

book  
summary

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DEAN BOKHARI

# The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

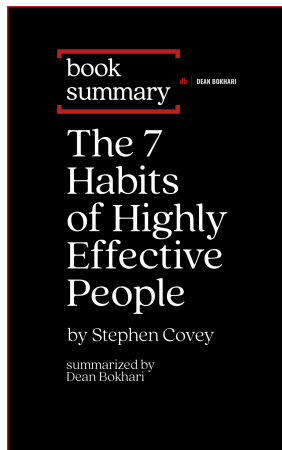
by Stephen Covey

summarized by  
Dean Bokhari

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# SUMMARY: THE 7 HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE



## BOOK SUMMARY: THE 7 HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE

Powerful Lessons in Personal Change

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# ABOUT

When a book sells over 25 million copies and gets translated into over 40 different languages, it's safe to say it contains a useful message. And in *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey presents much more than just a useful message, he presents life-changing habits based on universal principles such as kindness and integrity. Covey teaches readers practical strategies for creating the lives they desire and building mutually beneficial personal and professional relationships. The first three habits of being proactive, starting with the end in mind, and putting the most important things in life first are personal victory habits. Habits three through six delve into how to be successful in interactions with others. These habits focus upon working towards win-win situations, seeking to understand others before trying to make them understand you, and learning to be cooperatively creative. Finally, the seventh habit deals with taking good care of your body, mind, and spirit, so that you are fully capable of putting habits one through six into action and reaping their wonderful benefits in your life.

## **Here's what you'll learn about in this summary:**

- The important differences between Personality Ethics and Character Ethics
- How to see the paradigms in your life as maps; and how to shift them in order to make vast improvements
- How to unlearn your most destructive and stifling habits
- How to master the 7 habits of highly effective people in order to live a more fulfilling and productive life

## **Summary in a sentence:**

- True success comes from living by principle, priority, and unshakeable

character.

### **Crucial quotes**

- “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.”
- “The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.”

“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.”

# 1. OVERVIEW

Throughout the Big Ideas in this summary, we'll get into some practical tips and actionable insights on how to make each of the seven habits part of your daily life, as well as how to put them to use to achieve a higher-level of success in life—both personally and professionally. But for now, here's a quick overview of each habit:

- **Habit 1: Be Proactive** (The power of choice). Being proactive is more than taking initiative. It is accepting responsibility for our own behavior (past, present, and future) and making choices based on principles and values rather than on moods or circumstances. Proactive people are agents of Change and choose not to be victims, to be reactive, or to blame others. They do this by developing and using four unique human gifts—self—awareness, conscience, imagination, and independent will—and by taking an Inside-Out Approach to creating change. They resolve to be the creative force in their own lives, which is the most fundamental decision anyone ever makes.
- **Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind** (Measure twice, cut once). All things are created twice—first mentally, second physically. Individuals, families, teams, and organizations shape their own future by creating a mental vision and purpose for any project. They don't just live day to day without a clear purpose in mind. They mentally identify and commit themselves to the principles, values, relationships, and purposes that matter most to them. A mission statement is the highest form of mental creation for an individual, a family, or an organization. It is the primary decision because it governs all other decisions. Creating a culture behind a shared mission, vision, and values is the essence of leadership.
- **Habit 3: Put First Things First** (Organize + execute around priorities). Putting first things first is the second or physical creation. It's about organizing and executing around the mental creation (your purpose, vision, values, and most important priorities). Second things do not come first. First

things do not come second. Individuals and organizations focus on what matters most, urgent or not. The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.

- **Habit 4: Think Win-Win** (Don't think "Me," think "We"). Thinking win-win is a frame of mind and heart that seeks mutual benefit and is based on mutual respect in all interactions. It's about thinking in terms of abundance—an ever-expanding "pie," a cornucopia of opportunity, wealth, and resources—rather than of scarcity and adversarial competition. It's not thinking selfishly (win-lose) or like a martyr (lose-win). In our work and family life, members think interdependently—in terms of "we," not "me." Thinking win-win encourages conflict resolution and helps individuals seek mutually beneficial solutions. It's sharing information, power, recognition, and rewards.
- **Habit 5: Seek First to Understand** (...Then to be understood). When we listen with the intent to understand others, rather than with the intent to reply, we begin true communication and relationship building. When others feel understood first, they feel affirmed and valued, defenses are lowered, and opportunities to speak openly and to be understood come much more naturally and easily. Seeking to understand takes kindness; seeking to be understood takes courage. Effectiveness lies in balancing the two.
- **Habit 6: Synergize** (When  $1+1 = 3$  or more). Synergy is about producing a third alternative—not my way, not your way, but a third way that is better than either of us would come up with individually. It's the fruit of mutual respect—of understanding and even celebrating one another's differences in solving problems, seizing opportunities. Synergistic teams and families thrive on individual strengths so that the whole becomes greater than the sum of the parts. Such relationships and teams renounce defensive adversarialism ( $1 + 1 = \frac{1}{2}$ ). They don't settle on compromise ( $1 + 1 = 1\frac{1}{2}$ ) or merely cooperation ( $1 + 1 = 2$ ). They go for creative cooperation ( $1 + 1 = 3$  or more).
- **Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw** (Do something daily to renew and recharge). Sharpening the saw is about constantly renewing yourself physically,

mentally, emotionally/socially, and spiritually. These are your four core human needs; and sharpening your saw is about doing something on a daily basis to maintain or enhance yourself across all four dimensions. This is the Habit that increases our capacity to live all other habits of effectiveness. For an organization, Habit 7 promotes vision, renewal, continuous improvement, safeguards against burnout and entropy, and puts the organization on a new upward growth path. For a family, it increases effectiveness through regular personal and family activities such as establishing traditions that nurture the spirit of family renewal.



## 2. INSIDE-OUT SUCCESS

After researching, studying, and dissecting over 200 years worth of success literature, Covey noticed a huge shift in the type of advice being given with the more recent self-development material: While older studies focused upon the tenets of the Character Ethic (integrity, courage, living by principle), more current studies tend to focus on the Personality Ethic (short cuts, tricks, and quick fixes meant to cover up issues rather than deal with the deeper problems that caused the issues to begin with.)

- **The Character Ethic** teaches that there are principles that we should all live by, and the only way to truly be happy and successful is to make them the guiding principles of our lives. The Character Ethic is about inside-out success: build a strong foundation from within, and it'll reverberate into successes in every dimension of your life—both inside and out.
- **The Personality Ethic** (which emerged after WWI) focuses more on using manipulative language to influence people, shortcuts for maintaining appearances like your public image, or making sure that others approve of our attitudes and respect our skills and strengths. While ideas based upon the Personality Ethic such as building your communication skills or thinking positively can be beneficial, they can also breed insincerity and distrust.

Unfortunately, a lot of folks just don't have solid character and don't believe they're capable of achieving success, and this makes them especially susceptible to the quick-fix culture that pervades the Personality Ethic. Covey tells us that their successes—if they experience any at all—will be short-lived.

Long-lasting success and fulfillment come from internalizing the principles of the Character Ethic, and it is the foundation on which the seven habits are built.

Bottom line? INNER success comes before OUTER success. We'll never master the outer without first getting a handle on the inner. As Covey puts it: "private victory"

must precede “public victory.” This, in essence, is mastery of yourself (aka: personal leadership).

### 3. HABITS OF EFFECTIVENESS

The English novelist Charles Reade famously wrote: “Sow a thought, and you reap an action; sow an action, and you reap a habit; sow a habit, and you reap a character; sow a character, and you reap a destiny.”

Our habits determine how high—or how low—we go in the game of life.

The crux of The 7 Habits is that they are based on effectiveness rather than efficiency.

#### **Effective vs. Efficient—What’s the difference?**

There’s been a lot written in management theory and the productivity literature about “efficiency.” And there’s certainly a place for efficiency, but never at the cost of effectiveness—what good is it to spend weeks working on creating the perfect PowerPoint presentation, if the material you’re presenting about is outdated, irrelevant, or no longer matters?

Here’s how Covey puts it: “Think about what is most important to you and see if it is the center around which your life revolves. Don’t worry about efficiency. There is no use being “efficient” if what you are doing lacks meaning or an essential good.”

Bottom line? Effectiveness trumps Achievement every day of the week.

Achievement is hollow unless what you achieve actually matters, both in terms of your highest aims and your service to others. Covey’s view is that the personality ethic of twentieth-century self-help had helped to create a high-achieving society that happened to have absolutely no clue where it was going... People were climbing the ladder of success faster than ever, but no one was stopping to check on whether the ladder was leaning against the right wall.

## 4. HABIT 1: BE PROACTIVE

"I am what I am today because of the choices I made yesterday."

Habit 1 is about being proactive rather than reactive.

You can absolutely make and break your own habits. The key is to stop viewing yourself through social mirrors. If your only image of yourself is created out of the perceptions and views of those around you, that image cannot possibly be accurate. This is because everyone around you is actually projecting their own concerns about themselves and their weaknesses upon you.

You have the power to decide how you will react to what happens around and to you. You should not see yourself as conditioned genetically or environmentally, but as fully capable of shaping your own life. You can and should make conscious decisions based upon the values you believe in.

When you are reactive, you allow the circumstances and people around you to control your effectiveness and happiness. If you learn to place your most important values ahead of the impulses you have, you become proactive.

A reactive person allows herself to be controlled by her emotions about what is going on around her.

A proactive person might be influenced by what is happening around him, but the choices he makes about how he will react are based upon his values, not his emotions.

Things that happen to you can cause you pain, but your character does not have to sustain damage. The happiest and most inspirational and effective individuals are often those who allow the pain and suffering in their lives to make their character stronger. As Covey so beautifully puts it: "It's not what happens to us, but our response to what happens to us that hurts us." Your response to the

things that happen to you is what matters most.

### *ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS:*

Here are a few ways in which you can put this idea into action:

- **To be proactive, stop waiting for the things you want to happen to you,** and take the initiative to make them happen yourself. Growth and opportunity are there for you if you *act* rather than wait to be acted upon.
- **Learn to be proactive by paying close attention to your language.** Reactive language places responsibility for what is happening on circumstances or others, while proactive language seeks creative solutions and alternatives to unfortunate circumstances.
  - For example: Instead of saying to yourself, *"He makes me so angry!"* try saying instead, *"I control my own feelings."* Instead of using phrases like, *"I can't"* or *"I have to"*, get into the habit of saying *"I choose"* or *"I will."* If you use a lot of reactive language, it tends to become a self-fulfilling prophecy in your life because you'll look for proof to support the feelings of helplessness and negativity that surround you. Learning to use proactive language will help you [change your mindset](#) and ultimately your behaviors.
- **Create and focus upon a circle of influence in your life.** All of us have a circle of concern that includes the things we focus our time and energy upon. Narrow the circle to include only the things that you can actually influence. By focusing your energy on what you can control rather than what you cannot, you become more proactive, and your energy becomes more positive and powerful.
- **Change the way you think about mistakes from your past.** These are outside of your circle of influence. The way you respond to mistakes in your life influences the direction your life takes. If you can learn to admit, respond to, and correct mistakes, you will experience personal growth and find it easier to be proactive.

Quick recap of the actionable insights before we move onto the next Big Idea: To be more proactive, practice using proactive language; limiting your circle of influence to the people and things you can truly influence; and make an effort to respond to mistakes you make wisely.

## 5. HABIT 2: BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND

"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, next month's behavior -- can be examined in the context of the whole, of what really matters most to you."

Beginning with the End in Mind is about letting how you want to be remembered guide your thoughts and actions.

For Habit 2, Covey guides us through an eye-opening exercise that can really be a game-changer if you approach it whole-heartedly... Ready for it? Here we go:

Picture yourself at your funeral.

What would you like to be remembered for by all of the people in attendance?

What would you hope to hear each person say about you? We often get so busy with life and our materialistic goals, that we tend to forget about the values and people that matter most to us. We forget about who we really want to be.

Beginning with the end in mind gives us a different perspective and helps us keep our true values front and center.

Next, let's talk about clarifying those values...

It is counterproductive to set and manage goals before clarifying your values.

Practice beginning each day thinking about your values. That way, when things get tough, decisions you make are more likely to be based on those values rather than emotions or judgements.

Develop a personal mission statement that expresses what you want to be and do. This statement, if based on your values, can become a decision-making tool for you.

Determine what you want the center of your life to be. Many people place their spouses, children, money, religion, enemies, or themselves at the center of their lives and wind up unproductive and unhappy. This is because they are not starting with the principles. A principle-centered life is one that allows you to achieve self-awareness and knowledge and is not tainted by the attitudes and behaviors of others. Identifying what matters most to you and then managing yourself to support those values is beginning with the end in mind and will lead you to higher levels of productivity and happiness. When your life is centered on strong principles, you will feel a sense of security in the knowledge that those principles are unchanging, no matter what circumstances you encounter. This sense of security allows you to embrace, rather than fear change.

Centering on principles also provides guidance. You are able to look at your life more as a whole, rather than a series of situations to be dealt with. This can help you be proactive and make healthier decisions based on your principles rather than emotions.

Becoming centered on principles also allows you to look at the world in a different, wiser, way. You will begin to wonder what you can do for others instead of worrying only about getting ahead yourself. Each of us has a paradigm that affects all of our behaviors and thoughts. If you choose to shift to a principle-centered paradigm, you will see your life and the world very differently. This will help you keep your values and vision for your life at the forefront of everything you do.

#### *ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS:*

- Create a personal mission statement.
  - Think about the roles you play in your own life, and what goals you have for each role. It's likely that you'll have several personal roles, at least one professional role, and possibly even some important community roles. Write about who you want to be about in each role, and what values would best guide you to be the best version of yourself in each of these roles.
- You can choose to have different mission statements for different roles/



areas of your life. Or, you can choose to live by one simple mission statement.

- For example: here at [FlashBooks](#), our mission statement is simple: "We help busy people get more knowledge in less time."
- Another example: our founder, [Dean Bokhari's](#) mission statement is to "Inspire people everywhere to achieve their goals and improve their lives."

## 06. HABIT 3: PUT FIRST THINGS FIRST

“Things which matter most must never be at the mercy of things which matter least.” —Goethe

Putting First Things First is about exactly what it sounds like: putting what you truly value most in your life first.

- Habit 1 says, “You’re in charge. You’re the creator.” Being proactive is about choice.
- Habit 2 is the first, or mental, creation. Beginning with the End in Mind is about vision and mission—your purpose.
- Habit 3 is the second creation, the physical creation. This habit is where Habits 1 and 2 come together—understanding that you’re the “programmer”, your mission/purpose is your “program”, and now—through Habit 3—it’s time to organize and “run the program.”

Once you have determined what you value most, you are ready to put in the work of truly becoming principle-centered. This is NOT easy and doesn’t happen overnight. Remember, you are attempting to [change habits](#) that you have been practicing throughout your entire life; it’ll take some time to make these changes, and that’s totally fine.

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Becoming principle-centered means learning to effectively manage yourself. Each of us has the ability to make our own choices. Power comes with learning to align our choices and actions with our principles every day. The key to doing this effectively isn’t about managing your time as much as it’s about managing yourself.

You can learn to focus on the important aspects of your life such as building relationships and exercising rather than having to always react to the life that is

happening to you. When you can take the time to truly think and plan around your priorities, your problems will become much more manageable because you will become more preventative by nature.

For example, an excuse not to exercise may be that you just don't have the time. When you decide that your health is at the top of your list of values, you are more likely to build time to exercise into your daily schedule because you are preventing the more time-consuming problem of a health crisis.

"Putting first things first" means to practice and execute daily against your seemingly far-away vision from Habit 2. The good news though, is that once you know what you want and why you want it, you can plan your days accordingly.

Habit 3 urges us to say "no" to the un-important, and "yes" only to those things we've deemed to be our highest, most important priorities—the things that really matter most in our lives. There are two key behaviors involved in doing this effectively:

**1. Set your priorities.** Decide which of your roles and goals are most important, then determine what steps will best achieve those goals. Essentially, this means living life with your values in hand. It means defining your idea of success in life from the image you would like to leave in the roles that you assume (like mother, father, spouse, grandparent, employee, manager, salesperson, activist, voter, student, etc.). The idea is to have these clearly defined and on a piece of paper. Once you've done this, the next step is to...

**2. Schedule your priorities.** Single out the most important things you can work on within each of your roles and the goals you've attached to those roles. Then, schedule blocks of time to work on them. But how do we decide what's most important? How do we know when we should choose to work on "Project X" rather than working on "Project Y"? This is where Covey's time management matrix comes in...

Let's take a look at how we can use the time management matrix to determine what deserves our time and energy vs what doesn't.

**The time management matrix contains four quadrants, each of which represent where/how we spend our time:**

- Quadrant 1: Important and Urgent
- Quadrant 2: Important but not Urgent
- Quadrant 3: Urgent but not Important
- Quadrant 4: Not Urgent or Important

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	① - Crises - Pressing problems - Deadline driven projects eg pressing emergencies or recruitment issues	② - Prevention - planning tasks - Relationship building - Recognising new opportunities - Recreation - Management + leadership - Proactive, strategic work - Coaching + mentoring staff - Looking after health
NOT IMPORTANT	③ - Interruptions; calls, people, email - Some meetings - Popular activities - Work that can be delegated - Other people's crises - Favours for others	④ - Trivial things - Personal actions; eg banking + social emails - Time wasting - Activities you enjoy, socialising at work - Office gossip, chat chat - Social media, internet

To be effective we need to take care of everything in Quadrant 1 and then spend as much of our remaining time in Quadrant 2. **We need to live in Qs 1 and 2.**

- **Quadrant 1 activities—important + urgent.** Emergencies, deadline-driven projects, crises, some meetings, some phone calls. These are the things we cannot and should not ignore. They demand our immediate attention.
- **Quadrant 2 activities—important but not urgent.** Q2 activities would be things like reading, life-long learning, and relationship building — these are the things many of us don't do because they're never urgent. They're important, but once we finish dealing with the Urgent and Important crises of Q1, we often don't want to work in Q2. Instead, we tend to make room for the distractions of...
- **Quadrant 3 activities—urgent but not important.** Q3 activities are things like: answering phone calls while we're working on something that needs our full focus, interruptions from others, or texting and checking email like a hamster on a wheel. And finally, we might want to retreat to the gratifying but wasteful activities of...
- **Quadrant 4—not important, not urgent.** Q4 activities are trivial things like incessant gossiping, spending too much time chatting at the water cooler, checking facebook, or watching too much TV. We do these things because

we feel like we deserve a break, which is just fine—in moderation. But when we spend too much time doing wasteful activities when we should be doing important activities, we set the stage a negative domino effect. When we spend too much time wasting time, we set ourselves up for more crises in Q1 by ignoring the important activities of Q2.

Bottom line: when you can spend the majority of your time in Q1 and Q2, you're setting yourself up to become maximally effective and successful.

### *ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS:*

A great process for putting first things first is as follows:

- 1. Write down your most important roles in life**—both personal and professional.
- 2. Next, think about the areas within those roles** that you would like to invest consistent time and energy into within the next week.
- 3. Now, define one or two things/goals/actions you want to achieve** in each role within the week.
- 4. Finally, schedule time in your week** to achieve these goals.

Writing all of this down allows you to look at your life against the backdrop of your principles and values and make adjustments where necessary. Chances are, you will probably find that you are not spending most of your time and energy on what you truly value unless you have already gone through this process... so go through the process! You'll be grateful you did.

So far in this FlashBook, we've covered Covey's principles and habits on developing "inside-out" success—developing your mission, vision and values; and identifying your current roles to goals. In the next few Big Ideas, we'll transition into the habits that help you successfully—and positively—deal-with and influence other people.

## 7. EMOTIONAL BANK ACCOUNTS

"Our most constant relationships, like marriage, require our most constant deposits."

The emotional bank account is a metaphor that symbolizes the amount of trust and security we build up with others in our lives. Much like a financial bank account, it's something we make deposits into and withdrawals from.

When a person is honest and kind to you, the balance of trust is built and strengthened. Communication between you and that person becomes effective; even when mistakes are made, if a reserve of trust has been built up, the relationship is safe (thanks to all those deposits!) The more deposits we can make into the emotional bank accounts of those around us, the stronger our relationships will become.

On the flip-side though, being unkind, breaking our promises, and being a generally shady and flaky person can decrease or even bankrupt our emotional bank accounts, leaving little to no trust in our relationships.

### *ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS:*

There are six important ways to make deposits into emotional bank accounts:

**1. Always seek to truly understand the other person.** This is important because what the other person values may seem trivial to you unless you seek to truly understand him or her. We often tend to project our own experiences and desires onto others rather than truly trying to understand where they are coming from. Demonstrating sincere understanding makes a huge emotional deposit.

**2. Paying attention to the little things** is the second way to make emotional deposits into the lives of other people. People are extremely sensitive, and a small, seemingly insignificant kindness can often go a long way. For example, if you are

working on an important project for your job, and your three year old interrupts you to share a picture she has drawn, kind and loving feedback rather than admonishment or an exasperated response will make a large deposit into the child's emotional bank account.

**3. Keep your commitments.** Breaking an important promise can be devastating to a relationship, so make promises carefully, and do everything you can to avoid breaking them.

**4. Clarify your expectations.** It is common for expectations to be implicit or unstated in many relationships, but to avoid misunderstandings that can deplete emotional accounts, expectations should be crystal clear from the beginning. For example, in a marriage, a husband and wife may have implicit expectations about household duties. If the wife believes that the husband should be responsible for taking out the garbage and shoveling the sidewalk, but these responsibilities are never explicitly discussed, she may be disappointed when his understanding of these responsibilities do not match her own.

**5. Maintain your integrity at all times.** You can do this by being loyal and kind even to those who are not around. When you refuse to engage in gossip or unkind conversations about someone who is not present, you build trust with those who are present.

And the final way to make an emotional deposit into someone's bank account is this:

**6. When you make a mistake, apologize sincerely.** Apologies should be from the heart and not out of pity or embarrassment.

When you master the art of adding to the emotional bank accounts of others, your relationships will flourish.

## 8. HABIT 4: THINK WIN/WIN

"You can't change the fruit without changing the root."

Thinking Win/Win is about looking at life through the lens of cooperation rather than competition.

A win-win mindset is the idea that every interaction you have will be mutually beneficial. It is the notion that your success does not take away the opportunities that others have for success and vice versa. It is the idea that if a situation is not a win for all parties involved, it is not really a win for anyone.

Having a Win-Win mindset is actually a habit of leadership in interpersonal relationships. Character is at its foundation. To promote win-win situations, you need to have integrity, maturity, and an abundance mentality.

Having an abundance mentality is the idea that there is enough for everyone. It's the ability to be happy for others when they are successful because you do not see their success as limiting to your own opportunities.

Win-win relationships are those in which the emotional bank accounts of all parties are high, and the energy can be focused upon creative and desirable outcomes. When working with others, try to think not in terms of who is right and who is wrong, but instead think about what a third and even better solution might be.

### *ACTIONABLE INSIGHT:*

- To practice this habit, think about a situation in your near future where you will have to do some problem-solving with another person. Think about how the other person views the situation, and write down the solutions you believe he will propose in order for the outcome to be a win for him. Next, write down the things that would need to occur for the solution to be a win



for you. Finally, ask the other person to discuss the possible solutions and work to come to an agreement that will be mutually beneficial.

## 9. HABIT 5: SEEK FIRST TO UNDERSTAND

“Seek first to understand, then to be understood.”

One of the most important principles of effective interpersonal communications is to seek understanding before trying to be understood.

Most people have the urge to give advice meant to fix the problems of others before ever taking the time to truly understand the problem from an alternative vantage point.

Communication is the most important skill you can master in life. Chances are you have spent much time learning to read, write, and even speak well; but how much instruction and coaching have you received in the area of listening? Train yourself to listen carefully in order to understand the other person and their point of view rather than listening just to formulate a reply.

True listening is done with our ears, eyes, and hearts.

Empathetic listening involves understanding the way the other person sees the world, and how she feels about the situation. It is not sympathetic or even reflective. It is listening for feeling and meaning without projecting your own thoughts, motives, and interpretations onto what you are hearing.

### *ACTIONABLE INSIGHT:*

- If you have ever said things like, “I know exactly how you feel!” or “The same thing happened to me!” chances are you were not truly listening to the other person. Try instead to focus upon putting yourself into the other person’s shoes and understanding what he or she is expressing before formulating a response or diagnosing the problem.
  - For example: instead of saying, “I know exactly how you feel!” Come from the standpoint of truly trying to understand where they’re

coming from, by saying something like, “I just want to make sure I’m understanding where you’re coming from...” and then simply restate what they just said to in your own words, and then ask a clarifying question, like “do I have that right?” or “Am I understanding you correctly?”

When we learn to deeply understand each other, we open the door to creative solutions to problems because we eliminate the barriers that block clear communication and progress.

## 10. HABIT 6: SYNERGY

**"Synergy catalyzes, unifies, and unleashes the greatest powers within people."**

Synergy, the idea that "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts," is the creative, collaborative process that often results in something amazing and new.

One of the keys to achieving true synergy is to value the differences between people by realizing that every individual sees the world differently. When all members of a collaborative group realize this, they are able to understand that there is much to be learned by openly and honestly interacting with each other. If we each were to only rely on our own experiences to interpret the world around us, we would constantly be limiting our knowledge of the world.

True synergy requires complete openness of all parties, which can be challenging to achieve. The outcome is an interdependent and creative reality in which amazing new alternatives and solutions come to light.

### *ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS:*

- The first step to achieving synergy in your interactions with others is to respect the synergy within yourself. Realize that you have both a creative and a more logical side. Respect the differences between the two and use those differences to become a more creative person.
- In difficult situations, choose to look for the positives in others and to avoid negativity in order to see things from a different perspective.
- When somebody sees something differently than you do, react by affirming them. Say something like, "Great! You have a different perspective!" then work to truly understand that perspective rather than disagree with it. In your work to understand it, it is likely that you may come up with a third and better perspective.

## 11. HABIT 7: SHARPEN THE SAW

"The greatest battles of life are fought out daily in the silent chambers of the soul."

Sharpening your saw is about continuously striving to renew, refine, and recharge your body, mind, and soul.

In order to be the best person you can be, it is crucial to take care of the four dimensions of your nature: physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual.

1. **Physical (PQ)** — The physical dimension is just what it sounds like. You care for it by eating healthy foods and getting enough exercise and rest.

2. **Mental (IQ)** — Many people let their mental dimension suffer once they complete their formal education. It is important to find ways to continue to challenge and educate your mind.

3. **Emotional (EQ)** — Your social/emotional dimension has to do with the interpersonal relationships in your life and your ability to communicate empathetically and cooperate creatively. Our emotional lives are closely connected to our relationship with others, and we can practice sharpening these skills in our interactions with others rather than in isolation.

4. **Spiritual (SQ)** — The spiritual dimension deals with what you consider to be your center. It has to do with the commitments you have to your values. People renew their spiritual dimension in different ways. Some turn to prayer, yoga, or meditation. Others read spiritual literature or listen to spiritual music. Find something that works for you, and devote some time to strengthening your spiritual dimension.

Ideally, you should strive to devote one hour per day to strengthening each dimension so that you are at the top of your game and ready to practice the six previously discussed habits.

# CLOSING NOTES

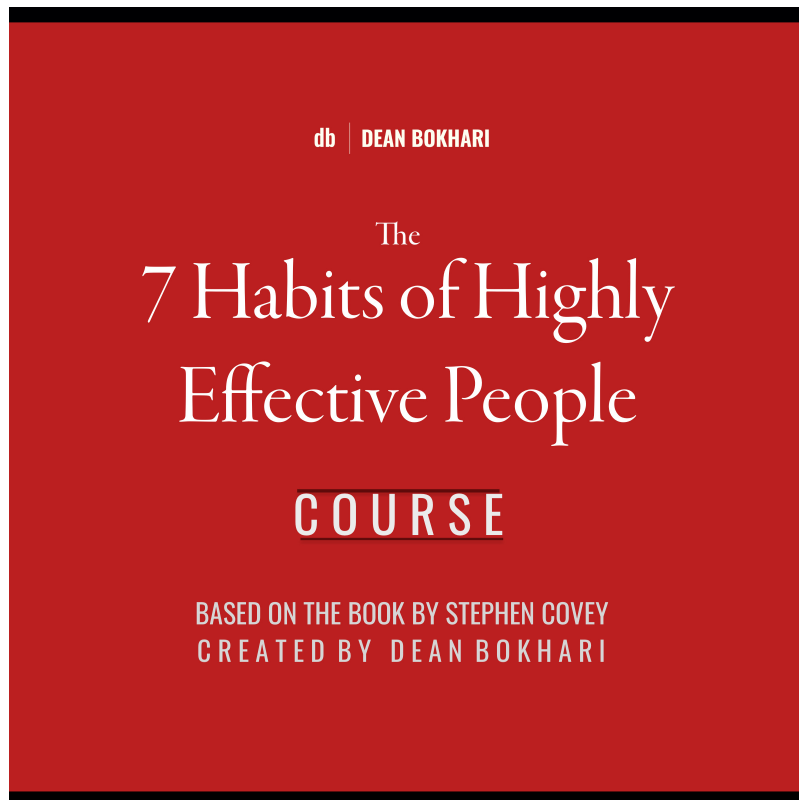
## **Key Take-away:**

- Authentic change has to happen from the inside out.

## **Actionable Insights:**

- Center your life on solid, timeless principles.
- Build a character of integrity by letting your values guide your actions.
- Make time (ideally everyday) to consistently renew the four dimensions of your nature—physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual.

# WANT TO MASTER THE 7 HABITS?



Master the 7 Habits to get ahead in life + work in this 12-lesson course based on Stephen Covey's best-selling book, ***The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*** and instructed by me, Dean Bokhari.

After having read and applied the 7 habits in my own life, I've distilled the core principles from this life-transforming book and packed them all into 12 easily digestible, 10-minute audio lessons for you.

## What you'll learn

I designed this program to make it as easy as possible for you to start using the 7

habits to become more successful, productive, and influential—both in life and at work. Over a period of 12 days, M–F, you’ll learn each of the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People and how to apply them, so that you can: boost your leadership influence, accomplish more, and achieve your highest potential.

### How it works

- 📅 **12 days. 12 lessons.** Each day, you’ll get an email with a 10–15 minute audio-lesson coupled with one actionable idea to help you incorporate the 7 habits into your personal + professional life. 12 days, 12 lessons, 15 minutes per lesson.
- ⚡ **A few minutes a day** is all you need. Simply carve out 10–15 minutes for your daily ritual.
- 🎧 **Listen + learn.** Anytime, anywhere. Because it’s audio-based, you can listen no matter where you are—at home or on the go, while you’re out for a walk or at the gym. Simply push play and let me be your guide. (You’ll also get written versions of each audio lesson)
- 💡 **Fast + actionable.** Each lesson includes actionable exercises you can implement immediately.


### What you’ll get

You’ll pickup practical principles and strategies that you can start using right away to become a more influential leader and make progress towards your goals. When you enroll today, you’ll get:

- 🔑 **Lifetime access** to the 7 Habits Course dashboard, so you can come back and listen again and again until the lessons become ingrained in your mind.
- 📝 **Course workbook** with actionable insights + templates. You’ll receive a



downloadable, fill-able, and printable course workbook to jot down notes and engage in your daily exercises.

-  **Get certified.** Receive a certificate upon completion of the course with your name and date of completion.

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