

Textbooks' review



Introduction

Many books used in the up-to-date educational process are dedicated to the development of the leadership strategies and defining the ways for achieving success. All these books have several advantages and disadvantages.

Within this work such books will be reviewed as Victor Frankel's *Man's Search for Meaning*, Stephen Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, and Max DePree's *Leadership is an Art*.

Man's Search for Meaning by Victor Frankel was first published in 1946. The book is based on the author's memories about his time in a concentration camp and states psychological methods Victor Frankel used to save his moral and mental sanity and gain moral strength. The aim of the book is to answer the question of "How was everyday life in a concentration camp reflected in the mind of the average prisoner?" (Frankel, 2006). According to the latest sociological research this book belongs to the ten books which have the most influence in the United States (Harper, 2012). By the time of the author's death in 1997, the book has been translated into 24 languages, and over 10 million copies of it have been sold.

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen Covey contain "powerful lessons in personal change" (Covey, 2004). The book was first published in 1989, and in fifteen years after that 15 million copies were translated into more than 38 languages and have been sold. In his book Stephen Covey states the seven principles of success. Moreover, these principles (on his opinion) can be developed automatically, and he calls them "habits". These habits include being proactive (ability to influence the life circumstances),

choosing a definite final goal, strict time-scheduling, ability to achieve multilateral profit (actions should be profitable for all participants), ability to understand the ideas being offered by other people, creative interaction, and constant self-improvement. This book is generally devoted to the harmonious development of a human personality. Covey states his seven principles as the ten commandments of the modern world. His book was significantly influenced and inspired by the works of Victor Frankel. Stephen Covey points to the freedom of reaction and importance of estimation of a situation. The freedom of choice should be preserved even if freedom of a person is physically limited (for instance, in prison etc.) (Covey, 2004).

Leadership is an Art by Max DePree is well known as a “ must read” not only in the business circles, but to a wide readership as well (Harper, 2012). The book was first published in 1989, and since that time over 800, 000 copies have been sold. DePree underlines the importance of building a relationship, being able to develop ideas, and the creation of a lasting value system within an organization (DePree, 2004). The author clearly defines the responsibilities of a leader which should include the following: ability to stimulate creativity of the others, taking an active part in developing, realization and defending of the values, and insurance of the corporate culture. According to the author, a leader is put into the circumstances defined by the past, and so the task of a leader is to get the maximum benefit from the situation offered. A leader should take the full responsibility for the effectiveness of ideas offered by him.

As it can be seen from this brief description, all these books offer different approaches to what is called leadership. The authors stress different sides of

a human personality by assigning them the greatest value in achieving a leadership. All of them could be useful for a person who desires to develop the leadership skills, as they appeal to the real life situations and are based on the life experience of the authors.

The Role of the Books in a Leadership Strategy Development p style=" text-align: justify;"> The leadership qualities are important in a person's life because they help not only to achieve success in the career, but also to realize the creative abilities and talents manage time completely and maximize the benefits of any situation. To accomplish all these tasks, it is important to be able to adapt to external changes quickly and to be prepared for the unpredictable future.

All these books are definitely worth being read, but from my own experience, I can say that *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey has the greatest power of persuasion. This book attracts the attention of the readers with a clear statement of the principles of effective management strategies and those of successful life planning in general. Stephen Covey assures that the principles stated by him can be applied to any situation without an exception. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* help to find the so-called “ golden middle” between “ hard” and “ soft” style of leadership (Harper, 2012). The book by Covey can influence positively both the structure of a large organization, and the life of an individual.

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People give several valuable advices on how to keep the balance between personal and professional spheres of life under constant stress and crises. The book also teaches us to enjoy the success of

others, rather than treat them as our competitors, which can significantly extend the range of communication and make it easier to establish a friendly relationship.

All these topics are also discussed in the other two books, though from a different point of view. Thus, Max DePree believes that the most important quality of a leader is the ability to generate new ideas and to attract others to their execution. Victor Frankel focuses his attention on the strength of mind and the ability to find a proper way out of any situation.

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People stands out from all the other books ever written on the subject of success. This is quite a natural fact, if we take into account that working on his book, the author has studied many works dedicated to his field of study, which have been published for the last 200 years. He took into account the fact that most of the works on the topic of his interest were focused on solving specific problems. However, in the majority of these works the preference was given to the analysis of the external circumstances in which an individual was placed in every certain case. Analysis of the personal qualities was almost ignored.

Covey calls the principles outlined in his book the “habits”, as he believes that following them does not require much effort from an individual since they are inherent in the nature of a human. These principles should be followed without being reminded about; also it should happen automatically, just like following the habits.

The seven principles outlined in the book deserve attention and may be put in practice. From my point of view, the ability to be proactive is especially

important, this means not to be dependent on external circumstances and other people's opinions while making a decision. This “habit” contributes to generating new ideas and engaging other people for their realization.

No less important is the ability to prioritize tasks (“put first things first”), which builds a firm base for the proper time-management skills and saves not only your time, but also the effort. This “habit” makes it possible to concentrate on the most important tasks that will lead to higher quality of their implementation.

The habit to “put first things first” is directly related to the definition of a personal mission statement.

Personal Mission as a “Universal Plan” for Life

Having read the book by Stephen Covey I came to the idea of a personal mission statement. From my point of view, the goal of a personal mission statement is to answer the questions: “What is the purpose of my life?” and “What do I want to achieve in the future?” This is a life plan, in which it is possible to schedule the desired key points throughout the lifespan and identify possible ways in order to achieve the goal.

In general, I would like every day in my life to be meaningful and no hour to be wasted. With this I mean the personal improvement and professional growth.

I like my chosen profession, and I think that it could be practically useful to the people. I would like not only to achieve significant professional growth, but to discover something new in the field of my activity as well. It is

important that the work done by an individual positively influences not only his self-development, but also the development of the society as a whole.

For me, as for any other person, family is of the major importance. Open and trustful family relationships are the basis of a person's life and give him the sense of confidence by making him feel loved and needed.

Talking about personal relationships, it is impossible omit mentioning friends. Friends play an important role in the life of any person, because they are always ready to provide assistance and psychological support. Talking to people who share your interests and spending time with them, certainly will make my life brighter and more interesting.

Changes in My Life Influenced by The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

The book by Stephen Covey deeply influenced my life. It allowed me to revise my " system of values" and make some adjustments to my life plans.

I believe that by adopting all of the seven " habits" as they are set out in the book, I could change all aspects of my life for the better. They could help me in my improvement and self-development that would be a powerful moral support in making important decisions, and would help to build a more trustful relationship with people.

The first " habit" formulated by Covey (" to be proactive"), advices to be guided by own moral qualities instead of basing your decisions on the outside circumstances or the opinions of others. In fact, this principle can be defined as " stay true to yourself in any situation".

Stephen Covey calls to plan your lives, and to make adjustments to these plans in accordance with the personal growth. Personally, I also believe that the planning allows more efficient distribution of time and separation of the main tasks from the secondary.

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People have changed my attitude towards others. This book clearly shows that communication and cooperation activities are productive only if they benefit all the parties. This is a direct appeal for mutually beneficial cooperation.

Trying to understand others before making them understand you and your ideas, helps to create a more trusting atmosphere in communication. This is very good advice when building friendships and family relationships.

Ability to synergize contributes to the understanding of the uniqueness of every individual.

In general, the book by Stephen Covey The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People is a source of valuable recommendations, which could significantly harmonize my life. Following The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People would help to create a strong family and a trustful friendship, as well as to develop my creativity. Combined with the ability to persuade (which also can be developed using these principles) it would contribute to my professional growth.