

The 7 Habits Of Highly Effective People Summary



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1-Sentence-Summary: *The 7 Habits Of Highly Effective People* teaches you both personal and professional effectiveness by changing your view of how the world works and giving you 7 habits, which, if adopted well, will lead you to immense success.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



If you hadn't at least heard about this book, I'd be shocked. It has sold over 25 million copies. That's as if the entire population of Venezuela had gotten a copy. I'm not sure if Stephen R. Covey had any clue about what a success *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* would be when he published it in 1990, but, even several years after his death, it's still the bible of leadership and modern management.

The original seven habits are:

1. Be Proactive
2. Begin with the End in Mind
3. Put First Things First
4. Think Win-Win
5. Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood
6. Synergize
7. Sharpen the Saw

The first three serve your own independence, so that you may "win in private," as Covey put it. The second three aim to shift your focus to interdependence. When you strive for cooperation instead of competition, you'll also "win in public" and find worldly success.

The last habit serves your own renewal so that you'll never burn out or overextend yourself.

Let's look at

1. Do the funeral test.
2. Learn how to say no.
3. Practice active listening.

Let's learn how to become highly effective both at work and in life!

Lesson 1: Do the funeral test.

This is the habit that Covey calls "Begin with the End in Mind". He issues a warning that plowing away and getting a massive amount of tasks done in a preferably short time (i.e. being efficient) is only useful when you're plowing in the right direction.

The classic analogy here is the ladder you're climbing furiously, only to find out it's leaned against the wrong wall when reaching the top. Only if you're clear about your major, long-term goals can you align each and every single one of your decisions with them.

The best way, by far, to get clear about those goals is to do **the funeral test**. Ask yourself:

1. **What do I want people to say about me at my funeral?**
2. **As what sort of person do I want to be remembered?**
3. **For what do I want to be remembered?**

Depending on your number of relationships (family, friends, clients, partners, customers), you can also ask yourself how many people will be there to mourn your death.

As Steve Jobs said:

"All external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure—these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important."

Truthfully answering those questions will make you realize you might not want that out-of-the-suitcase, business class lifestyle, or that really all you ever wanted to do was dance. So be bold and ask them.

Lesson 2: Learn how to say no.

Knowing exactly where you want to go makes it easy to find out what's important to you, and what not. When you know your final goal, you'll at least have an inclination for each to-do on how important it actually is.

You'll often find that the important things aren't urgent and vice versa. **That means some things don't deserve to be done at all.** To all those things, you'll eventually have to say no. It's not easy, especially if money's involved. But, as Covey says: "Put First Things First."

Sometimes, tempting rewards will be dangled right in front of you, which is when it's time to pull out the funeral test again to see whether those rewards deserve to be chased.

Lesson 3: Practice active listening.

The good thing about saying no to doing a lot of things is being able to spend a lot more time actually listening to others. Active listening is part of our "Coaching 101" on coach.me, and it is a 3-pronged approach to communication:

1. You're listening to understand the person you're listening to, not primarily to give advice or respond.
2. You make sure you understand by repeating back to them what they said and mirroring their emotions.
3. You help them structure their own thought process.

This was one of the major lessons I learned during my first 6 months as a coach: A good coach is determined much more by the quality of his questions, than by the quality of his answers. Covey calls this "Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood." It is a call to practice active listening and empathy.

Just like you get suspicious of your doctor when he prescribes you hefty antibiotics after hearing you cough just once, we don't tend to trust people, who we think don't really understand us.

Make an effort to listen to understand, instead of listening to respond. A good way to start this practice is by simply talking less.

The 7 Habits Of Highly Effective People Review

The 7 Habits Of Highly Effective People is an absolute classic. It's not a step-by-step how-to book, however. The lessons will take you a while to implement since they are general principles. But that also means they're timeless and have a powerful impact once you manage to do so.

Stephen Covey could have been Tim Ferriss's grandfather, the message is conveyed differently but remains the same. Whatever you do, be effective, not efficient.

[Learn more about the author](#)

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What else can you learn from the blinks?

- How you can truly change your character to become effective, by going through a paradigm shift
- What “sharpening the saw” means
- Why being reactive will make you miserable and proactive people determine their own weather
- The effect visualization can have on your work
- Which 3-word phrase is all you need to prioritize your entire life
- Why you have to change from a “win-lose” to a “win-win” mentality
- What an emotional bank account is and how you can invest in it
- The thing nature does to create a sum which is greater than its parts, and how you can do the same

Who would I recommend The 7 Habits Of Highly Effective People summary to?

The 18 year old, who’s considering a career she probably won’t like, but that will make her a lot of money, the 53 year old, who wants to make the jump to becoming a coach for the second half of his career, and anyone who struggles with saying no.