

The 8th Habit Summary

 fourminutebooks.com/the-8th-habit-summary

1-Sentence-Summary: *The 8th Habit* is about finding your voice and helping others discover their own, in order to thrive at work in the Information Age, where interdependence is more important than independence.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



One of the major points in Stephen R. Covey's global bestseller "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People" was that in today's day and age, working together has become more valuable than competing with one another.

Back in the Industrial Age, when work was mostly physical, differences in individual people's productivity were marginal, as no one man could cut 100x logs more per day than another. But now that we live in the Information Age, where knowledge is our main skill, a great programmer can indeed be 1000x more valuable than an average one.

In this 2004 addendum book, Stephen R. Covey shares with us how we can set up ourselves and others for success in the working world, by cultivating The 8th Habit: *finding your voice and inspiring others to find theirs*.

Here are the 3 lessons I've learned about it:

1. Your freedom to choose is the biggest gift you were born with.
2. Build trust by being friendly, knowing when to say sorry and following through on your promises.
3. Empower others by giving up control and handing them responsibility.

Do you want to set yourself up for a successful career in a post-Industrial Age world? Then let's cultivate the 8th habit together!

Lesson 1: There's no bigger gift you've been born with than the ability to choose.

In order to help others find their voice, you first have to find your own, obviously. Stephen Covey says how fast you'll be able to do that depends on how well you use the gifts you've been given at birth. There are many advantages we're born with, just because we're humans, but according to Stephen, the by far biggest one is this:

You are free to choose how you react to any and every situation in life.

Unlike plants, who can't move, or animals, whose life is just a series of instinctual, knee-jerk reactions, we as humans *get to choose our next action*. We can't control what happens to us. But we sure as hell can decide how we'll react to it. So whether that next step is a step up or down is entirely up to you.

If someone treats you badly, be it your boss or a friend, if people try to peer pressure you into doing things, it is up to you to give in to it, to do something about it, or to walk away.

However, freedom of choice isn't the only enabling factor in finding your voice. Covey also talks about the four kinds of intelligence:

1. **Physical intelligence**, which is your body's ability to function mostly on autopilot, without conscious direction.
2. **Mental intelligence**, what you'd call IQ.
3. **Emotional intelligence**, which is about empathy and what's sometimes called EQ.
4. **Spiritual intelligence**, which is your own moral compass, your true north star, the thing that drives your life's meaning.

Recognizing these powers you have and playing with how you use them is the first step towards finding and capitalizing on your unique powers at work. Then, it's all about communicating them to others.

Lesson 2: Be nice, apologize when you have to and deliver on what you promise to build trust.

Communicating with others comes easiest when your relationship is built on trust. The more you trust in one another, the more things you'll feel comfortable saying, the more you think about each other's words and the more likely you are to accept them.

Covey says that trust is built in three ways:

1. **Stick to your word**. If you promise something, follow through. 100% of the time. Not sure if you'll make it? Then don't promise it. Whatever comes out of your

mouth, back it the f up, every time.

2. **Be nice.** So simple, yet so powerful. Just be friendly. Say “thank you,” “please,” and “how can I help you?” Avoid gossip and stay positive. These things don’t cost a thing, but go a long way.
3. **Say sorry when you have to.** We all screw up. The best thing, by far, you can do when that happens, is to instantly acknowledge it and just say “Sorry!”

However, trust isn’t a one-way street. It’s not just built by you being trustworthy to others, but also by you handing out trust yourself. How do you do that?

Lesson 3: Give up control and hand others responsibility to empower them.

One of the strongest ways to empower others is to just hand the power to them – literally! That doesn’t mean you should let the intern run the business, but **always keep extending the responsibility and control your employees have over their work.**

For example, if you run a cleaning workforce, let *them* decide what cleaning products to use, what gloves to wear, what vacuuming devices to try, how to plan the schedule, etc.

Having the freedom to make these important decisions about their work will make them feel a lot more motivated and of course help them trust in your future decisions.

By the way, this applies to friendships too! Ask your friends for help, trust them to do their part and see how your relationship grows.

The 8th Habit Review

Mostly directed towards leaders and businesses, I think *The 8th Habit* is also an important book on a personal level. Especially the section about building trust, as it’s become a rare commodity in our short-term oriented world. A modern classic!

[Read full summary on Blinkist >>](#)

[Free Preview >>](#)

[Learn more about the author >>](#)

What else can you learn from the blinks?

- The four roles of a great leader
- Which two-word motto could change your life
- How to crank up your listening skill to better deal with conflicts
- What all organizations are built around and have to adjust to (whether they like it or not)

Who would I recommend The 8th Habit summary to?

The 24 year old graduate, who's already stuck in a job he hates, but doesn't see how big his freedom to choose really is, the 47 year old supply chain manager, with a very strict approach to rules and leadership, and anyone who knows they often fail to deliver on what they promise.