

# Summary of the seven habits of highly effective people

People



Seven Habits of Highly Effective People has proven to be an International best seller and has sold over 10 million copies world wide, the immense popularity of the literature has turned it into a bible for business managers, individuals in relationships and students getting themselves through university or college. The publication by Stephen R Covey had so much of valuable material that my habit of highlighting or underlining significant verses has turned my book into a colourful array of green, blue and pink highlighters.

I can go on and on with the endless compliments that this piece of work deserves but the fact of the matter is that I have been assigned a difficult task of summarising and justifying Stephen Covey's marvel in less than two thousand words. So without wasting any more words, here goes:

Habit 1: Be Proactive In the words of Stephen Covey, " Our behaviour is a function of our decision and not our conditions. " What the author means is that our behaviour and actions should be dictated by our own decisions and not by circumstances.

The book also mentions the circle of concern and influence of individuals. A circle of concern for an individual includes a wide range of problems that a person might have whereas a circle of influence includes all the concerns that the individual has a degree of control over. Proactive people tend to focus on their circle of influence whereas reactive individuals tend to operate the other way round, limiting their scope of the circle of influence. In a nutshell proactive people seize the opportunities, are solutions to problems and tend to write their own destiny.

Related Examples: Stephen Covey's Sacramento incident with the helpless nurse who had the misfortune of working with an unthankful, inconsiderate and rude man, somehow reminded me of my early years at school, when I used to stutter while talking. I was the hapless nurse and my classmates were the rude supervisor who would pounce at making fun of me with every stammer in my speech. Although I had not read Mr. Covey's book at that time, but it was my father who helped me get rid of my stammer.

I started talking out loud to myself, read newspapers standing in front of the mirror and used to practice words I had difficulty with, over and over again. This was me adopting a proactive attitude, I decided to stop being miserable about the circumstances and it was time to bring a change in myself. Barack Obama the 44th and current president of the USA on the other hand is a proven model of proactive behaviour. Obama has managed to do what no other 'black man' could have accomplished in a country that has discrimination so deeply rooted in its society.

Despite the Declaration of Independence highlighting the equal treatment of all humans regardless of gender and race, this believe did not stand true in the streets of United States, where a black man was always at a loss of his rights, be it a professional or a social setting. Obama on the other hand rose above these circumstances and took matters into his own hands. He made things happen for himself by leading successful campaign that landed him the title of 'The First Black President of The United States of America.

Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind The second habit in the book, talks about knowing where you are going, it is about visualising how the end of an activity or life as a whole is going to be. Begin with the end in mind <https://assignbuster.com/summary-of-the-seven-habits-of-highly-effective-people/>

inculcates a sense of planning in the mind of the reader. In this section Stephen has highlighted the fact that everything is created twice, first is the mental creation or in other words planning and the second is the physical creation i. e. the implementation of planning.

The text rightly says that every step you take up the ladder will go in vain, if you are not climbing up the right ladder. The best way for individuals to instil habit 2 is by preparing a personal mission statement and for organisations to have an organisation's mission statement. Related Examples: Our beloved Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (P. B. U. H) serves as an excellent example for all the seven habits, but I truly believe that every act of the Holy Prophet was in accordance to a goal and brought him a step closer to the final destination. In the case of Prophet Muhammad (P. B. U.

H), his final destination and the ultimate goal was to effectively spread the religion, Islam and to gain Allah's acceptance and blessings in the process. The Holy Prophet was so dedicated to his mission that he faced the torments of the kufar, was made to bleed till his shoes, was made the victim of rude harsh comments but besides all that Hazrat Muhammad did not falter in his mission and effectively delivered the purpose of his life. Coming to my personal life, the recent demise of my uncle came as quite a tragedy and at the same time it unveiled to me how much of a great man my uncle actually was.

Relating it to Stephen Covey's introductory funeral setting to Habit 2, I could see how every one was deeply engraved by the incident and how easily they could voice opinions like how great of a man my uncle was. I believe my uncle had created his personal mission statement and was more open to the <https://assignbuster.com/summary-of-the-seven-habits-of-highly-effective-people/>

end reality of life, death, than anyone else was. He had managed to provide his children with the best living standards and keep everyone happy in his social circle without having to compromise on his religious duties as a Muslim. I salute you uncle for the man you were!

**Habit 3: Put First Things First** The third habit focuses on leadership and managerial skills of the reader, where leadership tells you what first things are, your managerial skills help you in carrying out the process. This management process can be carried out by effectively prioritising your activities. According to the author, it is essential for individuals to operate in Quadrant I and II and let go of Quadrant III and IV that usually involve unimportant activities that prove to be time wasters.

By erasing quadrant III and IV activities from their schedule, individuals will be able to make up time for more important things in life. Related Examples: Looking back at the advent of the Buddhist religion, we see how Buddha had moved from his Quadrant III and IV activities, involving the luxuries of life living as royalty, to the second Quadrant, where he had developed a concern for the more important things in life. He had developed a sense of feeling for the suffering of his people and left the confines of his palace to sought out a solution to all the misery that had engulfed the people of his empire.

His search for nirvana or eternal peace had him travelling through various parts of the sub continent, preaching people about equality and peace. Gautama Buddha's efforts had resulted in the emergence of a new religion, now known as Buddhism. We have seen this happening in movies and in real life to people around us, when work and money driven parents tend to focus on ways of increasing the family's living standard and in the process they

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tend to forget the more important and less urgent, Quadrant II, responsibility of effectively bringing up, nurturing and dedicating time to their kids.

Working long hours at the office and coming home late deprives your child of the parental care that is ever so important while he is growing up. The lack of parental attention translates into child drug abuse, low self confidence, lack of consistency and an aim in life and other such issues.

Habit 4: Think Win/Win Unlike the first three habits, the next three habits focus on interdependence and building interpersonal skills. Think Win/Win is one of the six paradigms of human interaction mentioned by Covey.

It talks about building on relationships through seeing mutual benefit while carrying out all our human interactions. By following such behaviour we are able to make significant deposits into our emotional bank account. The other five paradigms of human interaction are: Win/Lose, Lose/Win, Lose/Lose, Win and Win/Win or No Deal. Related Examples: Several examples of Win/Win can be seen when observing a team based strategy. Take the example of F1 racing where for instance team McLaren is in first and second place.

The job of the driver in second place is to stop other contenders from overtaking, whereas the one in first place is totally focused on maintaining his position. The driver in second place is using a Win/Win approach, by not competing with his team mate for first place and going according to plan. Scoring first and second position in the end means that team McLaren will be able to score high points. The best example of Win/Win is that of a married couple who are celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary. Over the years they have managed to collaborate over providing what is best for them.

They might have resorted to compromise, which is a lower level of Win/Win, but they have made it possible to maintain a strong emotional bank account over the years.

Habit 5: Seek First to Understand and then be understood This habit talks about listening, empathising and putting one's self in another man's shoes. According to Covey, the best analogy to this habit is ' to diagnose before you prescribe. ' Habit 5 is a major tool in making deposits to a relationship's emotional bank and helps in maintaining a long term bond. Related Examples:

It was during my A-levels when I found out that my mom possessed habit 5 without having read Covey's manual of effectiveness. I was facing suspension from school for leaving the premises, when I should have been in class. While sitting in the principal's office, my mother asked me to narrate my side of the story to the school administration. On finding out that I had left school to take my injured friend, who had been involved in a car accident, to the hospital, my mom realised that I should not be punished for being there for a fellow human being.

Although I did face a two day suspension from school, but the fact that my mom stood up for me in that office, had made our relationship even stronger. A few days back I received a forwarded message that talked of a 20 year old boy travelling on a train with his father. The boy seemed to be over amused by what he could see from the train's window. He would point out to the clouds and tell his dad ' look dad clouds' the same would be the case for mountains, birds and flowers.

The people who witnessed this approached the boy's dad and said ' this is really sad, you should take your boy to a good doctor' to which the man replied ' we did and he just got his eyesight back after 20 years. ' Habit 6: Synergise According to the literature, synergy means the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. An elaboration on the meaning tells the reader that synergy is all about interdependence and creative collaboration. It is a process of making  $1+1=4$ , through complimenting each other strengths and minimising on weaknesses. Related Examples:

Coming back to the example of sports teams, a cricket team operates in a synergy towards attaining its goal. A victory in a match translates to a combined effort put in by the batsmen, bowlers and the fielders. The game of cricket is not a one man show, fielders provide support to the bowlers, whereas batsmen help in posting a good total or chasing a set target. The word synergy transports you to the production process of a Rolls Royce, where every employee's effort is an investment and a step towards the creation of one of the most amazing cars in the world.

Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw Habit 7 surrounds all the other habits making it possible for them to happen and grow. Sharpen the saw highlights four dimensions that need to be worked on in order to render success and effectiveness. They are physical, spiritual, mental and social/emotional. According to the habit, the learning process should never stop. Related Examples: Yogis have always found time to invest in sharpening the saw. Their methods of meditation and other yoga practices provide practitioners with a key to physical, mental and spiritual ease and freedom.



CEOs and Managers have followed this habit for quite sometime now. They get themselves enrolled in workshops that work on sharpening their physical, spiritual, mental and social skills. Conclusion Seven Habits of Highly Effective People at first was just a three hundred and nineteen page ordeal that I had to go through in order to be able to complete my final project for the Leadership course. It was later that I would find out that this book had made a changed person out of me, the text of this manual to success and effectiveness made me explore a side of my personality that I never knew existed.

In the words of Stephen R Covey, I was able to make a positive paradigm shift, I had developed a principle centred approach to life and by far have successfully ignored Quadrant III and IV activities that were not important in my life and were proving to be time wasters. A few months of spending my life according to the book has helped me develop the limited qualities mentioned above and I plan on effectively incorporating every single word into my personality and my daily life.