# THE SEVEN HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE

This new level of thinking is what Seven Habits of Highly Effective People is about. It's a principle-centered, character-based, "Inside-Out" approach to personal and interpersonal effectiveness. "Inside-Out" means to start first with self; even more fundamentally, to start with the most inside part of self -- with your paradigms, your character, and your motives.

It says if you want to have a happy marriage, be the kind of person who generates positive energy and sidesteps negative energy rather than empowering it. If you want to have a more pleasant, cooperative teenager, be a more understanding, empathic, consistent, loving parent. If you want to have more freedom, more latitude in your job, be a more responsible, a more helpful, a more contributing employee. If you want to be trusted, be trustworthy. If you want the secondary greatness of recognized talent, focus first on primary greatness of character.

The Inside-Out approach says that Private Victories TM precede Public Victories TM, that making and keeping promises to ourselves precedes making and keeping promises to others. It says it is futile to put personality ahead of character, to try to improve relationships with others before improving ourselves. Inside-Out is a process -- a continuing process of renewal based on the natural laws that govern human growth and progress. It's an upward spiral of growth that leads to progressively higher forms of responsible independence and effective interdependence.

The character ethic taught that there are basic principles of effective living, and that people can only experience true success and enduring happiness as they learn and integrate these principles into their basic character.

But shortly after World War I the basic view of success shifted from the character ethic to what we might call the personality ethic. Success became more a function of personality, of public image, of attitudes and behaviors, skills and techniques that lubricate the processes of human interaction. This personality ethic essentially took two paths: one was human and public relations techniques and the other was positive mental attitude (PMA).

If I try to use human influence strategies and tactics of how to get other people to do what I want, to work better, to be more motivated, to like me and each other -- while my character is fundamentally flawed, marked by duplicity and insincerity -- then, in the long run, I cannot be successful. My duplicity will breed distrust, and everything I do -- even using so-called good human relations techniques -- will be perceived as manipulative. It simply makes no difference how good the rhetoric is or even how good the intentions are; if there is little or no trust, there is no foundation for permanent success. Only basic goodness gives life to technique.

This brings into focus one of the basic flaws of the personality ethic. To try to change outward attitudes and behaviors does very little good in the long run if we fail to examine the basic paradigms from which those attitudes and behaviors flow.

Each of us tends to think we see things as they are, that we are objective. But this is not the case. We see the world, not as it is, but as we are -- or, as we are conditioned to see it. When we open our mouths to describe what we see, we in effect describe ourselves, our perceptions, our paradigms. When other people disagree with us, we immediately think something is wrong with them. But, as the demonstration shows, sincere, clearheaded people see things differently, each looking through the unique lens of experience.

The more aware we are of our basic paradigms, maps, 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.

Paradigm Shift experienced by the captain -- and by us as we read this account -- puts the situation in a totally different light. We can see a reality that is superseded by his limited perceptions -- a reality that is as critical for us to understand in our daily lives as it was for the captain in the fog.

Principles are guidelines for human conduct that are proven to have enduring, permanent value. They're fundamental. They're essentially unarguable because they are self-evident. One way to quickly grasp the self-evident nature of principles is to simply consider the absurdity of attempting to live an effective life based on their opposites. I doubt that anyone would seriously consider unfairness, deceit, baseness, uselessness, mediocrity, or degeneration to be a solid foundation for lasting happiness and success. Although people may argue about how these principles are defined or manifested or achieved, there seems to be an innate consciousness and awareness that they exist.

The more closely our maps or paradigms are aligned with these principles or natural laws, the more accurate and functional they will be. Correct maps will infinitely impact our personal and interpersonal effectiveness far more than any amount of effort expended on changing our attitudes and behaviors.

The glitter of the personality ethic, the massive appeal, is that there is some quick and easy way to achieve quality of life -- personal effectiveness and rich, deep relationships with other people -- without going through the natural process of work and growth that makes it possible

Our level of development is fairly obvious with tennis or piano playing, where it is impossible to pretend. But it is not so obvious in the areas of character and emotional development. We can "pose" and "put on" for a stranger or an associate. We can pretend. And for a while we can get by with it -- at least in public. We might even deceive ourselves. Yet I believe that most of us know the truth of what we really are inside; and I think many of those we live with and work with do as well.

I have seen the consequences of attempting to shortcut this natural process of growth often in the business world, where executives attempt to "buy" a new culture of improved productivity, quality, morale, and customer service with the strong speeches, smile training, and external interventions, or through mergers, acquisitions, and friendly or unfriendly takeovers. But they ignore the low-trust climate produced by such manipulations. When these methods don't work, they look for other personality ethic techniques that will -- all the time ignoring and violating the natural principles and processes on which high-trust culture is based.

Habits are powerful factors in our lives. Because they are consistent, often unconscious patterns, they constantly, daily, express our character and produce our effectiveness or ineffectiveness.

For our purposes, we will define a habit as the intersection of knowledge, skill, and desire. Knowledge is the theoretical paradigm, the what to do and the why. Skill is the how to do. And desire is the motivation, the want to do. In order to make something a habit in our lives, we have to have all three.

But knowing I need to listen and knowing how to listen is not enough. Unless I want to listen, unless I have the desire, it won't be a habit in my life. Creating a habit requires work in all three dimensions.

The Seven Habits are not a set of separate or piecemeal psyche-up formulas. In harmony with the natural laws of growth, they provide an incremental, sequential, highly integrated approach to the development of personal and interpersonal effectiveness. They move us progressively on a Maturity Continuum from dependence to interdependence.

As we continue to grow and mature, we become increasingly aware that all of nature is interdependent, that there is an ecological system that governs nature, including society. We further discover that the higher reaches of our nature have to do with our relationships with others -- that human life also is interdependent.

Dependent people need others to get what they want. Independent people can get what they want through their own effort. Interdependent people combine their own efforts with the efforts of others to achieve their greatest success.

Interdependence is a far more mature, more advanced concept. If I am physically interdependent, I am self-reliant and capable, but I also realize that you and I working together can accomplish far more than, even at my best, I could accomplish alone. If I am emotionally interdependent, I derive a great sense of worth within myself, but I also recognize the need for love, for giving, and for receiving love from others. If I am intellectually interdependent, I realize that I need the best thinking of other people to join with my own.

As an interdependent person, I have the opportunity to share myself deeply, meaningfully, with others, and I have access to the vast resources and potential of other human beings. Interdependence is a choice only independent people can make.

Dependent people cannot choose to become interdependent. They don't have the character to do it; they don't own enough of themselves.

That's why Habits 1, 2, and 3 in the following chapters deal with self-mastery. They move a person from dependence to independence. They are the "Private Victories," the essence of character growth. Private Victories precede Public Victories. You can't invert that process anymore than you can harvest a crop before you plant it. It's Inside-Out.

# The habits

The Seven Habits are habits of effectiveness. Because they are based on principles, they bring the maximum long-term beneficial results possible. They become the basis of a person's character, creating an empowering center of correct maps from which an individual can effectively solve problems, maximize opportunities, and continually learn and integrate other principles in an upward spiral of growth.

They are also habits of effectiveness because they are based on a paradigm of effectiveness that is in harmony with a natural law, a principle I call the "P/PC Balance," which many people break themselves against. This principle can be easily understood by remembering Aesop's fable of the Goose and the Golden Egg

As the story shows, true effectiveness is a function of two things: what is produced (the golden eggs) and the producing asset or capacity to produce (the goose).

Effectiveness lies in the balance -- what I call the P/PC Balance TM. P stands for production of desired results, the golden eggs. PC stands for production capability, the ability or asset that produces the golden eggs.

In our quest for short-term returns, or results, we often ruin a prized physical asset -- a car, a computer, a washer or dryer, even our body or our environment. Keeping P and PC in balance makes a tremendous difference in the effective use of physical assets.

To maintain the P/PC Balance, the balance between the golden egg (Production) and the health and welfare of the goose (Production Capability) is often a difficult judgment call. But I suggest it is the very essence of effectiveness. It balances short term with long term. It balances going for the grade and paying the price to get an education. It balances the desire to have a room clean and the building of a relationship in which the child is internally committed to do it -- cheerfully, willingly, without external supervision.

# Private Victory

## Habit 1: Be Proactive -- Principles of Personal Vision

Between stimulus and response is our greatest power -- the freedom to choose.

Within the freedom to choose are those endowments that make us uniquely human. In addition to self-awareness, we have imagination -- the ability to create in our minds beyond our present reality. We have conscience -- a deep inner awareness of right and wrong, of the principles that govern our behavior, and a sense of the degree to which our thoughts and actions are in harmony with them. And we have independent will -- the ability to act based on our self-awareness, free of all other influences.

### Proactivity defined

It means that as human beings, we are responsible for our own lives. Our behavior is a function of our decisions, not our conditions. We can subordinate feelings to values. We have the initiative and the responsibility to make things happen. Look at the word responsibility -- "response-ability" -- the ability to choose your response. Highly proactive people recognize that responsibility. They do not blame circumstances, conditions, or conditioning for their behavior. Their behavior is a product of their own conscious choice, based on values, rather than a product of their conditions, based on feeling.

Proactive people can carry their own weather with them. Whether it rains or shines makes no difference to them. They are value driven; and if their value is to produce good quality work, it isn't a function of whether the weather is conducive to it or not.

The ability to subordinate an impulse to a value is the essence of the proactive person. Reactive people are driven by feelings, by circumstances, by conditions, by their environment. Proactive people are driven by values -- carefully thought about, selected and internalized values.

Proactive people are still influenced by external stimuli, whether physical, social, or psychological. But their response to the stimuli, conscious or unconscious, is a value-based choice or response. As Eleanor Roosevelt observed, "No one can hurt you without your consent." In the words of Gandhi, "They cannot take away our self-respect if we do not give it to them." It is our willing permission, our consent to what happens to us, that hurts us far more than what happens to us in the first place.

Whether a problem is direct, indirect, or no control, we have in our hands the first step to the solution. Changing our habits, changing our methods of influence and changing the way we see our no control problems are all within our Circle of Influence.

Anytime we think the problem is "out there," that thought is the problem. We empower what's out there to control us. The change paradigm is "outside-in" -- what's out there has to change before we can change. The proactive approach is to change from the Inside-Out: to be different, and by being different, to effect positive change in what's out there -- I can be more resourceful, I can be more diligent, I can be more creative, I can be more cooperative.

While we are free to choose our actions, we are not free to choose the consequences of those actions. Consequences are governed by natural law. They are out in the Circle of Concern. We can decide to step in front of a fast-moving train, but we cannot decide what will happen when the train hits us.

We can decide to be dishonest in our business dealings. While the social consequences of that decision may vary depending on whether or not we are found out, the natural consequences to our basic character are a fixed result.

Our behavior is governed by principles. Living in harmony with them brings positive consequences; violating them brings negative consequences. We are free to choose our response in any situation, but in doing so, we choose the attendant consequence. "When we pick up one end of the stick, we pick up the other."

For those filled with regret, perhaps the most needful exercise of proactivity is to realize that past mistakes are also out there in the Circle of Concern. We can't recall them, we can't undo them, and we can't control the consequences that came as a result.

We can make a promise -- and keep it. Or we can set a goal -- and work to achieve it. As we make and keep commitments, even small commitments, we begin to establish an inner integrity that gives us the awareness of self-control and the courage and strength to accept more of the responsibility for our own lives. By making and keeping promises to ourselves and others, little by little, our honor becomes greater than our moods.

The power to make and keep commitments to ourselves is the essence of developing the basic habits of effectiveness. Knowledge, skill, and desire are all within our control. We can work on any one to improve the balance of the three. As the area of intersection becomes larger, we more deeply internalize the principles upon which the habits are based and create the strength of character to move us in a balanced way toward increasing effectiveness in our lives.

## Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind

The application of "Begin with the End in Mind" is to 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. Each part of your life -- today's behavior, tomorrow's behavior, next week's behavior, and next month's behavior -- can be examined in the context of the whole, of what really matters most to you. By keeping that end clearly in mind, you can make certain that whatever you do on any particular day does not violate the criteria you have defined as supremely important, and that each day of your life contributes in a meaningful way to the vision you have of your life as a whole.

**It's incredibly easy to get caught up in an activity trap, in the busy-ness of life, to work harder and harder at climbing the ladder of success only to discover it's leaning against the wrong wall. If the ladder is not leaning against the right wall, every step we take just gets us to the wrong place faster.**

"Begin 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 to all things.

To the extent to which we understand the principle of two creations and accept the responsibility for both, we act within and enlarge the borders of our Circle of Influence. To the extent to which we do not operate in harmony with this principle and take charge of the first creation, we diminish it.

It's a principle that all things are created twice, but not all first creations are by conscious design. In our personal lives, if we do not develop our own self-awareness and become responsible for first creations, we empower other people and circumstances outside our Circle or Influence to shape much of our lives by default. We reactively live the scripts handed to us by family, associates, other people's agendas, the pressures of circumstance -- scripts from our earlier years, from our training, our conditioning

These scripts come from people, not principles. And they rise out of our deep vulnerabilities, our deep dependency on others and our need for acceptance and love, for belonging, for a sense of importance and worth, for a feeling that we matter.

### Personal mission statement

People can't live with change if there's not a changeless core inside them. The key to the ability to change is a changeless sense of who you are, what you are about and what you value. With a mission statement, we can flow with changes. We don't need prejudgments or prejudices. We don't need to figure out everything else in life, to stereotype and categorize everything and everybody in order to accommodate reality

In order to write a personal mission statement, we must begin at the very center of our Circle of Influence, that center comprised of our most basic our paradigms, the lens through which we see the world.

It is here that we deal with our vision and our values. It is here that we use our endowment of self-awareness to examine our maps and, if we value correct principles, to make certain that our maps accurately describe the territory, that our paradigms are based on principles and reality. It is here that we use our endowment of conscience as a compass to help us detect our own unique talents and areas of contribution. It is here that we use our endowment of imagination to mentally create the end we desire, giving direction and purpose to our beginnings and providing the substance of a written personal constitution.

Whatever is at the center of our life will be the source of our security, guidance, wisdom, and power. Security represents your sense of worth, your identity, your emotional anchorage, your self-esteem, your basic personal strength or lack of it.

Guidance means your source of direction in life. Encompassed by your map, your internal frame of reference that interprets for you what is happening out there, are standards or principles or implicit criteria that govern moment-by-moment decision-making and doing.

These four factors -- security, guidance, wisdom, and power -- are interdependent. Security and clear guidance bring true wisdom, and wisdom becomes the spark or catalyst to release and direct power. When these four factors are present together, harmonized and enlivened by each other, they create the great force of a noble personality, a balanced character, a beautifully integrated individual.

Principles don't react to anything. They won't divorce us or run away with our best friend. They aren't out to get us. They can't pave our way with shortcuts and quick fixes. They don't depend on the behavior of others, the environment, or the current fad for their validity. Principles don't die. They aren't here one day and gone the next. They can't be destroyed by fire, earthquake, or theft. Principles are deep, fundamental truths, classic truths, and generic common denominators. They are tightly interwoven threads running with exactness, consistency, beauty, and strength through the fabric of life.

The wisdom and guidance that accompany Principle-Centered Living come from correct maps, from the way things really are, have been, and will be. Correct maps enable us to clearly see where we want to go and how to get there. We can make our decisions using the correct data that will make their implementation possible and meaningful. The personal power that comes from Principle-Centered Living is the power of a self-aware, knowledgeable, proactive individual, unrestricted by the attitudes, behaviors, and actions of others or by many of the circumstances and environmental influences that limit other people.

Frankl says we detect rather than invent our missions in life. I like that choice of words. I think each of us has an internal monitor or sense, a conscience that gives us an awareness of our own uniqueness and the singular contributions that we can make. In Frankl's words, "Everyone has his own specific vocation or mission in life. Therein he cannot be replaced, nor can his life be repeated. Thus, everyone's task is as unique as is his specific opportunity to implement it.

A mission statement is not something you write overnight. It takes deep introspection, careful analysis, thoughtful expression, and often many rewrites to produce it in final form. It may take you several weeks or even months before you feel really comfortable with it, before you feel it is a complete and concise expression of your innermost values and directions. Even then, you will want to review it regularly and make minor changes as the years bring additional insights or changing circumstances. But fundamentally, your mission statement becomes your constitution, the solid expression of your vision and values. It becomes the criterion by which you measure everything else in your life.

There are a number of techniques using your imagination that can put you in touch with your values. But the net effect of every one I have ever used is the same. When people seriously undertake to identify what really matters most to them in their lives, what they really want to be and to do, they become very reverent. They start to think in larger terms than today and tomorrow.

In effective personal leadership, visualization and affirmation techniques emerge naturally out of a foundation of well thought through purposes and principles that become the center of a person's life. They are extremely powerful in re-scripting and reprogramming, into writing deeply committed-to purposes and principles into one's heart and mind. I believe that central to all enduring religions in society are the same principles and practices clothed in different language -- meditation, prayer, covenants, ordinances, scripture study, empathy, compassion, and many different forms of the use of both conscience and imagination.

## Habit 3: Put First Things First

Habit 3, then, is the second creation -- the physical creation. It's the fulfillment, the actualization, the natural emergence of Habits 1 and 2. It's the exercise of independent will toward becoming principle-centered. It's the day-in, day-out, moment-by-moment doing it.

The key is not to prioritize what's on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities. And this can best be done in the context of the week.

**Quadrant I** – Important and Urgent – crises, deadline-driven projects, and pressing problems  
**Quadrant II** – Important and Not Urgent – preparation, planning, and relationship building  
**Quadrant III** – Not Important and Urgent – interruptions, most phone calls and mail and reports  
**Quadrant IV** – Not Important and Not Urgent – trivia, busywork, time wasters, and escape activities

Quadrant II organizing involves four key activities.

1. Identifying Roles: The first task is to write down your key roles. If you haven't really given serious thought to the roles in your life, you can write down what immediately comes to mind. You have a role as an individual. You may want to list one or more roles as a family member -- a husband or wife, mother or father, son or daughter, a member of the extended family of grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. You may want to list a few roles in your work, indicating different areas in which you wish to invest time and energy on a regular basis. You may have roles in church or community affairs. You don't need to worry about defining the roles in a way that you will live with for the rest of your life -- just consider the week and write down the areas you see yourself spending time in during the next seven days.

e.g.:

* 1. Individual
  2. Husband/Father
  3. Manager New Products
  4. Chairman United Way

1. Personal Development
2. Wife
3. Mother
4. Real Estate Salesperson
5. Selecting Goals: The next step is to think of two or three important results you feel you should accomplish in each role during the next seven days. These would be recorded as goals. At least some of these goals should reflect Quadrant II activities. Ideally, these short-term goals would be tied to the longer-term goals you have identified in conjunction with your personal mission statement. But even if you haven't written your mission statement, you can get a feeling, a sense, of what is important as you consider each of your roles and two or three goals for each role.
6. Scheduling: Now you look at the week ahead with your goals in mind and schedule time to achieve them. For example, if your goal is to produce the first draft of your personal mission statement, you may want to set aside a two-hour block of time on Sunday to work on it. Sunday (or some other day of the week that is special to you, your faith, or your circumstances) is often the ideal time to plan your more personally uplifting activities, including weekly organizing. It's a good time to draw back, to see inspiration, to look at your life in the context of principles and values. If you set a goal to become physically fit through exercise, you may want to set aside an hour three or four days during the week, or possibly every day during the week, to accomplish that goal. There are some goals that you may only be able to accomplish during business hours, or some that you can only do on Saturday when your children are home. Can you begin to see some of the advantages of organizing the week instead of the day?
7. Daily Adapting: With Quadrant II weekly organizing, daily planning becomes more a function of daily adapting, or prioritizing activities and responding to unanticipated events, relationships, and experiences in a meaningful way. Taking a few minutes each morning to review your schedule can put you in touch with the value-based decisions you made as you organized the week as well as unanticipated factors that may have come up. As you overview the day, you can see that your roles and goals provide a natural prioritization that grows out of your innate sense of balance. It is a softer, more right-brain prioritization that ultimately comes out of your sense of personal mission.

You simply can't think efficiency with people. **You think effectiveness with people and efficiency with things.** I've tried to be "efficient" with a disagreeing or disagreeable person and it simply doesn't work. I've tried to give 10 minutes of "quality time" to a child or an employee to solve a problem, only to discover such "efficiency" creates new problems and seldom resolves the deepest concern.

### Delegation

Stewardship delegation involves clear, up-front mutual understanding and commitment regarding expectations in five areas.

1. Desired Results: Create a clear, mutual understanding of what needs to be accomplished, focusing on what, not how; results, not methods. Spend time. Be patient. Visualize the desired result. Have the person see it, describe it, make out a quality statement of what the results will look like, and by when they will be accomplished.
2. Guidelines: Identify the parameters within which the individual should operate. These should be as few as possible to avoid methods delegation, but should include any formidable restrictions. You won't want a person to think he had considerable latitude as long as he accomplished the objectives, only to violate some long-standing traditional practice or value. That kills initiative and sends people back to the gofer's creed: "Just tell me what you want me to do, and I'll do it."

Let people learn from your mistakes or the mistakes of others. Point out the potential failure

paths, what not to do, but don't tell them what to do. Keep the responsibility for results with them -- to do whatever is necessary within the guidelines.

1. Resources: Identify the human, financial, technical, or organizational resources the person can draw on to accomplish the desired results.
2. Accountability: Set up the standards of performance that will be used in evaluating the results and the specific times when reporting and evaluation will take place.
3. Consequences: Specify what will happen, both good and bad, as a result of the evaluation. This could include such things as financial rewards, psychic rewards, different job assignments, and natural consequences tied into the overall mission of an organization.

# Public Victory

Integrity includes but goes beyond honesty. Honesty is telling the truth -- in other words, conforming our words to reality. Integrity is conforming reality to our words -- in other words, keeping promises and fulfilling expectations. This requires an integrated character, a oneness, primarily with self but also with life. One of the most important ways to manifest integrity is to be loyal to those who are not present. In doing so, we build the trust of those who are present. When you defend those who are absent, you retain the trust of those present.

## Habit 4: Think Win-Win -- Principles of Interpersonal Leadership

Win-win is not a technique; it's a total philosophy of human interaction. In fact, it is one of six paradigms of interaction. The alternative paradigms are win-lose, lose-win, lose-lose, win, and Win-Win or No Deal

Win-win is a frame of mind and heart that constantly seeks mutual benefit in all human interactions. Win-win means that agreements or solutions are mutually beneficial, mutually satisfying. With a win-win solution, all parties feel good about the decision and feel committed to the action plan. Win-win sees life as a cooperative, not a competitive arena. Most people tend to think in terms of dichotomies: strong or weak, hardball or softball, win or lose. But that kind of thinking if fundamentally flawed. It's based on power and position rather than on principle. Win-win is based on the paradigm that there is plenty for everybody, that one person's success is not achieved at the expense or exclusion of the success of others. Win-win is a belief in the Third Alternative. It's not your way or my way; it's a better way, a higher way.

No deal basically means that if we can't find a solution that would benefit us both, we agree to disagree agreeably -- no deal. No expectations have been created, no performance contracts established. I don't hire you or we don't take on a particular assignment together because it's obvious that our values or our goals are going in opposite directions. It is so much better to realize this up front instead of downstream when expectations have been created and both parties have been disillusioned.

Anything less than win-win in an interdependent reality is a poor second best that will have impact in the long-term relationship. The cost of the impact needs to be carefully considered. If you can't reach a true win-win, you're very often better off to go for no deal. Win-Win or No Deal provides tremendous emotional freedom in the family relationship.

If family members can't agree on a video that everyone will enjoy, they can simply decide to do something else -- no deal -- rather than having some enjoy the evening at the expense of others.

In my own work with various people and organizations seeking win-win solutions, I suggest that they become involved in the following four-step process:

1. See the problem from the other point of view. Really seek to understand and give expression to the needs and concerns of the other party as well as or better than they can themselves.
2. Identify the key issues and concerns (not positions) involved.
3. Determine what results would constitute a fully acceptable solution.
4. Identify possible new options to achieve those results.

## Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then 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 autobiography into other people's lives. "Oh, I know exactly how you feel!" "I went through the very same thing. Let me tell you about my experience." They're constantly projecting their own home movies onto other people's behavior. They prescribe their own glasses for everyone with whom they interact.

### Emphatic listening

When I say empathic listening, I am not referring to the techniques of "active" listening or "reflective" listening, which basically involve mimicking what another person says. That kind of listening is skill-based, truncated from character and relationship, and often insults those "listened" to in such a way. It is also essentially autobiographical. If you practice those techniques, you may not project your autobiography in the actual interaction, but your motive in listening is autobiographical. You listen with reflective skills, but you listen with intent to reply, to control, to manipulate. When I say empathic listening, I mean listening with intent to understand. I mean seeking first to understand, to really understand. It's an entirely different paradigm.

Empathic (from empathy) listening gets inside another person's frame of reference. You look out through it, you see the world the way they see the world, you understand their paradigm, you understand how they feel.

Empathy is not sympathy. Sympathy is a form of agreement, a form of judgment. And it is sometimes the more appropriate emotion and response. But people often feed on sympathy. It makes them dependent. The essence of empathic listening is not that you agree with someone; it's that you fully, deeply, understand that person, emotionally as well as intellectually.

In empathic listening, you listen with your ears, but you also, and more importantly, listen with your eyes and with your heart. You listen for feeling, for meaning. You listen for behavior. You use your right brain as well as your left. You sense, you intuit, you feel. Empathic listening is so powerful because it gives you accurate data to work with. Instead of projecting your own autobiography and assuming thought, feelings, motives, and interpretation, you're dealing with the reality inside another person's head and heart. You're listening to understand. You're focused on receiving the deep communication of another human soul.

You will never be able to truly step inside another person, to see the world as he sees it, until you develop the pure desire, the strength of personal character, and the positive Emotional Bank Account, as well as the empathic listening skills to do it.

## Habit 6: Synergize

When properly understood, synergy is the highest activity in all life -- the true test and manifestation of all the other habits put together. The highest forms of synergy focus the four unique human endowments, the motive of win-win, and the skills of empathic communication on the toughest challenges we face in life. What results is almost miraculous. We create new alternatives -- something that wasn't there before.

## Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw - Principles of Balanced Self-Renewal

Habit 7 is personal PC. It's preserving and enhancing the greatest asset you have -- you. It's renewing the four dimensions of your nature -- physical, spiritual, mental, and social/emotional. Although different words are used, most philosophies of life deal either explicitly or implicitly with these four dimensions. Philosopher Herb Shepherd describes the healthy balanced life around four values: perspective (spiritual), autonomy (mental), connectedness (social), and tone (physical). George Sheehan, the running guru, describes four roles: being a good animal (physical), a good craftsman (mental), a good friend (social), and a saint (spiritual). Sound motivation and organization theory embrace these four dimensions or motivations -- the economic (physical); how people are treated (social); how people are developed and used (mental); and the service, the job, the contribution the organization gives (spiritual). "Sharpen the Saw" basically means expressing all four motivations. It means exercising all four dimensions of our nature, regularly and consistently, in wise and balanced ways.