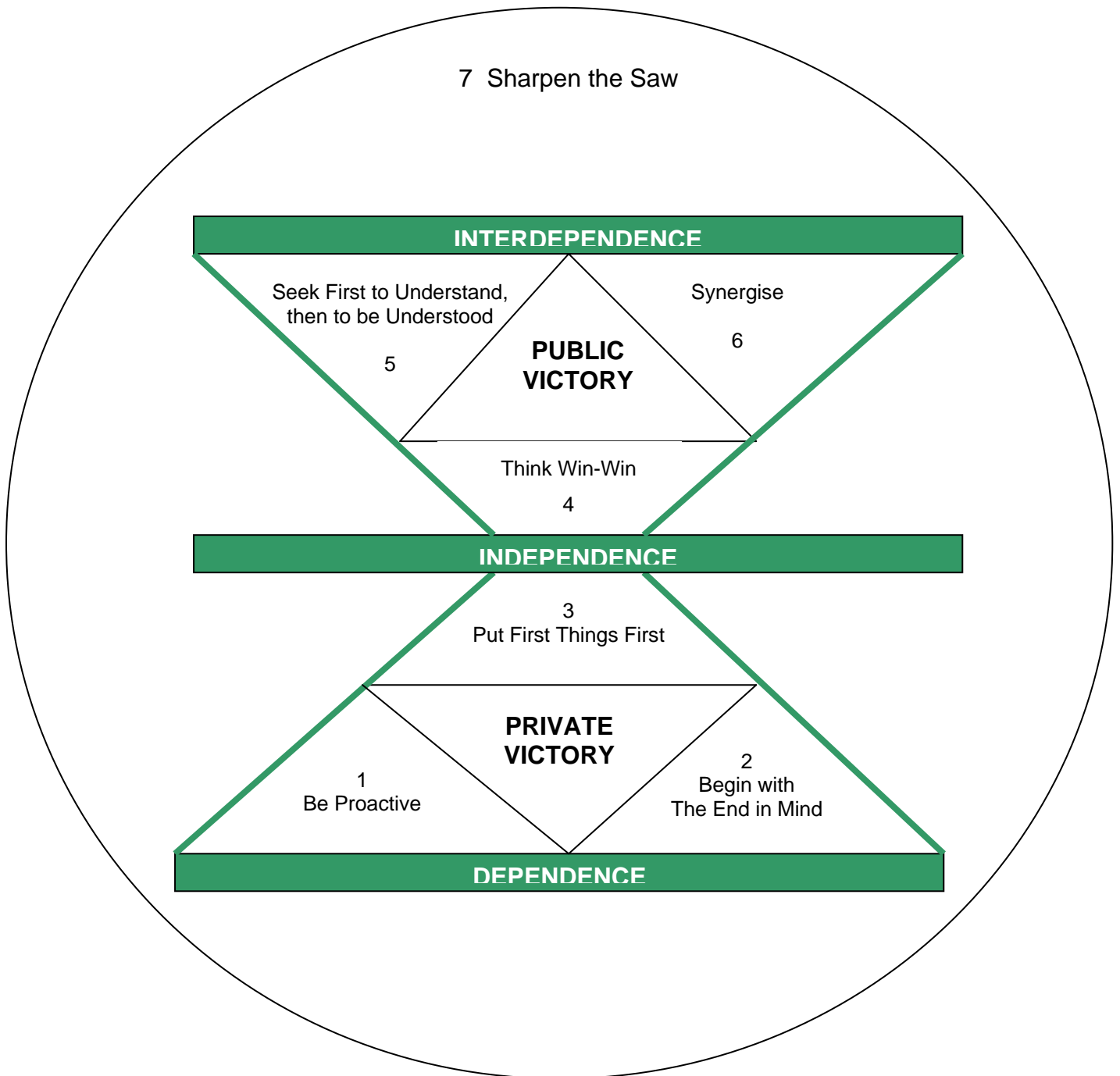


# The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

by Stephen R. Covey

“Successful people build habits of effectiveness into their daily lives.”

The first three are habits of character; they will help you achieve Private Victory and lead you to independence. The next three habits are the outward expression of character and lead to mutual benefit and Public Victories which lead to interdependence. Habit 7 sustains the growth process.



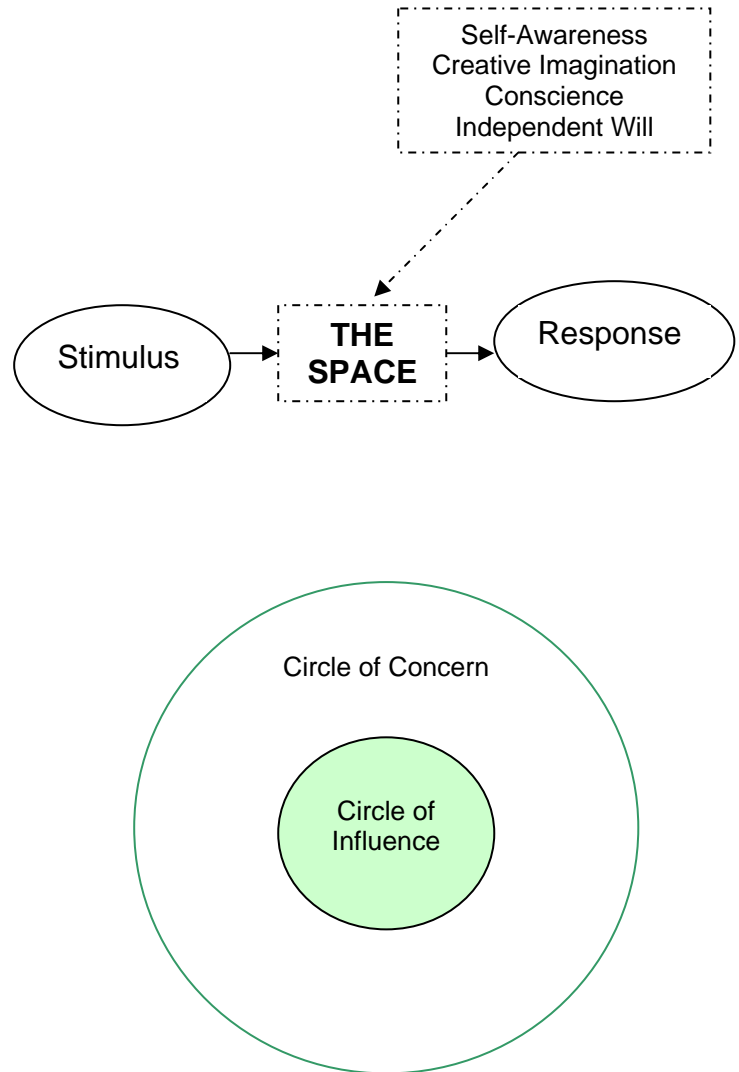
## Habit 1: BE PROACTIVE

The habit of being proactive means taking responsibility for your attitudes and actions. Responsibility can be broken into two parts: response / ability. Proactive people recognise that they have the ability to choose their responses. Their behaviour is a product of their own conscious choices, based on values, rather than a product of their conditions, based on feelings. The proactive model states that between stimulus and response lies our freedom to choose our responses.

Proactive people focus their time and energy on things they can control (Circle of Influence) instead of reacting to or worrying about conditions over which they have little or no control (Circle of Concern).

### Applications

1. For 30 days work within your Circle of Influence. Keep all of the promises you make. Be part of the solution, not part of the problem.
2. Imagine an experience or an encounter where, based on past performance, you might behave reactively. Decide in advance what your proactive response will be, then exercise that choice in the actual situation.
3. Listen to your language. Are you using reactive language – “If only ...”, “I can’t ...”, or “I have to ...” – to transfer responsibility for your feelings and actions to somebody or something else? If so, start using more proactive, positive language, expressing your ability to choose your response and to create alternatives.
4. Identify what lies within your Circle of Influence. Concentrate your energy and efforts on these things, and monitor the difference it makes in your performance.



## **Habit 2:**

### **BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND**

This is the habit of personal leadership, meaning you begin each day or task with a clear understanding of your desired direction and destination. By keeping that end in mind, you can make certain that whatever you do does not violate the criteria you have defined as supremely important.

All things are created twice. There is a mental or first creation, and a physical or second creation. The second creation follows from the first. If we do not develop our own self-awareness and become responsible for first creations, we empower other people and circumstances to shape our lives by default.

#### Applications

1. Consider the difference between leading and managing. Determine the direction you want to take and the destination you want to reach in your life.
2. Imagine you are attending your own funeral three years from now. Four people will be speaking at the services: a family member, a close friend, a work associate, and a spiritual or community leader. List things you would like each person to say about you at the funeral. Make these characteristics, virtues and skills part of your mission statement.
3. Identify a project you will be working on in the near future, and apply the principle of mental creation. Write down the results you desire and what steps will lead to those results.

### Habit 3 PUT FIRST THINGS FIRST

This is the habit of personal management, which involves organising and managing your time according to the personal priorities you established in Habit 2.

		URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Crises</li><li>▪ Pressing problems</li><li>▪ Deadline-driven projects</li><li>▪ Meetings</li><li>▪ Preparations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Preparation</li><li>▪ Prevention</li><li>▪ Values clarification</li><li>▪ Planning</li><li>▪ Relationship building</li><li>▪ True re-creation</li><li>▪ Empowerment</li></ul>
	III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Interruptions</li><li>▪ Some phone calls</li><li>▪ Some mail</li><li>▪ Some reports</li><li>▪ Some meetings</li><li>▪ Many proximate, pressing matters</li><li>▪ Many popular activities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Trivia, busywork</li><li>▪ Some phone calls</li><li>▪ Time wasters</li><li>▪ "Escape" activities</li><li>▪ Irrelevant mail</li><li>▪ Watching TV excessively</li></ul>
NOT IMPORTANT			

Basically, we spend our time in four ways, as illustrated. With careful analysis, most people discover that they spend far too much time responding to the urgent crises of Quadrants I and III, escaping occasionally for survival to the not urgent, unimportant time wasters of Quadrant IV.

The ideal to work toward is eliminating time spent in QIII and QIV, and increasing time spent in QII. As you invest more time on the planning, prevention and relationship-building activities of QII you'll find that you spend far less time picking up the broken pieces in QI or reacting to the urgent demands of other people in QIII.

#### Applications

1. List one activity in your personal life and one in your professional life that, if performed regularly, would produce highly desirable results. Now, schedule and organise your time next week according to your priorities.
2. Draw a Time Management Matrix and estimate how much time you spend in each quadrant. Then log your time for three days in 15-minute intervals. How accurate was your estimate? Make needed changes by concentrating on Quadrant II.
3. Start organising your life on a weekly basis. Write down your roles and goals, then incorporate your goals into a specific action plan.

## **Habit 4:**

### **THINK WIN-WIN**

Think Win-Win is the habit of interpersonal leadership. In personal relationships and business, effectiveness is largely achieved through the cooperative efforts of two or more people. Marriages and other partnerships are interdependent realities, yet people often approach these relationships with an independent mentality, which is like trying to play golf with a tennis racket – the tool isn't suited to the sport.

Most of us learn to base our self-worth on comparisons and competition. We think about succeeding in terms of someone else failing. There is only so much pie, and if you get a big piece, there is less for me. People with this type of Scarcity Mentality find it difficult to share recognition and power, and to be happy for the successes of other people, especially those closest to them.

Win-Win, on the other hand, is based on an Abundance Mentality – the paradigm that there is plenty for everyone, that one person's success is not achieved at the expense or exclusion of the success of others. Win-Win means that agreements or solutions are mutually beneficial and satisfying.

A Win-Win agreement is an effective tool for establishing the win-win foundations necessary for long-term effectiveness. A win-win agreement makes the following five elements explicit: desired results, guidelines, resources, accountability, and consequences.

#### Applications

1. Think Win-Win means to seek mutually beneficial solutions. Identify an upcoming project you will be working on. Determine to explore mutually beneficial options with the other people involved.
2. Identify three key relationships in your life and indicate what you feel the balance (trust level) is in each of the Emotional Bank Accounts. Write down some specific ways you could make deposits into each account.
3. Identify a model of win-win thinking – someone who seeks mutually beneficial solutions even when other people are going for win-lose. Determine what you can learn and apply from this person's example.

## **Habit 5:**

### **SEEK FIRST TO UNDERSTAND, THEN TO BE UNDERSTOOD**

Habit 5 is the habit of communication – the most important skill in life. You've spent years learning how to read and write, years learning how to speak. But what about listening? What training have you had that enables you to listen so that you really understand another human being from that individual's frame of reference?

We typically seek first to be understood. Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply. They're either speaking or preparing to speak. They're filtering everything through their own paradigms, reading their autobiographies into other people's lives.

In contrast, Empathic Listening gets inside another person's frame of reference. You see the world the way he or she sees it, you understand how he or she feels. This does not mean that you agree necessarily, simply that you understand his or her point of view.

#### Applications

1. The next time you observe people talking with each other, cover your ears for a minute and just watch them. What emotions are being communicated that may not come across in words alone? In your next interaction with someone, be sensitive to those unexpressed feelings and exercise the attitude and skill of Empathic Listening.
2. Select a relationship where you sense the Emotional Bank Account is in the red. Try to understand the situation from the other person's point of view and write down your thoughts. In your next interaction with this person, listen to understand. Compare what you are hearing with what you wrote down. How valid were your assumptions? Did you really understand that individual's perspective?
3. When you catch yourself probing, evaluating, advising, or interpreting in a conversation with another person, acknowledge it, apologise, and begin listening with real empathy to capture and reflect both the content and feeling of what the other person is expressing.

## Habit 6: SYNERGISE

This is the habit of creative cooperation or teamwork. Two people, creatively cooperating, will be able to produce far better results than either one could along. Synergy lets us discover jointly things that we are much less likely to discover by ourselves.

$$1 + 1 = 3$$

Valuing the differences – the mental, emotional, and physiological differences between people – is the essence of synergy. The key to valuing those differences is to realise that all people see the world not as it is, but as they are. When we value differences and bring different perspectives together in the spirit of mutual respect, people feel free to seek the best possible alternative, often the Third Alternative – one that is substantially better than either of the original proposals. Finding a Third Alternative is not a compromise; it represents a Win-Win solution for both parties.

### Applications

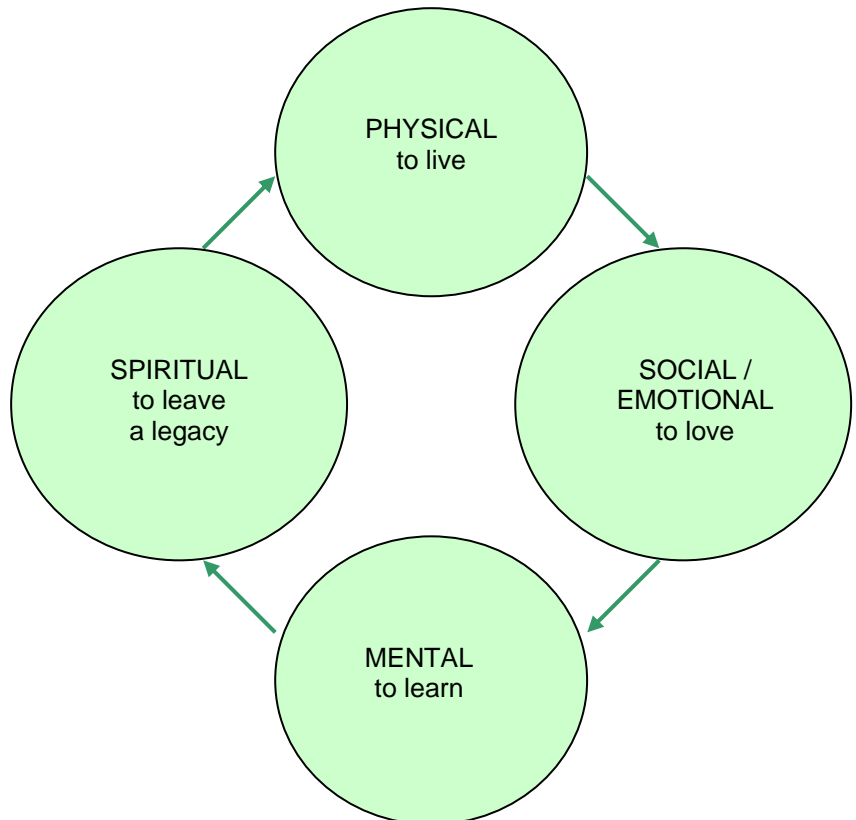
1. Think about a person who sees things differently than you do. Consider how those differences might lead to Third Alternative solutions. Openly seek this person's view on a current project or problem. Show consideration and courageously express your own views.
2. The next time you have a disagreement or confrontation with someone, attempt to understand the concerns underlying that person's position. Address those concerns in a creative and mutually beneficial way.
3. Identify a situation that could benefit from greater teamwork and synergy. What conditions would need to exist to support synergy? What can you do to create those conditions?

## Habit 7: SHARPEN THE SAW

This is the habit of self-renewal. Success has two sides: production capability and the production of desired results. It is wise to keep both sides in balance. When people get busy producing or “sawing” they rarely take time to sharpen the saw because maintenance seldom pays dramatic, immediate dividends.

Sharpening the saw means having a balanced, systematic program for self-renewal in the four areas of our lives; physical, mental, social/emotional, and spiritual. Without this discipline, the body becomes weak, the mind mechanical, the emotions raw, the spirit insensitive, and the person selfish.

To sharpen the saw, we must be proactive. Self-renewal is a Quadrant II activity, and Quadrant II must be acted on. This is the single most powerful investment we can ever make in life – investment in ourselves, in the only instrument we have with which to deal with life and to contribute. Renewal is the principle and the process that empowers us to move in an upward spiral of growth and change, of continuous improvement.



### Applications

1. Get out of bed at a set time each morning and exercise for 30 minutes.
2. Read uplifting and inspirational literature for a few minutes each day. Meditate upon its meaning to you and how you can apply it in your life.
3. Spend an hour or two each week keeping a personal journal and family records.