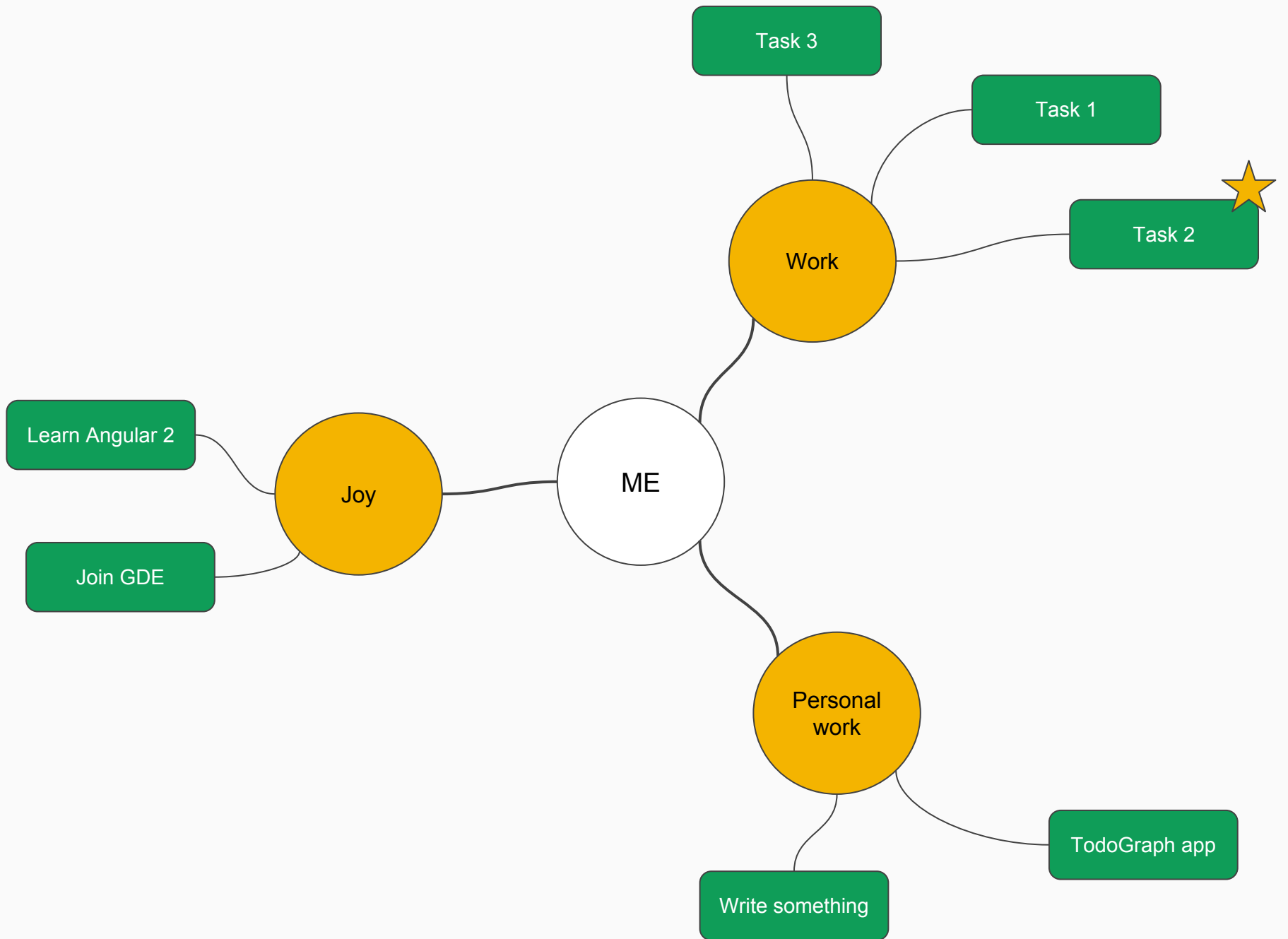
Notes

Those are not effective for me (anymore)

I use mindmap now



Mindmap is not enough, I need an app.



# Task 2

Set deadline

Set priority

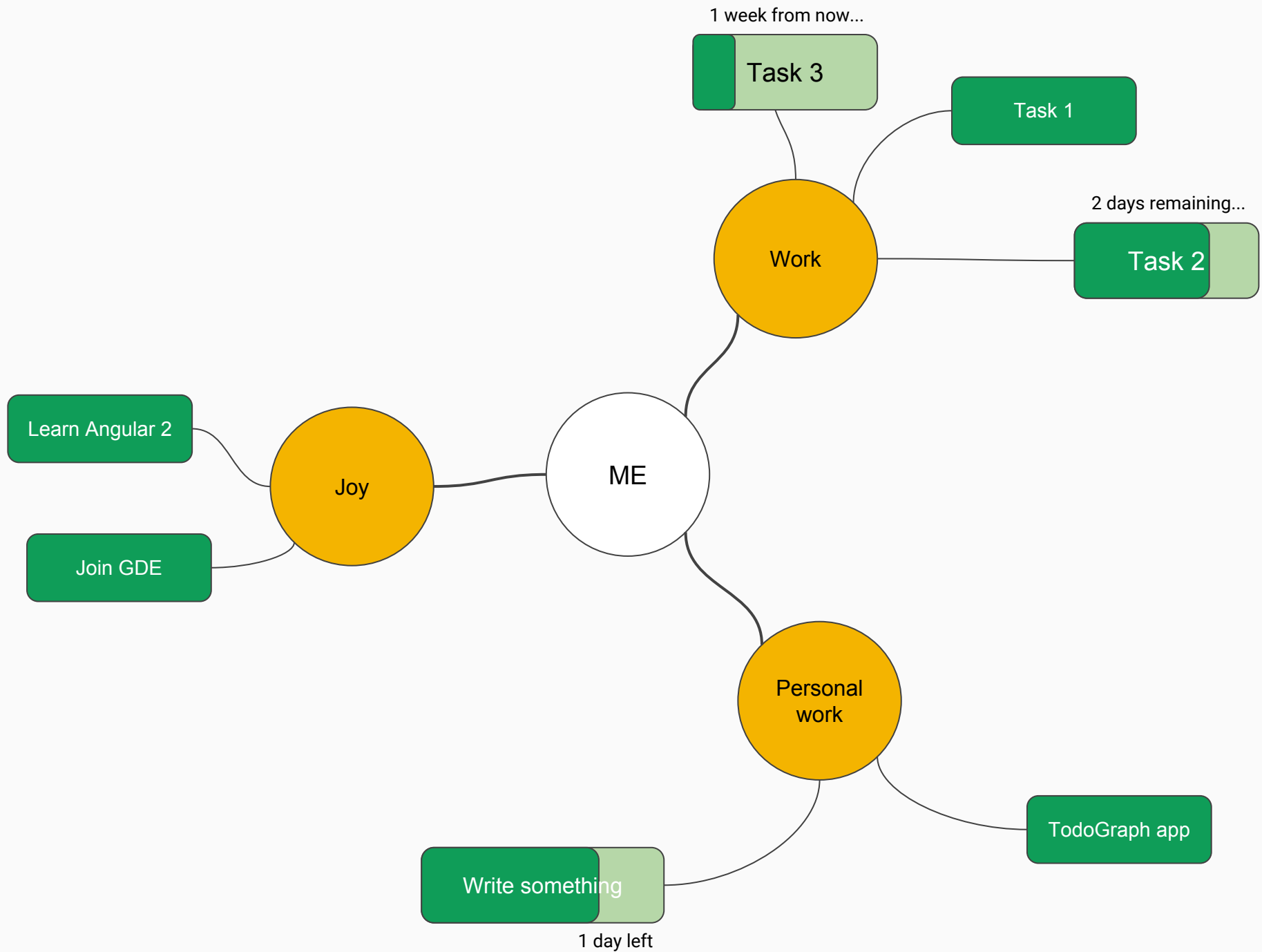
Mark as done

Drop this :-(

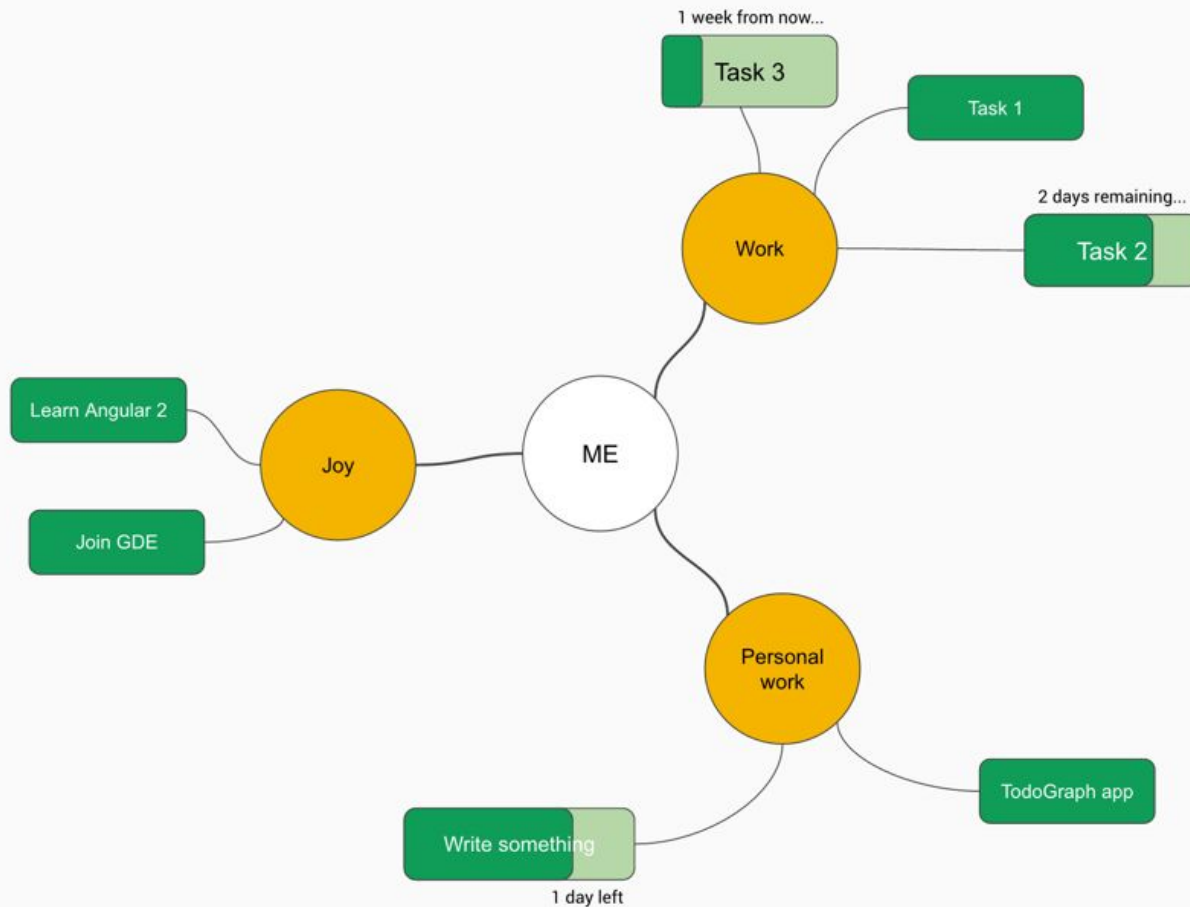
2 days remaining...

A graphic consisting of two overlapping rounded rectangles. The front rectangle is dark green and contains the text 'Task 2' in white. The back rectangle is a lighter shade of green and is partially obscured by the front one.

Task 2







You have **7 tasks** to do in **1 day** left.

You have **3 non-duedate tasks** lasted for more than 2 months. Want to do it now?

1. Task 2
2. Task 3
3. Write something
4. ToDoGraph app
5. Join GDE
6. Learn Angular 2
...

Overload metter



- Synchronize with calendars
- Calendar suggestion
- Map history
- Most dropped tasks
- Overload pattern analysis
- Life balance analysis based on task completed
- ...

How do you manage yours?

So...

# Recap

Micro-focus

Normal-focus

Group-focus

Macro-focus

# Thank you

Đinh Quang Trung  
Silicon Straits Saigon  
13 April 2016

# References

This slide: <http://j.mp/presentation-focus>

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attention\\_span](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attention_span)
- [Brainrules.net](http://brainrules.net)
- <http://pomodorotechnique.com/>
- The Inner Game of Work: Focus, Learning, Pleasure, and Mobility in the Workplace, By W. Timothy Gallwey
- <http://www.medicaldaily.com/human-attention-span-shortens-8-seconds-due-digital-technology-3-ways-stay-focused-333474>
- <http://www.learningsolutionsmag.com/articles/1440/brain-science-focuscan-you-pay-attention>
- <http://zenhabits.net/focus/>
- Images from the internet