

1. Make a list of activities that would help you keep in good physical shape, that would fit your life-style and that you could enjoy over time.
2. Select one of the activities and list it as a goal in your personal role area for the coming week. At the end of the week evaluate your performance. If you didn't make your goal, was it because you subordinated it to a genuinely higher value? Or did you fail to act with integrity to your values.
3. Make a similar list of renewing activities in your spiritual and mental dimensions. In your social-emotional area, list relationships you would like to improve or specific circumstances in which Public Victory would bring greater effectiveness. Select one item in each area to list as a goal for the week. Implement and evaluate.
4. Commit to write down specific "sharpen the saw" activities in all four dimensions every week, to do them, and to evaluate your performance and results.

Inside-Out Again

The Lord works from the inside out. The world works from the outside in. The world would take people out of the slums. Christ takes the slums out of people, and then they take themselves out of the slums. The world would mold men by changing their environment. Christ changes men, who then change their environment. The world would shape human behavior, but Christ can change human nature.

-- Ezra Taft Benson

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I would like to share with you a personal story which I feel contains the essence of this book. In doing so, it is my hope that you will relate to the underlying principles it contains.

Some years ago, our family took a sabbatical leave from the university where I taught so that I could write. We lived for a full year in Laie on the north shore of Oahu, Hawaii.

Shortly after getting settled, we developed a living and working routine which was not only very productive but extremely pleasant.

After an early morning run on the beach, we would send two of our children, barefoot and in shorts, to school. I went to an isolated building next to the cane fields where I had an office to do my writing. It was very quiet, very beautiful, very serene -- no phone, no meetings, no pressing engagements.

My office was on the outside edge of the college, and one day as I was wandering between stacks of books in the back of the college library, I came across a book that drew my interest. As I opened it, my eyes fell upon a single paragraph that powerfully influenced the rest of my life.

I read the paragraph over and over again. It basically contained the simple idea that there is a gap or a space between stimulus and response, and that the key to both our growth and happiness is how we use that space.

I can hardly describe the effect that idea had on my mind. Though I had been nurtured in the philosophy of self-determinism, the way the idea was phrased -- "a gap between stimulus and response" -- hit me with fresh, almost unbelievable force. It was almost like "knowing it for the first time," like an inward revolution, "an idea whose time had come."

I reflected on it again and again, and it began to have a powerful effect on my paradigm of life. It was as if I had become an observer of my own participation. I began to stand in that gap and to look outside at the stimuli. I reveled in the inward sense of freedom to choose my response -- even to become the stimulus, or at least to influence it -- even to reverse it.

Shortly thereafter, and partly as a result of this "revolutionary" idea, Sandra and I began a practice of

deep communication. I would pick her up a little before noon on an old red Honda 90 trail cycle, and we would take our two preschool children with us -- one between us and the other on my left knee -- as we rode out in the canefields by my office. We rode slowly along for about an hour, just talking.

The children looked forward to the ride and hardly ever made any noise. We seldom saw another vehicle, and the cycle was so quiet we could easily hear each other. We usually ended up on an isolated beach where we parked the Honda and walked about 200 yards to a secluded spot where we ate a picnic lunch.

The sandy beach and a freshwater river coming off the island totally absorbed the interest of the children, so Sandra and I were able to continue our talks uninterrupted. Perhaps it doesn't take too much imagination to envision the level of understanding and trust we were able to reach by spending at least two hours a day, every day, for a full year in deep communication.

At the very first of the year, we talked about all kinds of interesting topics -- people, ideas, events, the children, my writing, our family at home, future plans, and so forth. But little by little, our communication deepened and we began to talk more and more about our internal worlds -- about our upbringing, our scripting, our feelings, and self-doubts. As we were deeply immersed in these communications, we also observed them and observed ourselves in them. We began to use that space between stimulus and response in some new and interesting ways which caused us to think about how we were programmed and how those programs shaped how we saw the world.

We began an exciting adventure into our interior worlds and found it to be more exciting, more fascinating, more absorbing, more compelling, more filled with discovery and insight than anything we'd even known in the outside world.

It wasn't all "sweetness and light." We occasionally hit some raw nerves and had some painful experiences, embarrassing experiences, self-revealing experiences -- experiences that made us extremely open and vulnerable to each other. And yet we found we had been wanting to go into those things for years. When we did go into the deeper, more tender issues and then came out of them, we felt in some way healed.

We were so initially supportive and helpful, so encouraging and empathic to each other, that we nurtured and facilitated these internal discoveries in each other.

We gradually evolved two unspoken ground rules. The first was "no probing." As soon as we unfolded the inner layers of vulnerability, we were not to question each other, only to empathize. Probing was simply too invasive. It was also too controlling and too logical. We were covering new, difficult terrain that was scary and uncertain, and it stirred up fears and doubts. We wanted to cover more and more of it, but we grew to respect the need to let each other open up in our own time.

The second ground rule was that when it hurt too much, when it was painful, we would simply quit for the day. Then we would either begin the next day where we left off or wait until the person who was sharing felt ready to continue. We carried around the loose ends, knowing that we wanted to deal with them. But because we had the time and the environment conducive to it, and because we were so excited to observe our own involvement and to grow within our marriage, we simply knew that sooner or later we would deal with all those loose ends and bring them to some kind of closure.

The most difficult, and eventually the most fruitful part of this kind of communication came when my vulnerability and Sandra's vulnerability touched. Then, because of our subjective involvement, we found that the space between stimulus and response was no longer there. A few bad feelings surfaced. But our deep desire and our implicit agreement was to prepare ourselves to start where we left off and deal with those feelings until we resolved them.

One of those difficult times had to do with a basic tendency in my personality. My father was a very private individual -- very controlled and very careful. My mother was and is very public, very open, very spontaneous. I find both sets of tendencies in me, and when I feel insecure, I tend to become private, like my father. I live inside myself and safely observe.

Sandra is more like my mother -- social, authentic, and spontaneous. We had gone through many experiences over the years in which I felt her openness was inappropriate, and she felt my constraint was dysfunctional, both socially and to me as an individual because I would become insensitive to the feelings of others. All of this and much more came out during those deep visits. I came to value Sandra's insight and wisdom and the way she helped me to be a more open, giving, sensitive, social person.

Another of those difficult times had to do with what I perceived to be a "hang up" Sandra had which had bothered me for years. She seemed to have an obsession about Frigidaire appliances which I was at an absolute loss to understand. She would not even consider buying another brand of appliance. Even when we were just starting out and on a very tight budget, she insisted that we drive the fifty miles to the "big city" where Frigidaire appliances were sold, simply because no dealer in our small university town carried them at that time.

This was a matter of considerable agitation to me. Fortunately, the situation came up only when we purchased an appliance. But when it did come up, it was like a stimulus that triggered off a hot button response. This single issue seemed to be symbolic of all irrational thinking, and it generated a whole range of negative feelings within me.

I usually resorted to my dysfunctional private behavior. I suppose I figured that the only way I could deal with it was not to deal with it; otherwise, I felt I would lose control and say things I shouldn't say. There were times when I did slip and say something negative, and I had to go back and apologize.

What bothered me the most was not that she liked Frigidaire, but that she persisted in making what I considered utterly illogical and indefensible statements to defend Frigidaire which had no basis in fact whatsoever. If she had only agreed that her response was irrational and purely emotional, I think I could have handled it. But her justification was upsetting.

It was sometime in early spring when the Frigidaire issue came up. All our prior communication had prepared us. The ground rules had been deeply established -- not to probe and to leave it alone if it got to be too painful for either or both.

I will never forget the day we talked it through. We didn't end up on the beach that day; we just continued to ride through the canefields, perhaps because we didn't want to look each other in the eye. There had been so much psychic history and so many bad feelings associated with the issue, and it had been submerged for so long. It had never been so critical as to rupture the relationship, but when you're trying to cultivate a beautiful unified relationship, any divisive issue is important.

Sandra and I were amazed at what we learned through the interaction. It was truly synergistic. It was as if Sandra were learning, almost for the first time herself, the reason for her so-called hang-up. She started to talk about her father, about how he had worked as a high school history teacher and coach for years, and how, to help make ends meet, he had gone into the appliance business. During an economic downturn, he had experienced serious financial difficulties, and the only thing that enabled him to stay in business during that time was the fact that Frigidaire would finance his inventory.

Sandra had an unusually deep and sweet relationship with her father. When he returned home at the end of a very tiring day, he would lie on the couch, and Sandra would rub his feet and sing to him. It was a beautiful time they enjoyed together almost daily for years. He would also open up and talk through his worries and concerns about the business, and he shared with Sandra his deep appreciation for Frigidaire financing his inventory so that he could make it through the difficult times.

This communication between father and daughter had taken place in a spontaneous way during very natural time, when the most powerful kind of scripting takes place. During those relaxed times guards are down and all kinds of images and thoughts are planted deep in the subconscious mind. Perhaps Sandra had forgotten about all of this until the safety of that year of communication when it could come out also in very natural and spontaneous ways.

Sandra gained tremendous insight into herself and into the emotional root of her feelings about Frigidaire. I also gained insight and a whole new level of respect. I came to realize that Sandra wasn't talking about appliances; she was talking about her father, and about loyalty -- about loyalty to his needs.

I remember both of us becoming tearful on that day, not so much because of the insights, but because of the increased sense of reverence we had for each other. We discovered that even seemingly trivial things often have roots in deep emotional experiences. To deal only with the superficial trivia without seeing the deeper, more tender issues is to trample on the sacred ground of another's heart.

There were many rich fruits of those months. Our communication became so powerful that we could almost instantly connect with each other's thoughts. When we left Hawaii, we resolved to continue the practice. During the many years since, we have continued to go regularly on our Honda trail cycle, or in the car if the weather's bad, just to talk. We feel the key to staying in love is to talk, particularly about feelings. We try to communicate with each other several times every day, even when I'm traveling. It's like touching in to home base, which accesses all the happiness, security, and values it represents.

Thomas Wolfe was wrong. You can go home again -- if your home is a treasured relationship, a precious companionship.

Intergenerational Living

As Sandra and I discovered that wonderful year, the ability to use wisely the gap between stimulus and response, to exercise the four unique endowments of our human nature, empowered us from the Inside-Out.

We had tried the outside-in approach. We loved each other, and we had attempted to work through our differences by controlling our attitudes and our behaviors, by practicing useful techniques of human interaction. But our band-aids and aspirin only lasted so long. Until we worked and communicated on the level of our essential paradigms, the chronic underlying problems were still there.

When we began to work from the Inside-Out, we were able to build a relationship of trust and openness and to resolve dysfunctional differences in a deep and lasting way that never could have come by working from the outside in. The delicious fruits -- a rich win-win relationship, a deep understanding of each other, and a marvelous synergy -- grew out of the roots we nurtured as we examined our programs, rescripted ourselves, and managed our lives so that we could create time for the important Quadrant II activity of communicating deeply with each other.

And there were other fruits. We were able to see on a much deeper level that, just as powerfully as our own lives had been affected by our parents, the lives of our children were being influenced and shaped by us, often in ways we didn't even begin to realize. Understanding the power of scripting in our own lives, we felt a renewed desire to do everything we could to make certain that what we passed on to future generations, by both precept and example, was based on correct principles.

I have drawn particular attention in this book to those scripts we have been given which we proactively want to change. But as we examine our scripting carefully, many of us will also begin to see beautiful scripts, positive scripts that have been passed down to us which we have blindly taken for granted. Real self-awareness helps us to appreciate those scripts and to appreciate those who have gone before us and nurtured us in principle-based living, mirroring back to us not only what we are, but what we can become.

There is transcendent power in a strong intergenerational family. An effectively interdependent family of children, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins can be a powerful force in helping people have a sense of who they are and where they came from and what they stand for.

It's great for children to be able to identify themselves with the "tribe," to feel that many people

know them and care about them, even though they're spread all over the country. And that can be a tremendous benefit as you nurture your family. If one of your children is having difficulty and doesn't really relate with you at a particular time in his life, maybe he can relate to your brother or sister who can become a surrogate father or mother, a mentor, or a hero for a period of time.

Grandparents who show a great interest in their grandchildren are among the most precious people on this earth. What a marvelous positive social mirror they can be! My mother is like that. Even now, in her late 80s, she takes a deep personal interest in every one of her descendants. She writes us love letters. I was reading one the other day on a plane with tears streaming down my cheeks. I could call her up tonight and I know she'd say, "Stephen, I want you to know how much I love you and how wonderful I think you are." She's constantly reaffirming.

A strong intergenerational family is potentially one of the most fruitful, rewarding, and satisfying interdependent relationships. And many people feel the importance of that relationship. Look at the fascination we all had with Roots some years ago. Each of us has roots and the ability to trace those roots, to identify our ancestors.

The highest and most powerful motivation in doing that is not for ourselves only, but for our posterity, for the posterity of all mankind. As someone once observed, "There are only two lasting bequests we can give our children -- one is roots, the other wings."

Becoming a Transition Person

Among other things, I believe that giving "wings" to our children and to others means empowering them with the freedom to rise above negative scripting that had been passed down to us. I believe it means becoming what my friend and associate, Dr. Terry Warner, calls a "transition" person. Instead of transferring those scripts to the next generation, we can change them. And we can do it in a way that will build relationships in the process.

If your parents abused you as a child, that does not mean that you have to abuse your own children. Yet there's plenty of evidence to indicate that you will tend to live out that script. But because you're proactive, you can rewrite the script. You can choose not only not to abuse your children, but to affirm them, to script them in positive ways.

You can write it in your personal mission statement and into your mind and heart. You can visualize yourself living in harmony with that mission statement in your Daily Private Victory. You can take steps to love and forgive your own parents, and if they are still living, to build a positive relationship with them by seeking to understand.

A tendency that's run through your family for generations can stop with you. You're a transition person -- a link between the past and the future. And your own change can affect many, many lives downstream.

One powerful transition person of the twentieth century, Anwar Sadat, left us as part of his legacy a profound understanding of the nature of change. Sadat stood between a past that had created a "huge wall of suspicion, fear, hate and misunderstanding" between Arabs and Israelis, and a future in which increased conflict and isolation seemed inevitable. Efforts at negotiation had been met with objections on every scale -- even to formalities and procedural points, to an insignificant comma or period in the text of proposed agreements.

While others attempted to resolve the tense situation by hacking at the leaves, Sadat drew upon his earlier centering experience in a lonely prison cell and went to work on the root. And in doing so, he changed the course of history for millions of people.

He records in his autobiography:

It was then that I drew, almost unconsciously, on the inner strength I had developed in Cell 54 of Cairo Central Prison -- a strength, call it a talent or capacity, for change. I found that I faced a highly

complex situation, and that I couldn't hope to change it until I had armed myself with the necessary psychological and intellectual capacity. My contemplation of life and human nature in that secluded place had taught me that he who cannot change the very fabric of his thought will never be able to change reality, and will never, therefore, make any progress.

Change -- real change -- comes from the Inside-Out. It doesn't come from hacking at the leaves of attitude and behavior with quick-fix personality ethic techniques. It comes from striking at the root -- the fabric of our thought, the fundamental, essential paradigms, which give definition to our character and create the lens through which we see the world. In the words of Amiel:

Moral truth can be conceived in thought. One can have feelings about it. One can will to live it. But moral truth may have been penetrated and possessed in all these ways, and escape us still. Deeper even than consciousness there is our being itself -- our very substance, our nature. Only those truths which have entered into this last region, which have become ourselves, become spontaneous and involuntary as well as voluntary, unconscious as well as conscious, are really our life -- that is to say, something more than property. So long as we are able to distinguish any space whatever between Truth and us we remain outside it. The thought, the feeling, the desire or the consciousness of life may not be quite life. To become divine is then the aim of life. Then only can truth be said to be ours beyond the possibility of loss. It is no longer outside us, nor in a sense even in us, but we are it, and it is we.

Achieving unity -- oneness -- with ourselves, with our loved ones, with our friends and working associates, is the highest and best and most delicious fruit of the Seven Habits. Most of us have tasted this fruit of true unity from time to time in the past, as we have also tasted the bitter, lonely fruit of disunity -- and we know how precious and fragile unity is.

Obviously building character of total integrity and living the life of love and service that creates such unity isn't easy. It isn't quick fix.

But it's possible. It begins with the desire to center our lives on correct principles, to break out of the paradigms created by other centers and the comfort zones of unworthy habits.

Sometimes we make mistakes, we feel awkward. But if we start with the Daily Private Victory and work from the Inside-Out, the results will surely come. As we plant the seed and patiently weed and nourish it, we begin to feel the excitement of real growth and eventually taste the incomparably delicious fruits of a congruent, effective life.

Again, I quote Emerson: "That which we persist in doing becomes easier -- not that the nature of the task has changed, but our ability to do has increased."

By centering our lives on correct principles and creating a balanced focus between doing and increasing our ability to do, we become empowered in the task of creating effective, useful, and peaceful lives...for ourselves, and for our posterity.

A Personal Note

As I conclude this book, I would like to share my own personal conviction concerning what I believe to be the source of correct principles. I believe that correct principles are natural laws, and that God, the Creator and Father of us all, is the source of them, and also the source of our conscience. I believe that to the degree people live by this inspired conscience, they will grow to fulfill their natures; to the degree that they do not, they will not rise above the animal plane.

I believe that there are parts to human nature that cannot be reached by either legislation or education, but require the power of God to deal with. I believe that as human beings, we cannot perfect ourselves. To the degree to which we align ourselves with correct principles, divine endowments will be released within our nature in enabling us to fulfill the measure of our creation. In

the words of Teilhard de Chardin, "We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience."

I personally struggle with much of what I have shared in this book. But the struggle is worthwhile and fulfilling. It gives meaning to my life and enables me to love, to serve, and to try again.

Again, T. S. Eliot expresses so beautifully my own personal discovery and conviction: "We must not cease from exploration. And the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we began and to know the place for the first time."