

THE 7 HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE

An Approach To Solving Personal and Professional Problems

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Main Theme

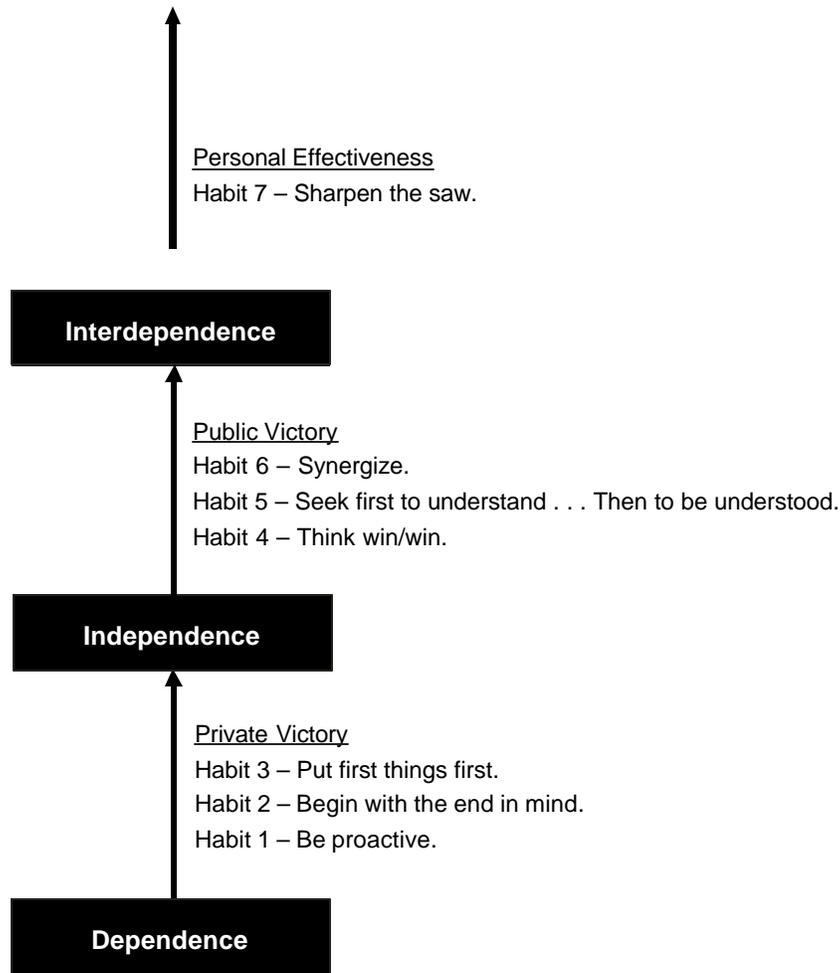
The 7 Habits provide an incremental, sequential, integrated approach to the development of personal effectiveness moving us progressively from dependence (on others) to independence (taking care of ourselves) to interdependence (looking after others and combining strengths to multiply our individual effectiveness).

The first three habits are the basis for private victories in which we develop the fiber of our own character traits.

The second three habits are for public victories, those situations where we work with other people.

The final habit improves the effectiveness of our lives in all areas.

The 7 Habits give the ability to work from the inside out to build character of total integrity.



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Paradigms and Principles

Main Idea

A paradigm is the way we see and understand the world around us. It is a mental map by which we interpret the information we receive. Paradigms hold the key to our own personal interpretation of reality. Principles are guidelines for human behavior that have been proven over time to have enduring, permanent value. Our challenge is to develop paradigms for our own lives that are principle based.

Supporting Ideas

Many individuals who have achieved incredible degrees of outward success find themselves struggling with an inner need for healthy, growing relationships with other people. These are the sorts of problems quick fixes cannot solve.

An academic study was recently made on how perceptions were formed, and how the way events are viewed governs behavior. This led to a study of expectancy theory and self-fulfilling prophecies. The study concluded that no matter how much a person works on their attitude, they won't change if they don't change their perceptions.

Much of the success literature of the past 50 years has been extremely superficial - filled with social image consciousness and quick-fixes. On the other hand, success literature for the previous 150 years focused on the character ethic as the foundation of success - things like integrity, humility, fidelity, justice, patience and the Golden Rule.

The character ethic taught there are basic principles of effective living, and that people can only experience true success and enduring happiness as they integrate those principles into their personal character. After World War I, the basic view of success shifted from the character ethic to the personality ethic. Success became a mere function of personality, public image, attitudes and skills. This involved public relations techniques and positive mental attitude.

Some parts of the personality ethic are clearly manipulative or even deceptive. Sometimes character was acknowledged, but it was not considered fundamental to overall success. While fleeting reference was made to it, the general approach could be described as influence techniques, power strategies, communication skills and positive attitudes.

Perhaps in building upon the foundation of generations before us, we have inadvertently become so focused on the secondary traits that we have forgotten the primary traits at the foundation. To focus on techniques alone is to miss the whole point of why the techniques are useful. In the long run, we cannot be successful if there is no actual foundation for success. It is the cramming approach to getting grades in school. In the final analysis, what we are communicating far more eloquently than anything we say or do. There are some people we trust absolutely because we know their character. Whether they are eloquent or not, or have human relations skills or not, we trust them and work successfully with them.

The seven habits embody many of the fundamental principles of human effectiveness. They represent the internalization of correct principles upon which enduring happiness and success are based. Before studying them, consider the power of a paradigm. A paradigm is like a map. It is not the actual piece of territory but is an explanation or model of a piece of territory.

Everyone carries with them mental maps of two types - the way things are and the way things should be. We often assume the way we see things is the way they really are. All our attitudes and

behaviors grow out of those assumptions. They also affect the way we interact with other people. In other words, sincere, clear headed people can each see the same thing differently because each person is looking through the unique lens of their own experience.

The more anyone becomes aware of their own paradigms and the extent to which they influence their perceptions, the more that person can take responsibility for their paradigms and test them against reality and try to perceive the larger picture for a more objective view. In the book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Thomas Kuhn showed almost every significant breakthrough in the field of scientific endeavor is first a break with tradition, with old ways of thinking, with old paradigms.

Paradigm shifts, whether instantaneous or gradual, positive or negative affect the way we see the world, and therefore our attitudes and behaviors and relationships with other people. Thus, if we want to make changes in our lives, we can do so by focusing on our paradigms. Paradigms are inseparable from our character.

The character ethic is based on the fundamental idea that there are principles that govern human effectiveness - natural laws that are just as unchanging as laws in the physical dimension. The degree to which our own mental paradigm accurately describes the reality does not alter its existence.

True principles surface again and again in the cycles of social history. In fact, people are either moving towards survival when they live in harmony or destruction when they move away. Examples are principles such as;

- Fairness
- Integrity
- Honesty
- Human dignity
- Service
- Quality or excellence
- Human potential

Principles are not practices (specific activities that work in certain circumstances). Nor are they values (which are simply maps of principles). Seen in this light, the glitter of the personality ethic is that there is some shortcut, a get-rich-quick scheme to achieve quality of life without paying the price. It is illusory and deceptive. The way we see any problem is the problem.

The 7 Habits are a new level of thinking - a paradigm shift based on a principle-centered, character-based inside-out approach to personal effectiveness.

Key Thoughts

"There is no real excellence in all this world which can be separated from right living."

— David Starr Jordan

"Into the hands of every individual is given a marvelous power for good or evil - the silent, unconscious, unseen influence of his life. This is simply the constant radiation of what man really is, not what he pretends to be."

— William George Jordan

"The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them."

— Albert Einstein

"We must not cease from exploration and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we begun and to know the place for the first time."

— T. S. Eliot

The Seven Habits - An Overview

Main Idea

The 7 habits provide an incremental, sequential, integrated approach to the development of personal effectiveness moving us progressively from dependence (on others) to independence (take care of ourselves) to interdependence (looking after others and combining strengths).

Supporting Ideas

Our character is basically a composite of our habits. Habits are powerful factors in our lives because they express our character and produce our effectiveness. A habit can be defined as the intersection of knowledge (the what to do), skill (how to do it) and desire (the motivation to do it). We need all three to form a habit.

Happiness can be defined as the fruit of the ability to sacrifice what we want now for what we want eventually. True independence of character empowers us to act rather than be acted upon. However, life is, by its very nature, highly interdependent. Much more can be achieved through interdependence. It opens the opportunity to share meaningfully with others, and provides access to the vast resources and potential of other people. You can't be effectively interdependent until you are truly independent.

- Habits 1,2 and 3 deal with self-mastery or private victories and lay the foundation for other habits.
- Habits 4,5 and 6 deal with the public victories.
- Habit 7 is the habit of renewal of the four basic dimensions of a meaningful life.

The 7 habits are habits of effectiveness based on principles that make long-term beneficial results possible.

P/PC Balance

Main Idea

The 7 Habits are also habits of effectiveness. Effectiveness is the result of a balance known as the P/PC balance.

P stands for production of desired results. PC stands for production capability, the ability or asset that produces the golden egg. The essence of effectiveness is the balance between the short-term and the long-term.



For example, for a piece of machinery, P is the machine itself. PC is the regular maintenance required. If we concentrate on high P (production levels) at the expense of PC (regular maintenance), we have short-term gains at the expense of long term productivity. Long-term success requires maintaining a proper P/PC balance. Both are necessary, and both need to be addressed.

Key Thoughts

"That which we obtain too easily, we esteem too lightly. It is dearness only which gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price on its goods."

— Thomas Paine

Habit 1 - Be proactive.

Main Idea

We can choose our own response to any signals or information we receive. We have the ability to influence our own actions. Therefore, being proactive means to actively choose what our response will be in any situation rather than to react blindly.

Supporting Ideas

Man is unique in that he alone can think about his very own thought process. Every other creature simply reacts. Man can control his thoughts. This is why we can learn from the generations that have gone before us, and why man can evaluate and learn from other people's experiences. This is the principle of self-awareness, the most fundamental paradigm. Until we take into account how we see ourselves and others, we limit our ability to relate to others.

Between every stimulus and response, rational human beings have the freedom to choose a response. This is due to the presence of;

- *Self-awareness* - the ability to control thoughts.
- *Imagination* - the ability to mentally create a new reality.
- *Conscience* - an inner awareness of right and wrong.
- *Independent will* - the ability to act on thoughts.

In other words, animals can't change their programming but human beings can write their own directions on how to treat new situations. Each person has the ability to be either reactive or proactive in every situation that arises. This is the true meaning of "response-ability" - the ability to choose our own response. Proactive people are highly responsible.

Proactivity means to subordinate impulses to values. Reactive people are swept away by the heat of the moment. Proactive people are driven by values that are both well thought out and internalized.

It is not what happens that is important. It is our response to whatever happens that makes all the difference. Often, the most difficult circumstances become crucibles that forge our character and develop hidden reserves of strength. What matters most in life is not what happens to us, but how we respond to whatever happens. Our basic nature is to act, not to wait to be acted upon. We have the ability to take the initiative in any situation we are in. Everyone either waits to be acted on or takes responsibility for their own course and make the appropriate decisions.

Being proactive doesn't mean being pushy, aggressive or insensitive. Rather, proactivity means to control a situation from the inside out. Or in other words, to affect positive change, stop focusing on the immediate circumstances and instead consider your response to the conditions that exist. Do that and you have removed the power of anything external to affect you.

While we are free to choose our actions, we are not free to choose the consequences of our actions. Consequences are governed by natural law outside our influence. We can, for example, decide whether or not to step in front of a moving train but we cannot decide what will happen when the train hits us. We are free to choose our response to any situation, but in doing so we automatically choose the attendant consequence.

It is in the ordinary events of every day that we develop our proactive skills. It is in the little things that we show our true character traits. Our response to the little irritations in life will also affect responses to disasters.

Habit 2 - Begin with the end in mind.

Main Idea

Beginning with the end in mind means using an image or paradigm of your character at the end of your life as a frame of reference or criterion by which everything is examined. Each part of your life should be examined in the context of the whole - the long-term view.

Supporting Ideas

To begin with the end in mind requires a clear vision of your destination, and where you now are. Then you can clarify what needs to yet be done to get where you'd like to end up. It's easy to get so caught up in climbing the ladder of success that you fail to make sure the ladder is leaning against the right wall. It's easy to be busy without being effective, to score many hollow victories at the expense of critical events. We may be very busy, we may even be very efficient, but we will only be truly effective when we begin with an end in mind.

Beginning with the end in mind is based on the principle that all things are created twice. There's a mental or first creation, and a physical or second creation. The first creation can be either by conscious design, or as a result of outside pressures. We can create our own script or reactively live the scripts others create.

Example: Clearing a jungle. The managers are there directing the workers and getting them to sharpen their saws, exercise to develop the right muscles and improving the efficiency of the workers. Leaders are climbing the highest tree, surveying the situation and yelling out "Wrong jungle!" The managers respond, "Who cares? Look at how efficiently we're clearing away the undergrowth."

Effectiveness doesn't depend solely on how much effort we expend, but also on whether or not we are in the right jungle. No management success can compensate for failure in leadership. A particularly effective way to get into the habit of beginning with the end in mind is to write your own mission statement, philosophy or creed. This should focus on what you want to be (character), do (contributions & achievements) and on the values or principles upon which being and doing are based.

A mission statement is a personal constitution. It is a written standard, the key criterion by which everything is evaluated and directed. It becomes the basis by which decisions are made on a day to day basis. It is a basic direction from which to set long-term and short-term goals.

The ideal situation is to center our lives on correct principles. Correct principles do not change, and do not react to anything. They are deep, fundamental truths that are consistent, exacting and timeless. They do not require recognition for their validity. And best of all, they can be validated in our own lives. Principle-centered living provides wisdom and guidance in that we see things as they really are, have been and will be. The power of this type of living comes from freedom of the influence of other people's attitudes. The wisdom of principle-centered living means that we have the correct perspective on events that occur.

A mission statement is not something you write overnight. It will take careful thought and many hours of introspection to produce. Yet, the process of writing one is as important as the product itself. And it will need to be rewritten and reviewed regularly to take into account additional insights or changing circumstances. Developing a mission statement calls for use of both sides of the brain. The left hemisphere of the brain is logical, dealing with words and specifics. The right hemisphere is more intuitive and creative, dealing with pictures and relationships.

Your first instinct in developing a mission statement is to use your left hemisphere only. However, equally important is the perspective the right hemisphere can add. To get this, you have to visualize the result of all your efforts. Some ways to do this might include;

- Visualize being at your own funeral. Write a eulogy. What sort of things would you like to be said about you?
- Visualize being at your 50th wedding anniversary. What kind of family relationship do you have?
- Visualize your retirement day. What do people in your industry have to say about you?

Personal leadership is not a single experience. It does not begin and end with writing your mission statement. It's an ongoing process to keep your vision and values before you and to align your life consistently with the underlying principles you espouse most strongly. Use a mission statement to write affirmations that will guide your actions. Good affirmations are personal, positive, present tense, visual and emotional.

Research has shown that almost all world-class athletes and other peak performers are visualizers. They see it, feel it and experience it in their mind before they actually do it. They begin with the end in mind. You can do the same in every area of your life by using affirmations based on a personal mission statement.

Habit 3 - Put first things first.

Main Idea

The heart of effective personal time management is to spend the maximum time possible doing important jobs in a non-urgent atmosphere that increases your efficiency.

1. Important & Urgent	2. Important & Non-Urgent
3. Urgent But Not Important	4. Not Urgent & Not Important

Supporting Ideas

There are four basic types of activities;

1. *Important and Urgent Activities*
These include responding to a crisis, pressing problem or tight deadline. Crisis managers and problem-minded people are consumed primarily with this area of time management.
2. *Important But Not Urgent Activities*
Preventative maintenance, relationship building, creative thinking, planning and recreation. This area is at the heart of effective personal management, and holds the key to business efficiency.
3. *Not Important But Urgent Activities*
Phone calls, mail, some meetings and other pressing matters. These tasks are often only urgent because someone else has that expectation, and some people spend time here thinking they are covering essential matters.
4. *Not Important And Non-Urgent Activities*
Includes trivia, some mail, time wasters and pleasant harmless activities. Spending all your time here is a sure way to be totally ineffective.

The goal is to maximize your time in quadrant 2 on important but non-urgent activities. This is the heart of effective personal management. By increasing the amount of tasks carried out in quadrant 2, the likelihood of tasks cropping up in quadrant 1 are minimized.

Effective people are not problem minded - they are opportunity minded. They think preventively. The only way to concentrate efforts on quadrant 2 activities is to cut time spent on quadrants 3 and 4 activities. To be proactive about choosing quadrant 2 activities, get into the habit of saying "No" to quadrant 3 and 4 activities. Sometimes this will take diplomacy. Centering decisions on correct principles and focusing on a mission statement gives the guidance needed to make decisions. The way you spend your time is a direct result of the way you really see your own personal priorities, whether you like to admit it or not.

The objective of quadrant 2 management is to manage our lives effectively - from a center of sound principles, a knowledge of our personal mission (focusing on the important and the urgent) and a balance between increasing our production and increasing our production capacity.

The six criteria of quadrant 2 time management skills are;

1. *Coherence* - harmony between your personal mission statement and both short- and long-term activities.
2. *Balance* - identify your various roles and keep them focused so important areas are not inadvertently ignored.
3. *Quadrant 2 focus*— deal with prevention and anticipation rather than crisis control. Rather than prioritizing your schedule, you schedule time to achieve your priorities.
4. *A people dimension* - your planning needs to reflect thinking in terms of dealing effectively with other people, as they can influence your time schedule.
5. *Flexibility* - time management needs to be tailored to exactly the way you need it to work for your life.
6. *Portability* - time management needs to be on the go and with you at all times, not just in your office.

Time management begins with four key activities;

1. *Identify the key roles of your life.* Everyone wears a number of different hats in their business, personal and social lives. Write down the roles you fill in the average week.
2. *Select goals* – maybe two or three that you want to achieve in the coming week in each of your roles.
3. *Scheduling.* Look at each week with your goals in mind. When are you going to set aside time to achieve your goals?
4. *Adapt on a daily basis.* This may mean responding to unexpected events in meaningful ways. The more completely weekly goals are tied in to a wider framework of correct principles and a mission statement, the greater the increase in effectiveness. Long term organizing means the mission statement leads to the roles leading to goals and then to plans.

Key Thoughts

"Things which matter most must never be at the mercy of things which matter least."

— Goethe

"The successful person has the habit of doing the things failures don't like to do. They don't like doing them either necessarily. But their disliking is subordinated to the strength of their purpose."

— E.M. Gray

"Management is doing things right, leadership is doing the right things."

— Peter Drucker & Warren Bennis

Public Victory

Main Idea

Effective interdependence can only be built on a foundation of true independence. Private victory precedes a public victory. You can't be successful with other people if you haven't paid the price of success with yourself first. Interdependence is a choice only independent people can make.

Supporting Ideas

The most important ingredient we can contribute to any relationship is not what we say or do, but what we are. If our words and actions come from superficial techniques rather than an inner core, people will sense that. So, the place to begin building any relationship is in our own character.

Interdependence opens up worlds of possibilities for deep, rich and meaningful associations leading to increased productivity. It is where we have the potential for the greatest joys and the greatest pain. Interdependence is like an Emotional Bank Account. We make deposits into this account by courtesy, kindness, honesty, openness and keeping commitments. When your account is in credit, you can make occasional mistakes and they can be compensated for. If your account is empty or overdrawn, there is a lot of tension, and you have to be very careful with every word you utter and everything you do.

Make deposits into your Emotional Bank Account by;

1. *Understanding the individual.* What may be a deposit to one person may be nothing or even a withdrawal to another. Therefore, you need to get to know the individual.
2. *Attending to the little things.* In relationships or associations, the big things are really the little things – courtesies and small acts of kindness. Little forms of disrespect can make large withdrawals if you're not careful.
3. *Keeping commitments.* Keeping a promise is a very large deposit, breaking a promise is the largest withdrawal it's possible to make. People tend to build their hopes around promises.
4. *Clarifying expectations.* The cause of many problems is simply conflicting or ambiguous expectations. Therefore, it's vital in any new situation to get all expectations tabled so they can be discussed and covered. This may take courage on the part of all parties involved.
5. *Showing personal integrity.* Integrity is the basis of many kinds of deposits, while lack of integrity undermines almost all other efforts to make deposits. Honesty is telling the truth or conforming our words to reality. Integrity is conforming reality to our words or keeping promises and fulfilling expectations. One important way to manifest integrity is to be loyal to those who are not present, as that communicates consistency. Integrity means you treat everyone by the same set of rules.
6. *Apologizing sincerely when you make a withdrawal.* This requires a great deal of strength of character.

Key Thoughts

"There can be no friendship without confidence, and no confidence without integrity."

— Samuel Johnson

"It is more difficult to give yourself completely to one individual than to labor diligently for the salvation of the masses."

— Dag Hammarskjöld, U.N. Secretary-General

"What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us."

— Oliver Wendell Holmes

Habit 4 - Think win/win.Main Idea

The most effective way to work with other people is to structure a win/win relationship focused on results, not methods.

Supporting Ideas

Basic paradigms of human interaction are;

1. *Win/Win* – A frame of mind and heart constantly seeking mutual benefit in business and personal transactions. All parties feel good about decisions and commit to the plan.
2. *Win/Lose* – Authoritarian approach involving the use of position, power, credentials, possessions or personality. Also involves an extrinsic approach by comparisons to others.
3. *Lose/Win* – This is capitulation, allowing the other party to do whatever they like. It can also be permissiveness or indulgence. Some people alternate between Win/Lose and Lose/Win constantly.
4. *Lose/Lose* – Comes about through being so centered on an enemy that you become willing to hurt your own interests if it will mean the other person will also lose.
5. *Win* – Thinking in terms of our own interests alone, we leave the other person to look out for themselves and give no thought to their position.
6. *Win/Win-or-No-Deal* – Means that if a mutually beneficial deal cannot be structured, then there is general agreement to disagree agreeably! In other words, if you find you are both wanting to head in different directions, it is better not to try and set up a deal between both parties. Provides tremendous emotional freedom.

Of all the options, Win/Win-or-No-Deal is the most desirable, especially at the beginning of a business or personal association.

There are five dimensions to the habit of thinking Win/Win;

1. *Character* – Thinking win/win requires integrity (the value we place on our own principles) on the part of both parties. It also requires maturity – the balance between courage and consideration. Expressing feelings with courage tempered by consideration for the feelings of others is the mark of a mature person. Finally, to think win/win, we need an abundance mentality, meaning we realize there is plenty out there for everyone. People with a scarcity mentality think there is only one pie and they are fighting to get as large a slice as possible. People with an abundance mentality realize there are lots of opportunities, more than a person can take advantage of.
2. *Relationships* – The Emotional Bank Account is a key to structuring a Win/Win. If enough deposits have been made over a period of time, you have a degree of credibility enabling you to focus on the issues, not on personality conflicts. If both parties have high emotional bank balances combined with a commitment to Win/Win, a tremendous amount of synergy is possible. If the other person is not thinking Win/Win, you have to take the lead and be proactive enough to keep hammering until they realize you genuinely want a Win/Win deal. The relationship can be the key to the success of the entire process.
3. *Agreements* – These give definition and direction to Win/Win. To be effective, agreements should focus on desired results rather than the methods to be followed. Guidelines specifying the parameters for the results and the resources available to achieve the results should be included. Also a method of accountability for evaluation and an outline of what will happen as a result of the evaluation.

4. *Systems* – Win/Win can only survive in an organization when the systems support it. If you talk Win/Win but reward Win/Lose, then don't be surprised when everyone goes for Win/Lose scenarios. The training, planning, budgeting, communication, information and compensation systems all have to be geared towards Win/Win.

5. *Processes* – The essence of structuring Win/Win is to separate the person from the problem, to focus on interests and not on positions, to invent options for positive mutual gain and to insist on objective criteria – some external standard or principle that both parties can accept. These processes are more fully examined in Habits 5 and 6.

Habit 5 - Seek first to understand, then to be understood.Main Idea

Everyone has a natural tendency to rush in and try to give advice or try to fix things before taking the time to diagnose or try to understand why the other person feels the way they do. The trick, however, is to seek first to understand the other person, then to try and be understood yourself.

Supporting Ideas

Most people have no training in how to listen effectively. By comparison, years are spent learning how to read and write effectively. If you really want to interact with another person, you need to take the time to listen to where they now are. Unless you have shown the person you acknowledge their uniqueness, they are not going to be open to any advice from you. This is not technique alone - you have to build skills on a foundation base of character and deposits to Emotional Bank Accounts.

Most people don't listen with an intent to understand - they listen with the intent to reply. They are either speaking or preparing to speak. They see others through the lens of their own autobiographies. The key to understanding another person is empathetic listening – really trying to understand everything (including the nonverbal signals) the other person is communicating. You listen for feeling and for meaning, for behavior and other signals. You are totally focused on the other person's point of view, not projecting your own life's story into their words.

Remember, satisfied needs do not motivate a person to action. When they are fed, they no longer look around for food. Similarly, you cannot and should not move on to satisfying a person's need to solve a problem before satisfying the need for them to feel like they have been understood by you. Diagnose before you prescribe. It actually requires a great deal of security on your own part, as you will also be opening up yourself to be influenced by that person.

This is actually the mark of all true professionals. The amateur salesman sells products, the professional salesman sells solutions to needs and problems. A lawyer first gathers the facts to understand the situation, including laws and precedents, before preparing a case. A good engineer will understand the forces and stresses at work within a design before drawing a bridge. The key to good judgment is understanding. If we judge first, we will never fully understand.

When people have a problem and you really listen to understand them, you'll be surprised how quickly and how fully they will open up to you. Empathetic listening takes time, but not nearly as much time as it will take to back up and correct misunderstandings when you are much further down the road.

Once you understand, then you have got to try to be understood yourself. Maturity is defined as the balance between courage and consideration. Seeking to understand requires consideration, seeking to be understood takes courage. Win/Win requires a high degree of both.

The Greeks had a philosophy embodied in three words: ethos, pathos and logos. Ethos is your personal credibility, integrity and competency. It is in effect the balance of your Emotional Bank Account. Pathos is the feeling. It means being in emotional alignment with the other person. Logos is the logic, the reasoning part of the presentation. Note the sequence: ethos, pathos, logos - your character, your relationship and your logic. Most people go straight to the logos without first taking ethos and pathos into consideration.

When you can present your own ideas clearly, specifically, visually and contextually (in the context of your listener's concerns), you increase the credibility of your ideas. Habit 5 lifts you to greater accuracy, integrity and effectiveness in your presentations. And best of all, seeking first to understand is within your own control. It is something you can practice right now. You can put this principle into immediate action.

Key Thoughts

"The heart has its reasons which reason knows not of."

— Pascal

Habit 6- Synergize.

Main Idea

Synergy means that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. In other words, each of the parts combine to create new and exciting unexpected discoveries that were not possible before. It is a creative force of unparalleled power created in the principles of creative cooperation.

Supporting Ideas

Synergy is the true test and manifestation of all the other habits combined.

When you communicate synergistically, you are opening your mind and heart to new possibilities, new alternatives and new options. You create something entirely new that is better than you ever thought it could be. This is the very essence of team spirit. When you work along synergetic lines, you can never be sure where the final result will lie. The only thing you can be certain of is that the end result of applying this method will truly justify the means. You literally can achieve more as a combined group than you ever could alone. Whole new worlds of insights, new perspectives, new paradigms leading to new options and alternatives are opened to your vision.

An activity like working on a mission statement should be undertaken in a synergetic environment. This requires a high level of both trust and cooperation amongst all participants. In fact, mutual trust is a key. If trust is low, the activity is dominated by legal jargon in order to protect everyone's interests. In a medium level of trust, there is respectful communication with polite intellectual compromises in effect. However, the most creative situations arise when there exists an environment where the solutions are far better than either party could ever have achieved alone.

Synergy draws its energy and its effectiveness from the differences between people – mental, emotional and psychological differences all contribute. It is this combination of individual paradigms that make the synergetic process so powerful. When we value the differences in perception that exist between people, we are able to transcend the limits created. If

two people are of the same opinion, one is unnecessary. Synergy can also be used to deal with negative forces working against growth and change. Any current level of performance is actually a state of equilibrium between the driving forces (positive, logical, conscious or economic) encouraging upward movement and the restraining forces that discourage it (negative, emotional, illogical or unconscious). Increasing the driving forces will bring results for a time, but the application synergy both increases the driving forces and decreases the restraining forces. Synergy is the result of applying all the previous habits. It cannot be built except on a foundation established by Habits 1 to 6. It can exist in a teamwork environment with other people or you can be personally synergetic in your own actions.

Key Thoughts

"We have committed the Golden Rule to memory; let us now commit it to life."

— Edwin Markham

Habit 7 - Sharpen the saw.

Main Idea

Habit 7 is taking time to sharpen the saw. In other words, don't get so busy sawing that you don't realize you are using a blunt saw. Take the time on a regular basis to sharpen your saw in the physical, spiritual, mental and social or emotional dimensions.

Supporting Ideas

Sharpening the saw involves four separate dimensions;

1. *Physical exercise* – Spending a minimum of 30 minutes per day exercising will vastly improve the quality of the remaining hours every day. Exercise on a regular basis will preserve and enhance your capacity to work and adapt and enjoy. Exercise is rarely ever urgent, you have to be proactive and set your own standard. You also find as you exercise, you will experience a paradigm shift of your own self image.
2. *Spiritual* – Renewing the spiritual dimension provides leadership to your life. It is highly related to Habit 2. The spiritual dimension is at the very core of your value system, drawing upon the sources that inspire and uplift you. People draw spiritual strength in many different ways. Rather than concentrating on how this should be done, the key principle is to make sure it is being refreshed frequently in your own life.
Immersion in great literature or music can provide spiritual renewal for some people. So too can time spent alone communicating with nature. Everyone has different needs, and draw upon different wells of spiritual strength. This is a definite Quadrant 2 activity. It is rarely ever urgent - we usually have to make time for spiritual renewal on a regular basis. The idea is to take the time to draw on the leadership center of our lives. As we consider our battles in the larger context, we can draw renewed strength for the challenges at hand.
A personal mission statement can be very important to spiritual renewal. We can take this time to recommit ourselves to our center and purpose in life. We can mentally live out events before they actually occur. We can achieve our private victories before our actions ever move into the public gaze.
3. *The mental dimension* – Formal education teaches the processes of mental development, study discipline, exploration of new subjects, analytical thought and expressive writing. Many people trade the classroom for the TV set as the basis of their thinking when they leave school. Habit 3 gave the basis for developing the self-discipline to ignore TV and instead develop serious study programs around new subjects. Television is a good servant but a poor master.

Continuing education – honing and expanding the mind – is vital mental renewal. Proactive people develop many ways to educate themselves, or use the external discipline of systemized study programs. It is extremely valuable to train the mind to stand apart and examine its own program. It is also valuable to read broadly and to expose yourself to the thoughts of great minds. Reading good books on a regular basis broadens your outlook on life. Writing is another powerful way to sharpen the mental saw. Writing also affects our ability to think clearly, to reason accurately and to be understood effectively. Organizing and planning are other habits which sharpen the mind.

4. The social / emotional dimension – Centered in the principles discussed in Habits 4, 5 and 6, the skills required to renew the social and emotional dimension require communication and creative cooperation.

Our emotional lives are primarily developed out of and manifested in our relationships with others. Renewing our social / emotional dimension can be carried out in our normal, everyday interactions with other people. All it takes is the correct emphasis and a little bit of effort. Success in this area is highly related to our sense of intrinsic security. If we are relying on the paradigms of other people for our own sense of worth, we are walking a perilous path. We should instead be developing an inner sense of integrity built on accurate paradigms and correct principles. Peace of mind comes when your life is in harmony with true principles and values and no other way except effective interdependent living.

There is also an intrinsic security that comes from service, from helping other people in a meaningful way. When you view your own life as constructive and exciting because of the difference you are making in the lives of other people, you're on the path towards a long, healthy and helpful life. The self-renewal process must include balanced renewal in all four dimensions of our nature. To neglect any one area impacts negatively on the rest. A mission statement should provide recognition of each of these four dimensions.

Balanced renewal is optimally synergetic. The things you do to sharpen the saw in any one dimension has positive impact in other dimensions as well as they are highly interrelated. As you improve in one dimension, you increase abilities in the other dimensions as well. A Daily Private Victory, in which you spend one hour a day in the renewal of the physical, spiritual and mental dimensions, is the key to the development of the 7 Habits. It is also the foundation for the Daily Public Victory.

Renewal is the principle – and the process – enabling us to move on an upward spiral of growth and change, of continuous improvement. The upward spiral consists of three steps;

1. To Learn
2. To Commit
3. To Do

Moving along the upward spiral requires us to learn, commit and do on increasingly higher planes. To keep progressing, we must repeat the cycle over and over.

Key Thoughts

"They cannot take away our self respect if we do not give it to them."

— Gandhi

Inside Out Again

Key Idea

The discovery that there is a gap between stimulus and response that we alone can fill in empowers us to take full charge of our own lives. No longer can we accept that we are a victim of circumstances, or that we have achieved anything simply because it is in our genes. The 7 Habits give anyone the ability to work from the inside out (character-driven acts) as opposed to an outside in approach (circumstances-driven). Real change comes from the inside out. It doesn't come from hacking at the leaves of attitude and behavior. It comes from striking at the roots of the fabric of our thoughts, the paradigms we use and the essential pattern of our characters.

Achieving unity with ourselves, our loved ones, our friends and working associates is the highest and most delicious fruit of the 7 Habits. Building a character of total integrity isn't easy but it's possible. It isn't a quick fix. By centering our lives on correct principles and creating a balanced focus between doing and increasing our ability to do, we become empowered in the task of creating effective, useful and peaceful lives.

Key Thoughts

"It was then that I drew, almost unconsciously, on the inner strength I had developed in Cell 54 of Cairo Central Prison - a strength, call it a talent or capacity, for change. I found that I faced a highly complex situation, and that I couldn't hope to change it until I had armed myself with the necessary psychological and intellectual capacity. My contemplation of life and human nature in that secluded place had taught me that he who cannot change the very fabric of his thought will never be able to change reality, and will never, therefore, make any progress."

— Anwar Sadat

"That which we persist in doing becomes easier - not that the nature of the task has changed, but our ability to do has increased."

— Emerson

"We must not cease from exploration. And the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we began and to know the place for the first time."

— T.S. Eliot

"I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by conscious endeavor."

— Henry David Thoreau

"The fountain of content must spring up in the mind, and he who hath so little knowledge of human nature as to seek happiness by changing anything but his own disposition, will waste his life in fruitless efforts and multiply the grief he proposes to remove."

— Samuel Johnson

"I have so much to do today, I'll need to spend another hour on my knees."

— Martin Luther King

"The greatest battles of life are fought out daily in the silent chambers of the soul."

— David O. McKay

"Treat a man as he is and he will remain as he is. Treat a man as he can and should be and he will become as he can and should be."

— Goethe