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Clinical Supervision Case Study

Stacey J. Evans-Chretien

Tarleton State University

EDAD 5073-410

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Book Review of Covey's Seven Habits

Essential Points within the Book

In the book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey, several paradigms, principles, and habits are explained and examined

that give the reader insight into ways to adapt and modify their thinking patterns into ones that are more effective and efficient. What Covey is talking about is a lifestyle thinking change. Covey also says the basic principles to which all human beings have innately are: fairness, integrity, honesty, human dignity, quality, excellence, potential and growth, patience, nurturance, and encouragement. These principles are the guidelines for human conduct and have enduring power. (Covey, P. 35)

Covey

suggests that the more closely our individual maps or principles are

aligned with these natural laws, the more functional they will be. Some people have incorrect internal thinking maps and this book is designed to relate to those individuals a new perspective in order to correct their internal maps to one that is more effective in their personal and interpersonal attitudes and behaviors. Covey discusses seven habits in order to achieve this purpose. The first three habits deal with self-mastery to move a person from a dependence framework to a more independent one which are called “ private victories” (Covey, p. 51). Habits 4, 5, and 6 deal with “ public victories” or ones that deal with teamwork, cooperation, and communication. The last habit deals with renewal which is a balance of the four basic dimensions of life and encompasses all of the other habits. It is the habit of continuous improvement that creates an upward growth pattern of effectiveness. (Covey, p. 52)

Paradigms and Principles

Covey discusses several habits that he feels makes a highly effective person. These seven habits are closely construed with several of the fundamental principles of human effectiveness. Even though the habits are

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basic, they are also primary and represent the correct and proper principles of which happiness and success are based on. (Covey, p. 23) In order to understand how to implement Covey's seven habits into a daily lifestyle with meaning, one must first understand the meaning of a paradigm shift. The meaning of a paradigm is seen in a multitude of ways; however, Covey's primary meaning is "the way we see the world in terms of perceiving, understanding, and interpreting" (Covey, 1989, p. 23). Covey puts it into very clear terms, "the more aware we are of our basic paradigms or assumptions, and the extent to which we have been influenced by our experience, the more we can take responsibility for those paradigms, examine them, test them against reality, listen to others and be open to their perceptions, thereby getting a larger picture and a far more objective view" (Covey, p. 29). Covey states that the basis on paradigm shifting is what he calls the "Aha!" experience. This is when someone finally gets the point that is trying to be made as when a teacher explains a concept several times and then the light goes on in her students' heads. Covey says the more a person is bound by their initial perception, the more

profound the “ Aha!” experience. (Covey, p. 29) Whether a paradigm shift is in the positive or negative direction they are still monumental because they are changing and instant ways of seeing the world, attitudes, and behaviors in a different way. Furthermore, Covey suggests that these paradigm shifts are ultimately the sources of relationships with others. (Covey, p. 30)

Inside-Out. Inside-Out is the new way of thinking that Covey exemplifies in his book. It is a principle centered and character based backwards approach to personal and interpersonal effectiveness. The term inside-out means to start first with the self or start with the most inside part of your self-your character, motives, and paradigms. Inside-out is a “ continuous process of renewal based on the natural laws that govern human growth and progress” (Covey, p. 43). It is also an “ upward spiral of growth that leads to progressively higher forms of responsible independence and effective interdependence” (Covey, p. 43). Covey says that the inside out process is a very powerful and dramatic paradigm shift for most people, but most of the habits are already within most people but they must be

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recognized, developed, and used to meet the deeper concerns of what makes

us effective. (Covey, p. 44)

The Seven Habits – An Overview. In order to explain the various

habits that Covey examines in his book, one must first understand the

definition of what a habit is. The definition of a habit as defined by

Covey is the intersection of knowledge, skill, and desire. (Covey, p. 47)

Covey (1989) states, “ knowledge is the theoretical paradigm, the what to do

and the why. Skill is the how to do. And desire is the motivations or,

the want to do.” As stated above, the first three habits deal with self-

mastery, a move from dependence to independence. They are private victories

which are the essence of character growth and precede public victories.

(Covey, p. 51) Habits 4, 5, and 6 are considered the “ public victory”

habits. They make up the framework of teamwork, cooperation, and

communication and are personality-oriented. (Covey, p. 51) The last habit

is the habit of renewal which is basically a regular balanced renewal of

the four dimensions of life. It circles all the other habits and lifts one

into an upward growth pattern of effectiveness with continuous improvement.

It lifts one to new levels of understanding and living each one of the habits as when meeting them on individual planes. (Covey, p. 51) Covey suggests that good relationships will improve, become deeper, more solid, more creative, and more adventuresome and that by replacing old habits with new, one will find new habits of effectiveness, happiness, and trust-based relationships. (Covey, p. 61)

Private Victory

The concept of a “ private victory” as Covey suggests is one that encompasses the first three habits: Habit one-being proactive, habit two-beginning with the end in mind, and habit three-putting first things first.

Private victories are the essence of character growth and come before the public victories of habits 4, 5, and 6.

Habit One – Be Proactive. Habit one is about being proactive.

Proactivity as defined by Covey is more than just taking initiative but it also means that humans are responsible for their own lives. That behavior

is a function of our decisions and not our conditions. Ultimately we have the power to make things happen. (Covey, p. 71) Covey (1989) also suggests that highly proactive people recognize responsibility and do not blame circumstances, conditions, or conditioning for their behavior, but rather their behavior is a product of their own conscious choice. That choice is based on values instead of a product of their conditions that are based upon a feeling. Human nature is to act and not be acted upon so taking initiative does not mean being pushy, obnoxious, or aggressive but rather recognizing responsibility to making things happen in effective ways.

Proactivity focuses on the circle of influence and working on the things that one can do something about and that is within the reach of "do-ability." Covey says the energy is positive, enlarging, and magnifying which in turn causes the circle of influence to increase. (p. 83) Reactive people in comparison focus their efforts on the circle of concern and the weaknesses of other people, the problems of the environment, and circumstances over which they don't have control over. (Covey, p. 83) Covey suggests that at the very heart of the circle of influence is the ability

to make and keep commitments and promises to oneself and others and is the

essence of one's proactivity. (Covey, p. 92)

Habit Two – Begin with the End in Mind. Habit two is about beginning with the end in mind or seeing the big picture before one starts. Covey (1989) suggests that one should, “ begin today with the image, picture, or paradigm of the end of your life as your frame of reference or the criterion by which everything else is examined.” “ What really matters to you in the end should be the guide to what contributes to the vision you have of your life as a whole” (Covey, 1989, p. 98). To begin with the end in mind means to start with a clear understanding of your destination...such as knowing where you want to go before getting to the airport, or better yet, before you even pack! This habit is based on the principles of personal leadership which is different than the next habit which deals with management. Covey states that the most effective way he knows to begin with the end in mind is to develop a personal mission statement or philosophy/creed to live by. (p. 106)” Personal mission statements focus on what you want to be and do and on the values or

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principles upon which being and doing are based” (Covey, 1989, p. 106). To

write an effective mission statement one must start with the basic

paradigms such as security, guidance, wisdom, and power. Only after these

are presented does one go further in recognizing the alternate centers such

as spouse centeredness, family centeredness, money centeredness, work

centeredness, possession centeredness, pleasure centeredness,

friend/enemy

centeredness, church centeredness, and self-centeredness. Those stated are

among the most common centers from which people approach their lives.

(Covey, p. 118)

Habit Three – Put First Things First. The last habit of independence

deals with the principles of personal management. It is “ the fulfillment

and natural emergence of habits one and two and is the exercise of

independent will toward becoming principle-centered” (Covey, 1989, p. 147).

In order to make habit three effective one must first have habits one and

two in effect as a prerequisite before attempting to fulfill habit three.

Covey states that you can’t become principle-centered without first being

aware of your paradigms and understanding how to shift them and align them

with principles. (p. 147) Furthermore, “ you can’t become principle-centered without a vision of and a focus on the unique contribution that is yours to make” (Covey, 1989, p. 147). Covey’s own personal rule is to manage from the left and lead from the right. (p. 147) Covey suggests that effective management is to put first things first, while leading secedes what first things are. But it is the management that puts them in order of moment-by-moment or the discipline of carrying them out. (p. 148)

Public Victory

In moving towards the paradigms of interdependence one must remember that effective interdependence can only be built on a foundation of true independence and private victory comes before public victory. (Covey, p. 185) Covey describes what he calls an Emotional Bank Account as a metaphor for the amount of trust that has been built up in a relationship. (p. 188) It is the “ feeling of safeness you have with another human being” (Covey, p. 188). If one doesn’t get deposits such as courtesy, kindness, honesty, commitments, but instead gets discourtesy, disrespect,

overreacting, betrayal, and threats, the relationship will deteriorate.

Public victory takes into account the successes of working with other people. Habits one through six work together to create “ effective interdependence.” Covey states that “ we can see on an even deeper level that effective interdependence can only be achieved by truly independent people” (p. 203).

The public victory habits four through six are as follows: Habit four-Think Win/Win, Habit five-Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood, and Habit six-Synergize.

Habit Four – Think Win/Win. Stephen Covey puts this habit into perspective when he says, “ whether you are the president of a company or the janitor, the moment you step from independence into interdependence in any capacity, you step into a leadership role” (p. 206). He also stated that you are in a position of influencing other people and the habit of effective interpersonal leadership is “ Think Win/Win,” (p. 206). Even though Win/Win is the primary paradigm of this habit, there are other interactions as well that are alternatives: Win/Lose, Lose/Lose, Win, <https://assignbuster.com/running-head-instructional-supervision-training-p/>

Lose/Win, and Win/Win or No Deal. Covey suggests though that in the long run, if it isn't a win for both, then we both will lose so that's why

Win/Win is the only alternative in any interdependent reality. (p. 212)

Within the Win/Win agreement there is five elements that are explicitly made and create a standard against which people can measure their own successes they are: desired results, guidelines, resources, accountability, and consequences. (Covey, p. 224) The Win/Win habit is a total paradigm of human interaction that comes from a character of integrity, maturity, and the abundance of mentality. (Covey, p. 234)

Habit Five - Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood. Covey states that the single most important principle he has learned in interpersonal relations is to seek first to understand and then to be understood or empathic communication. (p. 237) He also states that this one principle is the key to effective interpersonal communication. Covey also stated that most people don't really listen with the intent to understand because they would rather listen with the intent to reply. They are speaking or preparing to speak and are filtering everything through their

own paradigms. (Covey, p. 239) When you empathically are listening, you are listening with your ears, but also with your eyes. (p. 241) Empathic listening is also listening for meaning, feeling, and behavior. (p. 241) Covey finally states that you sense, you intuit, and you feel. (p. 241)

The other half of habit five is to be understood. It also is equally important in acquiring the Win/Win solution. Covey states that “ when you can present your own ideas clearly, specifically, visually, and contextually, you significantly increase the credibility of your ideas” (p. 257). Habit five gives you greater accuracy and integrity because you really understand and people really understand you.

Habit Six - Synergize. Habit six encompasses the principles of creative cooperation. “ Synergy is the highest activity in all life-the true test and manifestation of all of the other habits put together” (Covey, 1989, p. 262). Covey defines synergy as the whole that is greater than the sum of its parts and that the relationship which the parts have to each other is a part in and of itself. (p. 263) Synergy isn't only a part but the most powerful part of the whole because it is the part that unifies

the others and is the most exciting, according to Covey (p. 236). Synergy is the essence of the principle-centered leadership and is also everywhere.

Synergy is two parts in which live or work together off on one another.

Within this chapter Covey describes a multitude of synergistic scenarios such as: synergistic communication, synergy in the classroom, and synergy in business. Covey suggests that when you see only two alternatives, one being yours and the other being the wrong one, you can look for a synergistic third alternative. One of which will be better for everyone concerned (Covey, p. 284)

Renewal

The renewal process is multifaceted. It involves preserving yourself in four dimensions: physical, mental, social/emotional, and spiritual. It means making yourself aware of your surroundings inner and outer related.

Covey states that it means exercising all four dimensions of our nature in wise and balanced ways (p. 289). In order to do this Covey says one must be proactive and take the time to sharpen the saw, which brings us to habit seven-Sharpening the Saw.

Habit Seven - Sharpen the Saw. Investment in ourselves is what Covey says is the single most important thing we can ever do for ourselves. (p. 289) He also states that we are the instruments of our own performance and to be effective we need to recognize the importance of taking time to sharpen the saw in all four ways. (p. 289) Sharpening the saw is a good way of putting it when you are dulling in your attempts to be effective and you need to stop, look, analyze, sharpen your tactics again, and go for it again. Covey also suggests that although renewal in each of the four dimensions is important, it only becomes optimal when we deal with all four dimensions in a wise and balanced way (Covey, p. 302). He also states that to neglect any one part of the four dimensions would be negatively impacting upon the others. " Balanced renewal is optimally synergistic and the things you do to sharpen the saw in any one dimension have positive impact in other dimensions because they are so highly interrelated" (Covey, p. 303).

Covey's Seven Habits Implemented in the Clinical Supervision Process

Pre-observation Conference

Covey's seven habits may be utilized in the clinical supervision

process with teachers in my school environment in a number of ways. The

first step in the clinical supervision process is the pre-observation

conference. During the pre-observation conference the teacher will meet

with the administrator to discuss what will be seen in the classroom, the

behaviors to be observed, and collect data in response to what is being

observed. Covey's Habit two-Begin with the end in mind is what should be

focused on here. This is when the administrator must see as the big

picture what will take place in the classroom or what the teacher is trying

to portray.

Classroom Observation

The second step in the clinical supervision process is the actual

classroom observation. The administrator will look at the class as a whole

and view the interaction between the teacher and the students. Observation

as a whole is also taking place, the administrator must look at what it is

the teacher is trying to accomplish and if she is being effective. This

part of the clinical supervision is in parallel with Covey's Public Victory

and the relatedness of one to the other such as in habit six or synergy.

The administrator is trying to see if there is a Win/Win relationship taking place where what is being taught is being learned, as well as if the students understand what the teacher is saying. The teacher is also aware of her being critiqued and so she needs to have a perfect synergy within her class while the administrator is in her room doing her observation.

Analysis and Strategy

The third step of the clinical supervision process is the analysis and strategy of the observation. I can also see Covey's sixth habit of synergy within this step as the administrator or supervisor puts all her data together to present to the teacher in a useful format when doing the next step.

Supervision Conference

During this supervision conference step, or fourth step, the supervisor is using the public victory and bringing all points to be discussed with the teacher to the table. Also during this step, habit seven-sharpening the saw can have a place as to redirect efforts in

effectiveness by making the teacher aware of his or her weaknesses and determining a game plan to alleviate the problems and make the teacher more effective in the teaching process.

Post-conference Analysis

During the final step of the clinical supervision process, the post-conference analysis, the supervisor reflects upon the previous four stages. He or she will answer questions that are related to her own performance of how she met the teacher's needs, if she collected accurate data, was the teacher able to benefit from the data they presented and if they could have improved the process would they do it again. These questions are also in relation to all the habits that Covey explained in his book. Does it all fit together, is everything harmonized, did I begin with the end in mind, was I proactive during the process, did I get the most important things done first, was everyone in a win/win situation and if not did I try my best to get them there, was there harmony in the comprehension part between teacher and supervisor, was their synergy, and lastly did I need to go back

and revamp or sharpen the saw to make the whole process more effective for

everyone involved in the clinical supervision process.

Summary Reaction

Covey's book definitely opened my eyes to becoming a more active participant in the proactive process. Being proactive in my position means to make things happen. I agree with Covey in this perspective because one doesn't have time to sit around and wait for things to happen. Another area that I relate with was habit two and beginning with the end in mind.

When running a school one must keep the big picture in mind. What goals and

missions do we have to achieve before the end of the year. Everyone in the school has a specific function in making the goals successful ones. Not only does this habit work in the business realm of my life but it also works in my personal one as well. I must keep the big picture in mind and as a result everything such as work, family, and goals suddenly seem to change as I look at the big picture.

When reading about putting first things first, what came to

mind was all the times I started something and put it on the back burner to start something else before finishing what I first started. By keeping things in order and in an organized fashion you can prioritize easier and not get side tracked on less meaningful things that can be done later.

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