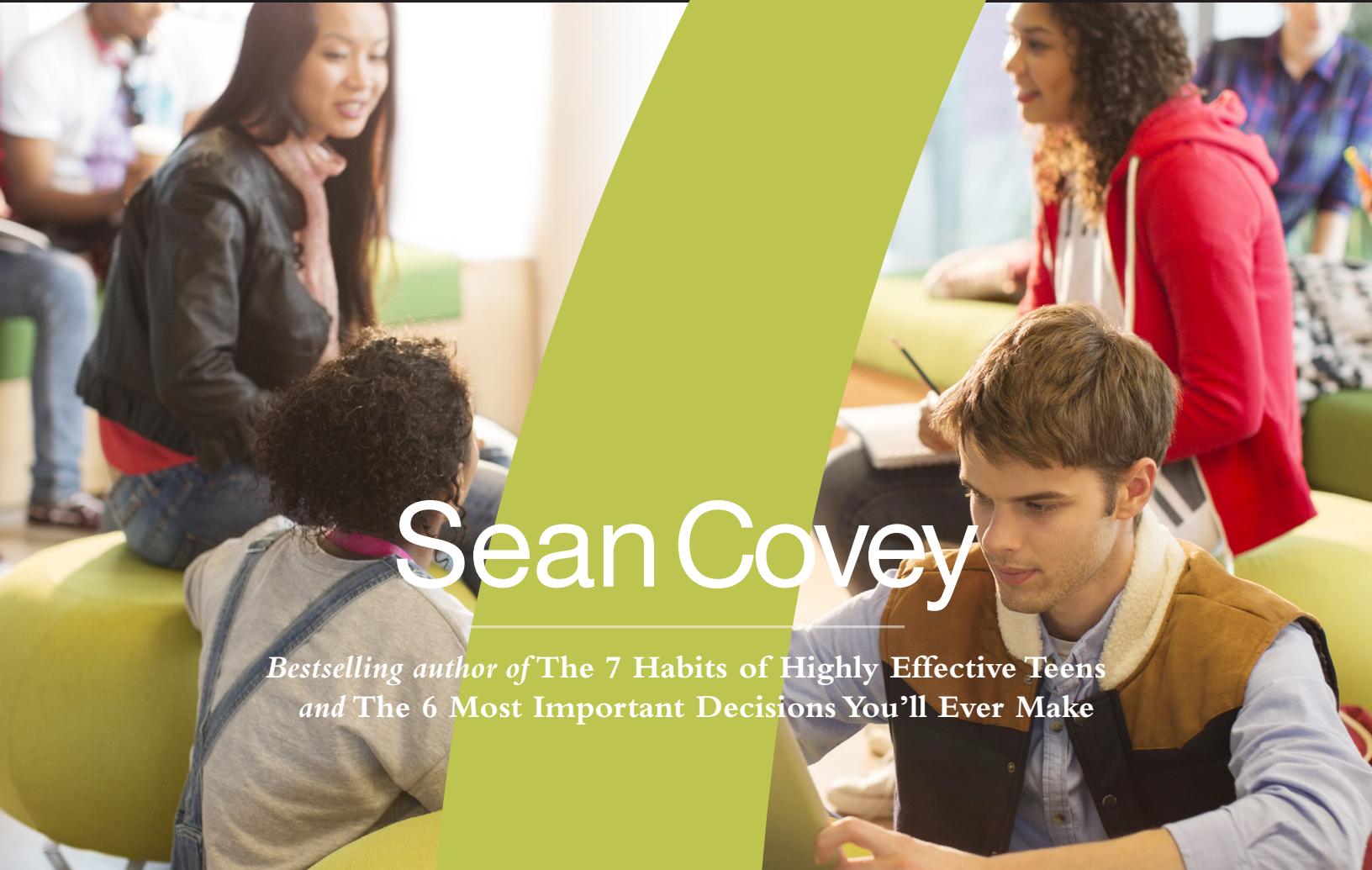


SAMPLE CHAPTER

THE 7 HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE COLLEGE STUDENTS

Succeeding in College...and in Life

A photograph showing several college students in a study group. In the foreground, a young man with short brown hair, wearing a brown vest over a light blue shirt, is looking down at a book or notes. Behind him, a young woman with curly hair, wearing a red hoodie, is also focused on her work. To the left, another student is visible, and in the background, more students are sitting at tables, creating a busy, academic atmosphere.

Sean Covey

*Bestselling author of The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens
and The 6 Most Important Decisions You'll Ever Make*

Course Syllabus

Boldface = video in etextbook

LESSON	TOPIC	STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES	SUGGESTED VIDEOS
1	The College Success Formula	Students will articulate their compelling reason for being in college and a threefold formula for success in college.	Welcome
2	7 Habits of Highly Effective Students	Students will be able to overview the 7 Habits of Highly Effective College Students and explain why they are critically important skills for living a meaningful life and building a successful career.	Maturity Continuum
3	Paradigms (See-Do-Get)	Students will be able to demonstrate self-awareness through analysis of their own paradigms and their effectiveness in producing success in school and in life.	Paradigms
4	Principle-Centered Living	Students will be able to define principles of effectiveness and choose to center their paradigms of action on those principles.	Principles Govern
5	Academic Protip: How to Study in College	Students will be able to distinguish active from passive learning and describe strategies for active learning.	n/a
Habit 1: Be Proactive			
6	The Freedom to Choose	Students will be able to explain how to use their own resourcefulness and initiative to meet the challenges of school and life.	Escalator
7	Carry Your Own Weather	Students will be able to choose their responses to external stimuli instead of reacting helplessly.	Carry Your Own Weather
8	Proactive Language	Students will be able to distinguish between proactive and reactive language and substitute the proactive for the reactive in their own language.	Proactive Language
9	Your Circle of Influence	Students will be able to focus their energies on the things they can control rather than stress out over the things they can't control.	Circle of Influence

10	Breaking Negative Cycles & Avoiding the Chains of Addiction	Students will be able to identify behaviors that keep them from being as effective as they could be and create strategies to overcome those behaviors.	Stone
11	Academic Protip: How to Use the College Library	Students will be able to use library resources and staff to do research and coursework.	n/a

Habit 2: Begin With the End in Mind

12	The Two Creations	Students will begin to develop the habit of “vision,” identifying their dreams and goals, and planning their college experience.	Begin With the End in Mind Teacher
13	Your Life Purpose: Personal Mission Statements	Students will discover and describe a compelling purpose for their education and their lives in the form of personal mission statements.	80th Birthday Masterpiece
14	Your Life Goals	Students will practice a goal-setting and decision-making process in developing a graduation plan.	Mohammed Yunus Ice Scraper
15	Academic Protip: How to Write a College Paper	Students will be able to describe and practice a simple process for writing research papers and essay examinations.	n/a

Habit 3: Put First Things First

16	Paradigms: First Things First	Students will be able to set priorities and manage time in accordance with those priorities.	Q2 Lifestyle
17	Quadrant 2 Lifestyle	Students will be able to distinguish between activities that are truly important or merely urgent.	The Time Matrix Big Rocks
18	Weekly/Daily Planning	Students will gain control of their weekly and daily schedules so that key priorities are fulfilled.	Weekly Planning
19	Academic Protip: How to Study for a Test	Students will be able to describe and practice a process for succeeding on tests and examinations.	n/a

Habit 4: Think Win-Win			
20	The Win-Win Paradigm	Students will be able to articulate effective versus ineffective paradigms of human interaction.	Win-Win Thinking
21	Balancing Courage and Consideration	Students will describe strategies for dealing successfully with peer pressures and interpersonal conflicts.	Green and Clean
22	The Emotional Bank Account	Students will be able to build healthy relationships by consistent attention to nurturing and repairing those relationships.	Emotional Bank Account
23	Academic Protip: How to Think Critically	Students will be able to apply critical thinking strategies to college course assignments and life challenges.	n/a

Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood			
24	Diagnose Before You Prescribe	Students will be able to describe common barriers to effective communication and strategies for overcoming those barriers.	Diagnose Before You Prescribe Autobiographical Responses
25	Empathic Listening	Students will practice and apply a process for thoroughly understanding the viewpoints and emotions of others.	Empathic Listening
26	Presenting Ideas Persuasively	Students will be able to describe quality standards and apply a process for communicating persuasively to others.	Presentation Advantage
27	Giving & Receiving Feedback	Students will be able to seek and provide constructive feedback to improve performance.	Blind Spots
28	Academic Protip: How to Make a Presentation	Students will apply a process for presenting ideas persuasively in front of an audience.	n/a

Habit 6: Synergize			
29	Celebrating Differences	Students will be able to capitalize on diversity in working collaboratively with others.	The Nature of Synergy Everest
30	Working in Teams	Students will describe how to contribute to meeting the goals of a group.	Path to Synergy
31	Seeking 3rd Alternatives	Students will practice and apply a creative process for group problem-solving.	IDEO
32	Academic Protip: How to Read College Textbooks	Students will describe and apply effective strategies for reading college-level content.	n/a

Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw			
33	The Physical Saw: Solving the Personal Energy Crisis	Students will describe balanced ways of maintaining good health and handling stress.	Sharpen the Saw
34	The Social/Emotional Saw: Balancing Your Relationships	Students will describe balanced ways of renewing themselves emotionally and dealing with social/sexual demands.	Stay Strong in the Key Moments
35	The Mental Saw: Learning for a Lifetime	Students will describe how the brain learns and how to capitalize on those functions to maximize learning.	TBD
36	The Spiritual Saw: Finding Time for Meaning	Students will explore strategies that college learning provides for dealing with existential life questions.	TBD
37	Academic Protip: How to Manage Money	Students will describe and apply a process for budgeting and managing money effectively.	Your Money-Making Model
38	Putting It All Together: The Upward Spiral	Students will articulate the transformative power of principle-centered living on their education and on their lives.	Closing Transformation

1

HABIT 1 Be Proactive The Habit of Choice



“Success isn’t a result of spontaneous combustion. You must set yourself on fire.”

-ARNOLD H. GLASOW

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL DISCOVER WAYS TO:

- Take initiative.
- Carry your own weather.
- Use proactive language.
- Grow your Circle of Influence.
- Break negative cycles.
- Avoid addictions.

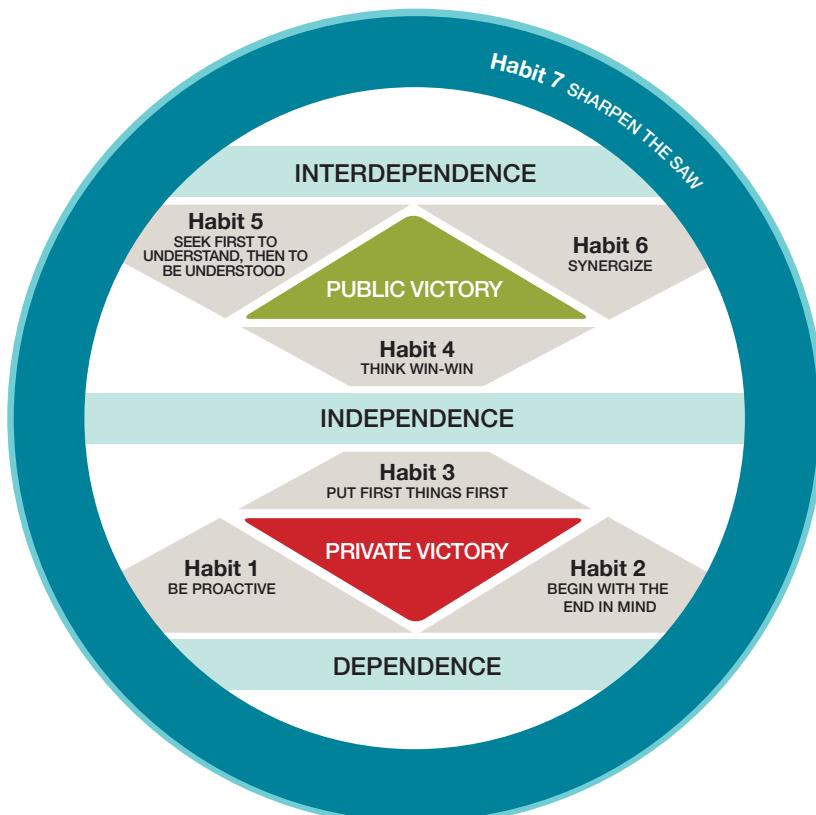
Also, look for the Academic Protip...

- How to Use the College Library



Habit 1: Be Proactive

is the foundation of all the other habits. It is the habit where college students like you learn to take responsibility for your life and education more than ever before.



What I Wish I'd known in college

“It really is true: 90% of life is showing up! So make the most of attending class—even the early ones!”

-Courtney, Boston

“I think freshman year is the hardest. There is no one there to force you to go to class and no parents breathing down your neck to get your homework done. Make it a point to never miss class and to get your homework done as soon as you can. It’s no fun spending the last three years of college trying to make up for poor choices in your first year.”

-Jordan, University of Utah

“Persistence is more important than talent or knowledge in college, and in life. Study more than you party. You don’t have to be the smartest person in the room, just one of the hardest working.”

-Jennifer, Purdue University

“You really have to take control of your own education. Don’t just ‘get by’ but make an effort to think about what you’re reading or studying and what you’re doing. Take advantage of everything in front of you.”

-Janita, Mauritius

“It isn’t as hard as you think, especially if you show up to class and do your homework.”

-Treion Muller, So. Africa

“This isn’t high school anymore. It’s up to you to ‘show up’ in every sense of the word.”

-Jackie, University of Hawaii

REAL CHOICES:

Creating Your Own Life

Frank McCain was hungry. It was nearly dinner time for the young man who was in his second term at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical University, known as "A&T." So he and three friends decided to grab a bite at a nearby diner.

It's the sort of thing millions of students do every day without even thinking about it. But on this day, February 1, 1960, Frank and his friends were taking their lives in their hands. They were African-American students, and it was against the law for them to sit down and order a meal in this whites-only restaurant in Greensboro, North Carolina. They knew the reaction might be a violent one.

They did not make this decision lightly. Frank had been reading about Gandhi and Martin Luther King and the idea that injustice doesn't have to be met with violence. Injustice could be overcome by peaceful, non-violent protest.

"Fifteen seconds after I sat on that stool, I had the most wonderful feeling," Frank said later. "I had a feeling of liberation, restored manhood; I had a

natural high. And I truly felt almost invincible."

The students asked for service, but the manager ordered them out and a police officer stood by with a blackjack in hand. Everyone stared at each other for a long time. Abruptly, the manager closed the restaurant early and the young men left with empty stomachs.

Word of their daring deed spread quickly, and the next day 20 more African-American students joined them in a second attempt to get service at the restaurant. Within a week, more than 300 black students were participating in lunch counter "sit-ins," with many white students joining them. The movement spread across the country.

The students "sitting in" were viciously abused. People poured sugar, mustard, and ketchup on them and shouted obscenities and death threats. People spat on them and hurled eggs and milkshakes at them. Many of the students were carried away to jail. But like Gandhi, not one ever fought back or said a word of protest to their tormentors. They simply and politely kept asking for service.



This shameful spectacle caused many people to look into their hearts, and it wasn't long before the law changed across the entire United States. Today a plaque marks the lunch counter in Greensboro where Frank McCain and his friends sat down for the first time. The lunch counter itself is on view in the Smithsonian Institution, and a statue on the A&T campus pays tribute to the four college freshmen who changed a nation.

"We didn't want to set the world on fire. We just wanted to sit down and eat like everybody else," Frank said many years later. "We wanted to be included in the round table of humanity."

Frank McCain and his friends weren't satisfied with standing back and letting the future happen to them. They took steps to create their own future. And that's what Habit 1: Be Proactive is about—taking responsibility for your life and choosing the future you want to have.

You probably don't face the dreadful barriers Frank faced, but in your own way you have a serious choice to make: Will you stand back and let life happen to you, or will you step up and make it happen the way you want it to happen?

If you're a proactive student, you take charge of your life. You take charge of your education. You choose your classes, your major, your career. You choose when to wake up and go to sleep. You choose your friends and how you will spend your time. You face up to obstacles and beat them, as Frank McCain did. You are captain of your own ship.

The opposite of proactive is reactive. If you're a reactive student, you avoid responsibility for your life and your education. You blame other people ("I would have aced that test, but my roommate wouldn't lend me his notes") or circumstances ("It was too cold to go to class") for your problems. You act like a victim ("That professor's out to get me"). You need somebody else to do everything for you ("Mom, would you take the bus over here and do my laundry for me? I just can't do it. I know it's 200 miles, Mom . . .").

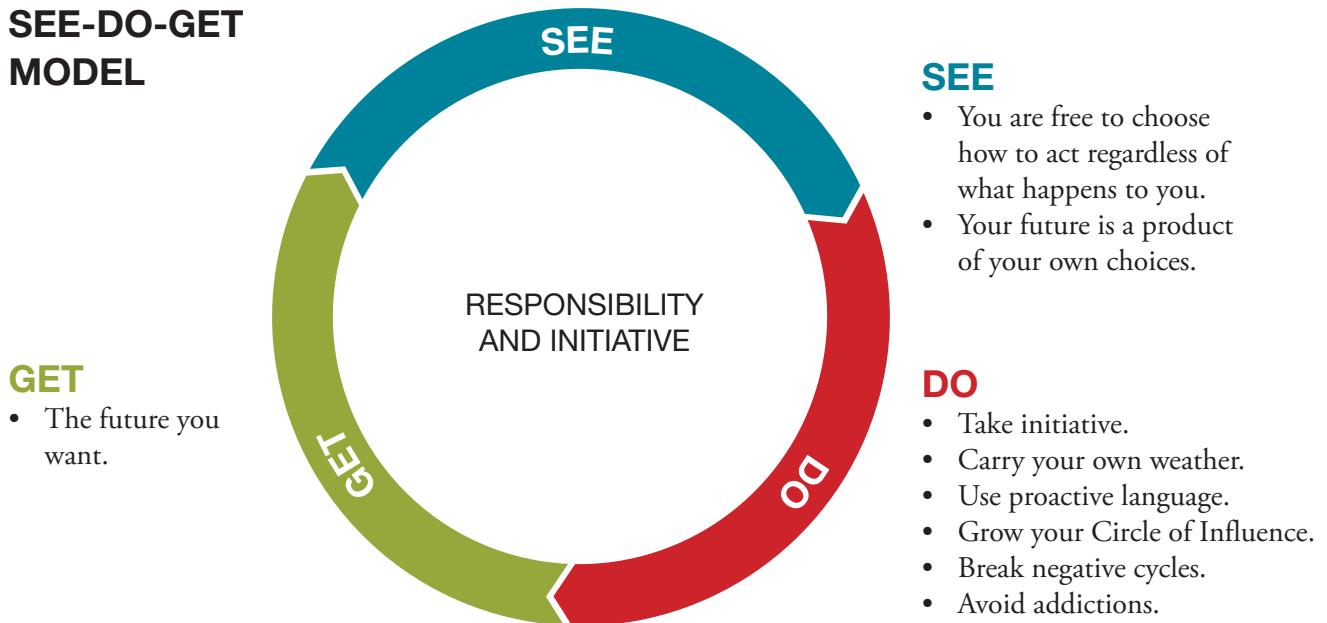
In this chapter we'll find out how proactive you are and what you can do to become more proactive. If you practice Habit 1, these See-Do-Get elements become your reality.

“Do what you think is right for your happiness. If you’re not happy with what you’re doing, change studies. If you think the direction you’ve taken for the last five years is no longer suiting you, start something else.”

—Erljen, University of Amsterdam



SEE-DO-GET MODEL



THE PARADIGMS OF PROACTIVITY

Proactive people think differently. If you're proactive, you have these paradigms:

- You are free to choose how to act regardless of what happens to you.
- Your future is the product of your own choices.

The Freedom to Choose

You are free to choose your own actions. Nobody can make you do anything.

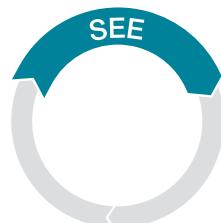
Imagine being in a situation where you're completely helpless, where other people are totally in control of you. And these people hate you and want to make you suffer.

That was the situation of the great Jewish psychiatrist Viktor Frankl when he was imprisoned in the Nazi death camps during World War II. In his famous book *Man's Search for Meaning*, written after the war, he describes many atrocities, including watching his parents, brother, and wife sent off to die in gas chambers. Only he and a sister survived.

As a medical student, Frankl had been schooled in genetic determinism and environmental determinism, two prevailing theories of why people behave as they do. Genetic determinism suggests that you are who you are because of your genetics. The convenient thing about this theory is that it allows people to blame their bad habits on their genes. "My grandfather was hot tempered, my dad was that way, and so am I. There's nothing I can do about it."

By contrast, environmental determinists argued that genes are not the whole answer. Your environment makes you who you are—your home life, your neighborhood, your friends, your school, the economy.

Clearly, your genes and environment both play a role in who you are. But





Viktor Frankl

Frankl saw things in the camps that he couldn't explain with either theory: "We who have lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances—to choose one's own way."

Frankl discovered that people are free to choose their own attitudes. This discovery excited him. It meant that his captors could jail him, kill his family, and torture his body, but only he could choose how to respond to it all. They could not take that choice from him. Only he—neither his genes nor his environment—could choose what he would do.

Frankl was fortunate to survive the war. Afterwards, Frankl taught his students about their freedom to choose their own response to life. He pioneered the cognitive theory of human behavior: You are not simply a product of your genes and your upbringing. You are a product of your own choices. You're free to choose what you will do about what has happened to you, what is happening to you, and what will happen to you in the future.

"You can't help what you were born with but you can help what you become."

—Alice Krige
in Skin, 2008

Three Theories of Human Behavior

GENETIC DETERMINISM	ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINISM	COGNITIVE THEORY
"I am the product of my genes."	"I am the product of my environment."	"I am the product of my choices."

"You must take personal responsibility. You cannot change circumstances, the seasons, or the wind, but you can change yourself."

—Jim Rohn

Do you see yourself as more of a "pawn" or an "origin"?

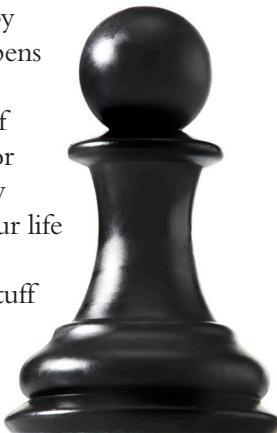
The Creative Force of Your Life

If you are proactive, you see yourself as completely free to choose what you will do with your life. You also see yourself—nobody and nothing else—as the creator of your own future. That's the second paradigm of proactive thinking.

Richard de Charms, a professor of education and psychology at Washington University, taught that people are either "pawns" or "origins." In the game of chess, the "pawn" is the least powerful piece on the board. It gets pushed around and sacrificed. The player who controls all the moves is called the "origin." The origin acts; the pawn is acted upon.

If you see yourself as a pawn, you get pushed around by luck, fate, or circumstances you can't control. Life just happens to you. You're a victim of society or your upbringing. By contrast, if you see yourself as an origin, you're in charge of your life, you control the moves, and you are responsible for your success—or lack of it—in school. De Charms says by choosing one of these two paradigms, you decide what your life will be like.

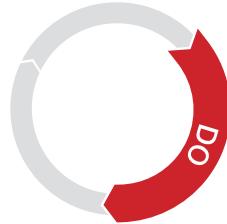
Of course, no one controls everything in life. Lots of stuff happens—good and bad, genetic and environmental—that you have absolutely no control over. But if you have the proactivity paradigm, you create your own future.



WHAT PROACTIVE COLLEGE STUDENTS DO

Remember, your paradigms drive what you Do, so here's what you Do differently if you have the proactivity paradigm:

- Take initiative.
- Carry your own weather.
- Use proactive language.
- Grow your Circle of Influence.
- Break negative cycles.
- Avoid addictive behaviors



Take Initiative

Proactive people act rather than are acted upon. They are self-starters. They take initiative to make things happen.

Taking initiative does not mean being pushy, aggressive, or annoying. Rather, it means being resourceful and creative in making things happen the way you want them to happen.

I like the example of Ute, a student at the University of Göttingen in Germany. She needed a place to live, but all the affordable places near the university were run down and falling apart. She could have just coped with it like most students, but instead she hopped in her VW Käfer and looked in a better section of town. When she found a good neighborhood, she put a note in each postbox that told people who she was and what she wanted. An elderly patent lawyer responded and offered her a guest room in his nice home for a very affordable rate. It even had a garden view. Ute spent three great years there.

The point? Ute didn't just sit back, accept the status quo, and let life happen. She took the initiative to make things happen her way.

During my senior year of college, I was a few credit hours short of a language requirement I needed to graduate. I wasn't excited about the classes offered, so I drew up my own curriculum for a class, showed it to the dean of the college, and asked for credit. He not only approved my plan but enthusiastically endorsed it. As a result, I got what I wanted and received credit for it—all because I took the initiative.

If you don't like your circumstances, go out and make your own.

Once when Napoleon was preparing for battle, one of his soldiers asked him what he thought the battlefield conditions would be like. Napoleon was curt in responding: "Conditions? I create my own conditions."

Like Napoleon, proactive people create their own conditions. They take seriously the words of George Bernard Shaw, the English playwright, who said: "People are always blaming their circumstances for what they are. I don't believe in circumstances. The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and if they can't find them, make them."

If you're proactive, you take the initiative to get the classes you need, take care of your health, or get a job. When life says no to you, you don't take no for an answer. You create the conditions for a positive and fun college experience.

"The best way to predict your future is to create it."
-Peter Drucker

"Whatever you're meant to do, do it now. The conditions are always possible."
-Doris Lessing



ACTIVITY 8

“7 Rights” for Successful Studying

Create a good study environment by doing these 7 things right.

1. **Right Attitude.** Good grades are your responsibility. You own them and no one else does, not even your mom. You can get good grades. You may need to get help, but it is within your control. Believe that you can do it because you can.
2. **Right Energy.** Your brain is connected to the rest of your body. To work well, it needs food and sleep. So if you’re starving, grab a bite to eat before you jump into studying. Staying up all night to study puts your body in the same state as drinking and driving. Instead, exercise, drink water, and take breaks.
3. **Right Location.** Find a quiet place where you can spread out all your stuff, such as the library. Stay away from places where you are tempted to slack off. Make sure you have everything you need readily accessible—paper, pencils, laptop, snacks, and water—so you don’t have to get up constantly.
4. **Right Time.** Set regular times for studying. Pick times when you are most alert and least likely to get distracted. Make it a routine.
5. **Right Pace.** Determine how long you will study. Stretch yourself, but break down your study times into doable chunks. Build in breaks to catch some fresh air and re-charge.
6. **Right Sequence.** Prioritize your work. First, focus on the now: do whatever is due today or tomorrow. Second, focus on the later: look ahead and chip away at upcoming projects, papers, readings, and tests. Don’t put them off—do a little bit at a time.
7. **Right Response.** You have the right to say no: NO to incoming text messages, NO to a crazy party, NO to your friend asking for a favor, and NO to the same video you’ve seen ten times already. Don’t be afraid to say no. It’s okay.

Now reflect: How effective are your study conditions? Think about your habits and patterns: where, when, and how long do you study? How well do you organize your study materials and plan your time? What could you do better?

Carry Your Own Weather

Have you ever known people who mirror the weather? If it’s sunny outside, they’re cheerful. If it’s overcast, they’re gloomy. If it’s really stormy, watch out!

If you’re a reactive person, you allow the outside world to determine how you feel. You let other people spoil your moods. You let the weather decide if you’re going to have a good day. You feel awesome if your team wins and snarl at people if your team loses.

By allowing the outside world to decide how you feel, you empower it to control you. You’ve heard of road rage. Driver A cuts off driver B so driver B goes into a rage—horns sound, fingers fly, and driver B’s day is ruined. To top it

“On starting out a gloomy day: First you must realize that it is the day that is gloomy, not you. If you want to be gloomy, too, that’s all right, but it’s not mandatory.”
—Nora Gallagher

all off, while driver B stewes all day, driver A is off and sailing, enjoying life.

You waste time and energy when you allow others' weaknesses to control your emotions. Comedian Buddy Hackett put it this way, "I've had a few arguments with people, but I never carry a grudge. You know why? While you're carrying a grudge, they're out dancing."

Proactive people choose their own weather. They choose to be pleasant, positive, and principle-centered, regardless of the circumstances or the moods of those around them. They're like the four freshmen from A&T who sat politely and quietly at the lunch counter while angry people spat on them. They're like the concentration camp prisoners Frankl wrote about, giving away their last piece of food for the day, creating hope even in the darkest circumstances.

Marci, a student from Kentucky, shared this experience:



her legs straighten.

As I went to the hospital, I wanted so badly to have something to say that would lift her spirits. Instead, as I walked into that room, there was my little friend—wrapped like a mummy from waist down, with a huge smile on her face. She was lifting the spirits of all who entered her room. She was taking all her physical challenges and choosing to deal with them in such a way that brought smiles and strength to those around her. She totally lifted my spirits.

Emily had many reasons to be miserable: a horrible, chronic disease, surgery over Christmas, and a hospital stay while friends were playing with new toys. But she was free to choose how she felt, and she chose to be happy.

In contrast, I am reminded of a student who leaves her apartment for school one day and a neighbor called out, "Have a good day." To which the young woman replied, "Thanks, but I have other plans."

Do you know people like that? They choose to be miserable and try to bring others down with them. But regardless of whether it's raining outside or not, you can choose your own inner weather.

Over the Christmas holidays, I flew home to spend time with family. On a previous visit, I had met a young girl named Emily. She was 11 and I was 20. She was stricken with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis that had progressed to the point that it was crippling her ability to use her arms and legs. We had periodically stayed in touch, so I thought I would try to see her.

I called Emily's home the day after Christmas and learned she was in the hospital having surgery. The muscles and tendons in her hips had tightened so much that it was like she was always squatting down. The doctors were going to cut the muscles and tendons in her stomach and pelvis to release her hips and let

"Happiness doesn't depend on outward conditions. It depends on inner conditions."

-Dale Carnegie

"Anyone can become angry. That is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose and in the right way—that is not easy."

-Aristotle



DID YOU KNOW?

Becoming Authentically Happy

Dr. Martin Seligman is a distinguished psychologist at Princeton. In his book *Authentic Happiness*, he says your happiness depends on 1) genetics, 2) circumstances, and 3) things you control. However, his research says genetics and circumstances have less to do with happiness than the third category--the things you can control.

So to be happy, Seligman suggests, focus on things you can control, which he divides into three categories: past, present, and future. See these categories below:

The Past:	You cannot change or control the past. However, you can change your paradigms about the past. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Express Gratitude: Think about the good things in your life. Keep a gratitude journal for thirty days. Record good things that happen each day, such as people who have helped you, gifts you got, or fun moments. Try to also express that gratitude to others.• Extend Forgiveness. Constantly stewing about what others have done only reignites anger—which is the opposite of happiness. “Let go,” move on. You don’t have to trust people who have hurt you, but you should forgive them—for your own sake.
The Present:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add Variety. Why do the same things all the time—eating the same crummy pizza, watching the same videos, playing the same games? Break up your routine now and then.• Savor Enjoyable Moments. You may be swamped, but make time to enjoy nature, listen intently to a friend, or go to a play. “Smell the roses.” Don’t rush through college so fast that you never get a chance to enjoy it.• Do Meaningful Work. Get involved in your studies or projects that take you outside yourself. Lazy loafing does not equal happiness.
The Future:	In viewing the future: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Argue for Your Strengths. Focus on what you can do—not on what you can’t. Don’t dwell on your weaknesses.• Become an Optimist. Focus on the positives ahead. Don’t be a pessimist who worries all the time. Look for silver linings in the clouds.

But it's not easy. Life is full of dumb problems like these, not to mention serious problems that really make things hard:

- You slog through snow to get to class and the professor doesn't show up.
- That annoying girl in the library won't shut up.
- Some idiot keeps setting off the fire alarm in the residence hall.
- Your boyfriend has your car and forgets to pick you up after work.
- Your study group blows off the assignment and now the whole thing lands in your lap.
- This guy on a bike nearly runs into you and makes you drop your stuff in the gutter.
- Your sister chokes on a burrito and gets kidney stones and you have to sit up with her in the emergency room all night, you have your mid-term exam on chemical bonds in the morning, and your phone is dead.

Most people just react without thinking, and they "lose it." It's normal to get mad at other people and the weather and your own life. But you don't have to. Being normal is not required; you need to be effective. If you want to start carrying your own weather, imagine that you have a big pause button in the middle of your forehead.

When someone hurts my feelings, cuts me off while driving, or otherwise ticks me off, I imagine myself hitting that big pause button. Then I ask myself, "What is the right thing to do here? What's the best thing to do here? Do I really need to strike back in some way?" Sometimes hitting that pause button is all it takes to calm me down.



"The professor is not merely an information dispensing machine, but a skilled navigator of a complex landscape."
—William Badke

Pause Button

Stop, Think, and Choose

Have you ever "hit the pause button" when you were faced with a tough choice? Describe the situation and how you acted.

ACTIVITY 9

What was the situation?

When did you pause?

What did you do then?

What was the result?

“It is our choices,
Harry, that show
what we truly are,
far more than our
abilities.”
—J.K. Rowling

Your freedom to choose how you act—your personal pause button—can save you from endless problems. When might you need to push the pause button? When someone makes fun of your outfit? When your date doesn’t show up? When your roommate messes up the kitchen and doesn’t clean up? You need to be proactive during these moments. Imagine yourself hitting the pause button in those moments and responding in a way you won’t regret later. It’s within your control.

Remember Frank McCain sitting at the lunch counter day after day. People spat on him, threw eggs at him, and called him dirty names. But he looked on calmly and waited for a menu. Instead of striking back, he paused and thought about his real purpose and what he truly believed in.

And in the end, he got what he valued most—the respect of others, the respect of a nation, and a revolutionized way of treating his people.

ACTIVITY 10

When Put in This Position, I...

Describe how you would typically act in these scenarios. Circle “P” if your typical response is proactive, or “R” if your response is reactive. If you respond with an “R,” decide now how you will respond more proactively in the future.

THE SCENARIO...	YOUR TYPICAL RESPONSE...	P	R
While you’re driving, someone cuts you off in traffic.			
Your instructor gives you a low score on a paper you worked really hard on.			
You’re watching or playing a sport and the referee makes a bad call.			
You get asked to go to a movie but you know you have homework.			
You sense you are about to lose your job.			
A roommate eats your food and leaves the package on the counter.			
You hear someone gossiping about you.			

Use Proactive Language

How can you tell instantly if people are proactive or reactive? Just listen to their language. Reactive people talk about how helpless they are, while proactive people are in charge of their lives.

REACTIVE LANGUAGE	PROACTIVE LANGUAGE
He makes me so mad.	I don't let him get on my nerves.
I have to do my homework.	I'm going to get this paper done now.
There's nothing I can do about it.	There's got to be a way I can do it.
If only I were taller . . .	I'm okay with the way I am.
I can't change.	Where there's a will there's a way.
It was his fault; he gave me the first drink.	I didn't take a drink. It was my choice.
I failed math because my professor was a lousy teacher.	Next time I'll turn in my assignments on time.
I was born [insert ethnic origin], nobody will ever give me a good job.	If I am prepared, someone will hire me no matter what race I am.
I have to drop out of school.	I'll find a way to stay in school.

Can you sense the drastic difference between these statements? For reactive people, all the responsibility is outside themselves: "He makes me so mad," "It was her fault," or "I can't help myself." As a result, reactive language:

- Takes power away from you.
- Blames or accuses other people.
- Makes excuses.
- Makes you feel helpless.

By contrast, proactive people accept responsibility. They say, "I will..." "There's gotta be a way..." "If I do my part..." or "Let's look at the alternatives." Proactive language:

- Keeps the power where it belongs—in you.
- Avoids blaming other people.



"So much stress,
so much to do
Problems to solve
but they don't have
a clue...
What can we find
that will see us
through?
SELF WORTH!"
—Better Than a
Thousand

- Finds a “way.”
- Gives you hope.

As you listen to conversations around campus, you’ll hear a lot of reactive language.

If you catch yourself speaking reactive language, try turning it around and making it proactive. Make proactive language your native tongue, and speak the language of optimism. You can practice by completing the activity below.

ACTIVITY 11

Turning Reactive Language into Proactive Language

People are surprised when they realize how often they say things like “You ruined my day,” or “She made me mad!” When you hear yourself using reactive language, replace it with proactive language. Give it a try:

REACTIVE LINE	PROACTIVE REPLACEMENT
<i>Sample:</i> She ruined my day.	I let her get on my nerves and ruin my day.
I have to go to class today.	
My roommates were too loud; I couldn’t study.	
Laziness runs in my family. We’re all slackers.	
Sorry. My boss brings out the worst in me.	
No one told me I had to pay utilities.	
The school’s food is making me gain weight.	

Reactive language can literally ruin your life. A friend told me about his sister-in-law, a fine and capable woman who did well in high school. But in her first month in college she began to tell herself, “I can’t do this. It’s too hard.” Eventually, she came to believe it and dropped out after one month. And she never went back. After 20 years of low-paying, back-breaking jobs she lost her health and went on welfare.

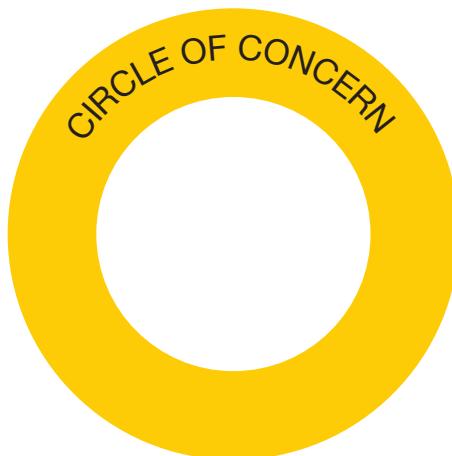
Grow Your Circle of Influence

Like everyone else, you live in a circle inside a circle. The inner circle is your Circle of Influence—the things you can control in your life. The outer one is your Circle of Concern—the things that worry you that you can’t control.

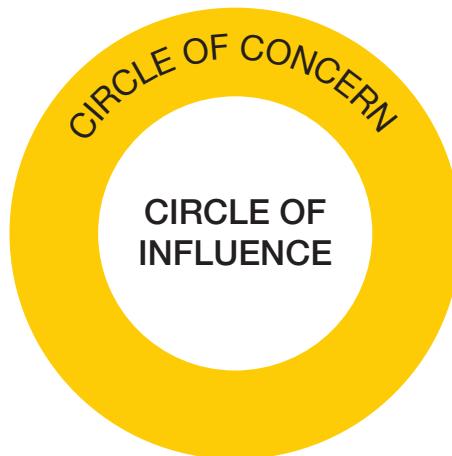
Your Circle of Concern might include the high cost of tuition, your mother’s health, the price of gas, bad weather, climate change, or the color of your skin. You’re concerned about those things, but what can you do? Not much.

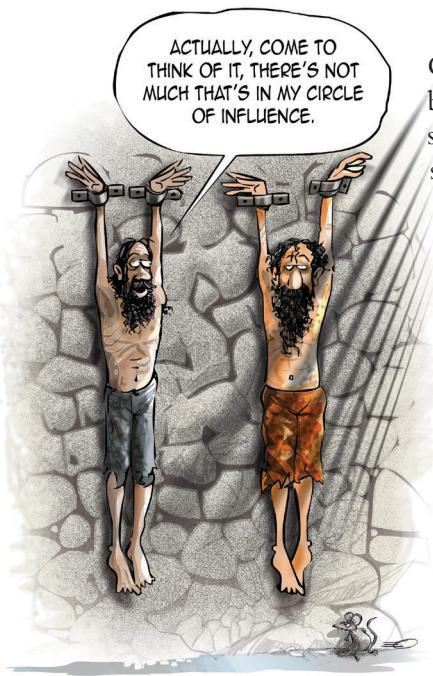


“Whether you prevail or fail, endure or die, depends more on what you do to yourself than on what the world does to you.”
—Jim Collins, in *How the Mighty Fall: And Why Some Companies Never Give In*



But you can do something about the things in the much smaller Circle of Influence.





Do you worry too much about things in your Circle of Concern?

Imagine for a minute that you are Frank McCain. You have a lot in your Circle of Concern. For hundreds of years, African-Americans like you have been shut out of the mainstream of society. You can't get decent jobs so you're stuck in poverty. You have to live in a separate, run-down part of town, go to separate schools, and even drink at separate drinking fountains.

Nobody you know has ever broken through those barriers. Your parents didn't and your grandparents didn't. Unfortunately, your own future looks the same. You're 19 years old, just another first-year student in a black college. What can you do?

You could stay focused all your life on your Circle of Concern and grow old and bitter about it. Or you could focus on your Circle of Influence. Your Circle of Influence is extremely small, but within that circle you can do something. You can take the small step of sitting down to order dinner in a whites-only restaurant.

It was a tiny step, but it was within Frank's power to take it. As a result, his Circle of Influence began to grow, and it grew every hour—like ripples from a stone dropped in a pool—into the great American civil rights movement.

That's how you grow your Circle of Influence.

Let's say you're worried about a big math test coming up. The professor is tough and obviously plays favorites. You've never gotten good math scores; when you were little your mother said, "Our family's no good at math." What do you do?

If you're reactive, you agonize over all the stuff in your Circle of Concern: You waste time badmouthing the professor, calling Mom for sympathy, wishing you had a different teacher, and crying in the bathroom.

But if you're proactive, you focus on your Circle of Influence. You can't control the professor; you can only control what you do. So you meet with her and ask for help, you get free tutoring at the student resource center, and you take practice tests and brush up on the problem areas. You might never be a math genius, but you get better. And you feel better about yourself.

Feel the difference between reactive and proactive people?



LESSON ON LEADERSHIP: Golda Meir

Golda Meir is one of the great women of world history. In reflecting on her younger years, she said:

"I was never a beauty. There was a time when I was sorry about that, when I was old enough to understand the importance of it and, looking in any mirror, realized it was something I was never going to have. Then I found what I wanted to do in life, and being called pretty no longer had any importance. It was only much later that I realized that not being beautiful was a blessing in disguise. It forced me to develop my inner resources. I came to understand that women who cannot lean on their beauty and need to make something on their own have the advantage."

By disregarding what she couldn't control and focusing on what she could control—her education, strengths, and skills—Golda Meir grew her Circle of Influence to worldwide proportions. Eventually, she became the first woman to serve as prime minister of Israel.

What would change for you if you focused more on your Circle of Influence and less on your Circle of Concern? Do you have weaknesses? Of course you do. But can you stop dwelling on them so you can move forward?



Golda Meir

So get to work on growing your Circle of Influence. Here's how:

- Rather than trying to "fix" other people, go to work on your own problems.
- Rather than complaining about the teacher, do the best coursework you can.
- Rather than badmouthing your annoying roommate, change your own annoying habits.
- Rather than blaming your parents, the fast-food industry, the school cafeteria, or your zodiac sign for being overweight, start doing what you must to lose a few pounds.

Do you know that when you focus on your Circle of Concern, your Circle of Influence shrinks? You have less influence on yourself and less influence with others. You get more and more helpless and hopeless. But when you focus on your Circle of Influence, which you can do something about, your influence on yourself and others expands! You get more power over what happens to you.

Remember the examples of Frank McCain and Golda Meir. Your influence might not spread across nations, but you'll shape your future instead of letting it be shaped by others. You grow from the inside out instead of shrinking from the outside in.

 
 "Self-reliance is the key to a vigorous life. A man must look inward to find his own answers."
 ~Theodore Roosevelt (Robin Williams), From the movie *Night at the Museum*, 2006



DID YOU KNOW?

The Fundamental Attribution Error

When things go right, people tend to take credit for them. When things go wrong, people tend to blame someone or something else. This is called the fundamental attribution error. It's a convenient—but ineffective—habit. It's useless and dishonest to take credit for things outside our Circle of Influence or blame others for mistakes we make inside our Circle of Influence.



"In any family, measles are less contagious than bad habits."
~Mignon McLaughlin,
The Neurotic's Notebook

Are there negative tendencies from your family or upbringing that you want to stop from being passed on?

Break Negative Cycles

Sometimes we inherit bad habits from our families. These habits might go back generations; if your father is an alcoholic, there's a good chance his father was an alcoholic. The same is true of drug addictions, poverty, violence, abuse, or a lack of education. Some families have traditions of yelling, getting up late, or watching TV all day. A bad habit can pass through multiple generations and become a vicious, unending cycle.



The good news, however, is that you have a choice. You can choose to be proactive and to break the cycle. The bad stuff can stop with you—with your family, friends, school, and even your community. When Frank McCain and his friends sat down to order a meal, a vicious cycle that trapped an entire society stopped right there in that Greensboro diner.

You can turn tragedy into hope. Listen to the writer and teacher Walter Anderson describe an ugly slice of his upbringing:

The kitchen door opened—and I was caught, cold. It was too late to hide the evidence; the proof was in the open, plain as could be, right there in my lap. My father, drunk, his face flushed, reeled before me, glowering, menacing. My legs started to tremble. I was nine years old. I knew I would be beaten. There could be no escape; my father had found me reading

An alcoholic like his parents before him, my father had hit me before, many times and harder, and in the years that followed he would hit me again, many times and harder, until finally I quit high school at sixteen and left home. His persistent rage about my reading when I was a boy, though, frustrated me more than all other abuse; it made me feel squeezed in the jaws of a terrible vise, because I would not, I could not, stop reading. I was drawn to books by curiosity and driven by need—an irresistible need to pretend I was elsewhere. . . . Thus I defied my father—and sometimes I paid a price for that defiance. It was worth it.

Can you imagine that? Your father beating you because you want to read? Fortunately, Walter's passion for learning was so great that he was able to break the cycles of alcoholism, abuse, and illiteracy that plagued his family. He literally read himself out of poverty. Walter is now the editor of a national magazine and the author of four books.



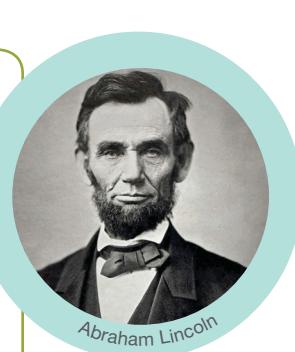
“The great courageous act that we must all do, is to have the courage to step out of our history and past so that we can live our dreams.”

—Oprah Winfrey

LESSON ON LEADERSHIP:

Lincoln, a Cycle Breaker

Abraham Lincoln's greatest achievement was to break a violent cycle of hatred and warfare.



Abraham Lincoln

When running for president of the United States, one of his challengers and greatest critics was Edwin M. Stanton. Stanton went so far as to call Lincoln a giraffe with “no token of any intelligent understanding.” When Lincoln was elected, however, to the shock of everyone, one of his first official acts was to appoint Stanton as Secretary of War, declaring that “he was the best man for the job.”

A woman once asked Lincoln, “How can you speak kindly of your enemies when you should rather destroy them?” After a brief pause, Lincoln replied, “Madam, do I not destroy them when I make them my friends?”

Lincoln made decisions based upon what he felt was best, not based on how others acted toward him. What negative cycles in today's world could a great leader break? What negative cycles in your own world could you break?

What other people do does not determine what you do. You can choose your own way. If something bad happens, reactive people take it out on others, like the guy who gets a lousy grade on a test and goes home and bad mouths the professor.

But proactive people turn setbacks into triumphs. Instead of giving up, they take initiative and find the resources to turn things around. For example, Sam's first semester of college was a disaster.

"You can't move forward because you've got your eyes in the rear view mirror."
—Aaron Eckhart,
in Love Happens,
2009

I got a scholarship to go to Tech, took 18 hours, and was playing football. The first semester I got D's, which was really, really bad for me. It was too much for me, way too overwhelming. I realized I couldn't handle it alone. Moving forward I found out all the resources I had. Tech had tutoring available, and after that first semester I never missed a tutoring class, never, not one time. I also went to the mental counseling center. I started building a relationship with each of my professors. My goal was that every professor would remember me and know my name, so when I got behind and needed help, I would ask for it, and amazingly, they would help me! I never got below a 3.3 from then on and graduated with honors because I took advantage of the tools that were right there. They don't want you to fall out, they want to help you succeed.

ACTIVITY 12

Turning Setbacks into Triumphs

In the following scenarios, what proactive advice would you give your friend to turn the setback into an opportunity?

SCENARIO	PROACTIVE ADVICE
Your friend gets a sports scholarship, but after record-setting performances in the first two games has a career-ending knee injury.	
Your friend has a hard time concentrating in class. Away from home for the first time, the abuse she took from her father while growing up continues to haunt her.	
Your friend has always wanted to be a nurse and help people, but just found out she did not get accepted into the program.	
Your friend has no experience with happily married people. She watched her mother go through three divorces. She now has no confidence she can ever be happily married.	

Avoid Addiction

Nothing takes your freedom away faster than an addiction. Alcohol is the top addiction among college students. Tobacco, illegal drugs, and gambling are also common. There are more and more addictions to prescription drugs, video games, and pornography, as well as addictive behaviors with eating disorders and compulsive buying.

Anybody can become an addict—addiction can strike any age, race, income level, or educational level. Some say, “It’s my choice. It doesn’t affect anybody else.” That’s a lie—addiction impacts a lot of people: family, friends, and society. The prisons are full of addicts to booze, drugs, and pornography. Addiction impacts everyone.



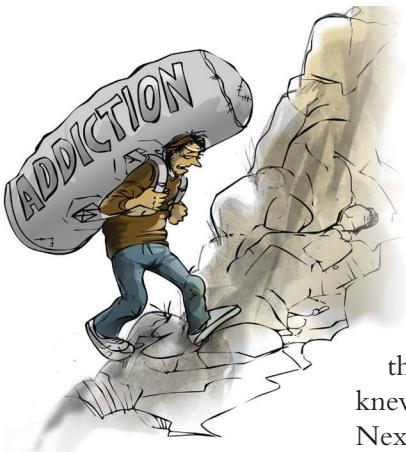
DID YOU KNOW?

How Alcohol on Campus Affects Other Students

STUDENTS WHO...	PERCENT
Have had study or sleep interrupted	60.5
Have taken care of a drunken student	53.6
Have been insulted or humiliated	29.3
Have been pushed, hit, or assaulted	9.4
Have had a serious argument or quarrel	18.6
Have had their property damaged	13.6
Have experienced an unwanted sexual advance	20.1
Have been a victim of sexual assault	1.3

(NIH, “College Drinking.”)





We are free to choose an addiction, but we are not free to choose the consequences of that choice.

One in four college students has trouble in school because of alcohol, and first-year students drink more than anyone. One in five college students drinks and drives. More than 97,000 college students are sexually assaulted in the United States each year because of alcohol. And about 1,825 students die from drinking alcohol (NIH Report, 2013).

One excellent student I know of chose to give “crack” a try. She thought just doing it once couldn’t hurt. One try and the next thing she knew she was shoplifting and stealing from family to sustain her addiction. Next came prison and rehabilitation. College was a broken dream. So, yes, she was free to try crack once—but she lost her freedom in that very moment.

Addiction steals your freedom and always leads to bad consequences.

If you’re proactive, you’ll do anything to keep from losing your freedom of choice. It’s precious to you. That’s why you get an education—to expand your choices in life. That’s why you avoid even the chance of getting addicted and watch your opportunities dry up and blow away.

ACTIVITY 13

The Case of the Vanishing Roommate

Addictions come in many forms. How would you respond to this student’s concern?

I've got a roommate who is addicted to video games. Seriously. It's scary. I met him at the start of the semester and he seemed nice enough. He's from a small town, and this is his first time away. The first week of school he would talk with me and the other guys in our apartment, but then he virtually disappeared into his room. He gets home from work around 10:00 at night, says hi, goes in his room, shuts the door, and at 6:00 a.m. I can still hear him talking to himself while playing a game. I have no idea how he is surviving his classes, but I can't imagine he is doing very well. I don't know if I should say something or not.



Do you have any proactive advice for him? Should he say something to his roommate? Should he get help? If yes, what specifically should he say or do?



WHAT YOU GET: IT PAYS TO BE PROACTIVE

When I was growing up, my dad made me take responsibility for my life. If I said something like, “My girlfriend makes me so mad,” he would come back with, “Now come on, Sean. No one can make you mad unless you let them. It’s your choice.”

Sometimes those conversations drove me crazy and I’d find myself thinking, “I like blaming other people for my problems. I like being reactive. It’s fun and easy. So just leave me alone, Dad!” And then I’d go find my mom.

Well, I hope you don’t think that way because being proactive pays off. For example, a while ago I read about the stress levels of pilots in the military. When war comes, who do you think is more stressed out—fighter pilots or cargo plane pilots? If you guessed the cargo plane pilots, you are right. Their planes are slow and un-maneuverable, so they can’t do much to avoid enemy attacks. The faster, more nimble fighters have a lot more choices.



“No man ever was wise by chance.”
—Seneca, Roman philosopher



The fighter pilots have what psychologists call an inner locus of control; that is, they see themselves as in charge of their lives. Proactive people have that inner locus of control. On the flip side, people with an external locus of control do not see themselves as in charge of their lives. Instead, they see themselves as subject to forces outside themselves—luck, fate, or other people’s whims.

Because of their inner locus of control, proactive people enjoy:

- More job productivity and satisfaction
- Less stress
- Greater work ethic
- Higher student achievement
- More ability to adapt
- Higher pay
- Greater general happiness

(Maltby, Day, and Macaskill)

Of course, reactive people tend to be less productive, stressed out, low-achieving, low-paid slackers. It’s your choice.

Would you rather pilot a fighter jet or a cargo plane in battle?

ACTIVITY 14

What Do I Want to Get?

Think back on the principles of Habit 1 and the activities you have completed in this chapter. Identify one or two actions that would help you most as a first-year student. What results do you hope to Get as a result of doing these things?

What I Am Doing Well

What I Hope to Do Better

What I Hope to Get by Doing Better

In Summary

As a college student, you might be on your own for the first time. For some students, this can be uncomfortable, especially if they have “helicopter parents” who always hovered around and made all the decisions. (The rise of the cell phone is often blamed for the explosion of helicopter parents—it has been called “the world’s longest umbilical cord.”) Then suddenly they’re off to college and making their own decisions. A student named Rebekah confessed, “College gave me a sense of freedom that literally overwhelmed me.”

Proactive people step up and use their freedom. If you want good grades, take the initiative to study hard. If you want a good job, be ready when recruiters come looking. If you want to be a good parent, learn what it takes. You can’t afford to wait for someone else to make life happen for you. Take charge and make it happen for yourself.

Granted, you are not responsible for everything that happens to you. You may, for example, have been the victim of a tragic accident or abuse. And, yes, both genes and environment do impact your life in ways you cannot control. But you’re still responsible for what you do with what you have. Focus on your Circle of Influence and work to control the things you can control.

Here’s a summary of the key points of Habit 1:

Habit 1: Be Proactive

Principles: Responsibility & Initiative

	INEFFECTIVE STUDENTS	EFFECTIVE STUDENTS
What They See	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am a product of my genetics and environment. What I get out of life is mostly a result of luck and fate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am free to choose my actions and attitudes. I am the creative force of my life.
What They Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sit back and let what happens happen. Let other people control them. Use victim language. Focus energy on things they can't control. Allow old baggage from the past to impede progress. Get pressured into addictive behavior. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show initiative: make things happen. Carry their own weather: control their own feelings. Use proactive language. Focus energy on things they can control. Break negative cycles from the past. Say no to anything that could be addictive.
What They Get	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dreams that stay dreams Out-of-control lives Increasing stress Crappy grades, broken relationships, a lame job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dreams that become reality Control over their lives Less stress Better grades, better relationships, a better job

In conclusion, Habit 1: Be Proactive is the key to an effective life because it is the key to living Habits 2 through 7. You have to be proactive to develop the other habits.

Try some of the Baby Steps below. I also recommend carefully studying and applying the tips found in the Academic Protip: How to Use the College Library.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

In the next chapter, you will be asked to think deeper than ever before about your motives and the purpose for your life and for going to college. You won't want to miss it!

Baby Steps



1. Teach to learn. Using the summary chart on page 31, teach the key concepts of Habit 1 to a friend, classmate, or family member within the next 48 hours.
2. The next time someone gives you the bird, give them the peace sign back.
3. If you did poorly on an assignment or test, take the initiative to talk with your professor to find out how to improve.
4. Sometime today catch yourself using reactive language, such as "I have to," "He makes me so mad," or "I can't help it." Replace it with proactive language, like "I choose to," "I'm not going to let his bad mood ruin my day," or "I can do better."
5. The next time you have a problem with somebody, be the first one to apologize.
6. Get to know one of your professors that you admire. Visit the office, have a talk after class, or do some research on him or her via the web.
7. If someone is mean or rude to you, kill him or her with kindness.
8. Pick something that is really bothering you, such as a poor relationship with a friend or a class that you are struggling with. Now, think about those things that lie within your Circle of Influence. Choose to focus on what you can control and forget about what you can't.
9. Identify a negative pattern that you may have inherited from your family. What is it?
_____ How might you be able to break that cycle and turn it into a new, positive pattern? _____
10. Identify the most proactive person you know. Write down his or her name and what that person does that is so different _____.



Academic Protip

If you live by Habit 1, you'll want to know about the college library. I used to think, why do you need a library when you have Google? Who needs all those dusty books when you can find what you want with a couple of clicks?

Well, after talking to Professor Trevor Dawes, one of the world's top experts on college libraries, I was stunned by how valuable the library is. It's much more than just a place to study or check out books. It's the place to go for everything. Here you can get help with your assignments, your tests, your class projects, and even your personal problems. It's the perfect place to practice Habit 1. Here you'll find the resources you need to succeed in college. So take the initiative to get to know your library.

How to Use the College Library

By Trevor A. Dawes,
President of the Association
of College and Research
Libraries

The Library can be intimidating. It's often a big building with long hallways, endless stacks of books, and hundreds of students reading, working on computers, or just sleeping.

But the library can actually be your best friend if you want to succeed in college.

Today's college librarian is not the person at the desk with a pencil behind her ear who glares at you if you start talking and tells you to shush. Today's librarians are actually there to help you find whatever you're looking for. Sometimes, they're the best people on the whole campus to talk to—and believe me, you're going to need them.

Think of a librarian as a personal coach. He is not going to do your school work for you, but he's going to show you how to do it and where you can get help. The whole purpose of the university is to find the answers to questions, and the library has the answers. Maybe the librarian doesn't know everything, but he knows

where to find it.

Suppose your professor says, "Write a five-page research paper on women characters in Shakespeare." (Or it could be a paper on political science, economics, or chemistry—it doesn't matter.) It's your first year of college, first class, first research paper. You don't have a very clear idea of what to do. You're not even sure what "research" is.

Come to the library. Find a librarian and ask her to sit down with you for a few minutes and help you understand what to do.

First, she'll probably ask you, "What question do you want to answer with your paper? What do you want to know?"

"Well, I suppose I want to find out what Shakespeare thought about women."

"Okay, let's see what we can find that will help you answer that question."

Now, the librarian has access to far more stuff on any question you can ask than you will ever be able to use. In fact, her resources are so vast that the problem isn't finding things, it's choosing things.

First, she will probably show you one of many subject guides that list recommended places to go for information. There might even be



Trevor A. Dawes,
President of the
Association of College
and Research Libraries

a subject guide called “Shakespeare and Women.” The subject guide will point you to core resources that list a lot of material that’s been published on the subject. For example, if you’re taking an English class, the Modern Language Association Bibliography is a core resource. For chemistry, it would be Tetrahedron, which is published by Elsevier. Every academic subject has its own bibliography, which is a list of books and articles.

If there is no subject guide, she might show you how to use a “discovery service,” a dream-come-true for people who do research. An online resource, the discovery service can give you a list of books and articles on any subject. The more you narrow down your search, the more helpful it is. Suppose you want to know “what is the symbolic meaning of the flowers Ophelia sings about in Shakespeare’s play Hamlet?” Ask the discovery service, and if anybody’s ever written anything on the subject, it will tell you where to look.

You might be asking yourself, “The discovery service sounds a lot like Google, which I already know how to use. Why do I need the library’s discovery service?”

Think of Google as a gigantic pile of information. The problem with Google is that some of that pile is helpful and reliable information, but much of it isn’t. Suppose you’re taking a botany class and the professor wants you to write a research paper on trees. So you Google “trees.” Obviously, you’re going to get a billion hits. You’ll find ads for tree services, programs for Arbor Day, a map of Tree Street, and Grandpa Jack’s plan for a tree house. You might even

find a web site called “allabouttrees.com.” That sounds just right. But you go there and find that it’s the report of some fifth grader who had to do a science project on trees.

Of course, none of that will help you with your research paper. But the library’s discovery service gives you only trustworthy and relevant information that you can use in your research paper. It lists only scholarly materials, articles or books that have been “peer reviewed”—which means that many scholars have already studied the material and pronounced it worthwhile. You can use it without worrying if it’s bogus or not.

“Okay, I’ve found several articles on Shakespeare’s attitude toward women. Now what do I do?”

Articles in the library generally follow the same format. First, pay close attention to the “abstract.” It appears at the beginning and is usually a one-paragraph summary of the article. The abstract will tell you what question the author was trying to answer and a short answer to that question.

“Here’s an article by Professor Smith that says Shakespeare’s real heroes were women, not men.”

Very interesting. Now you can skim or scan the article to find out why the author thinks that way. You might even be convinced he’s right. But you can’t just repeat in your paper what the author said in his. So you need to look further.

The librarian says, “Let’s search the discovery service to see if anyone has written an answer to Professor Smith.”

There it is. An article by Professor Jones that says Smith is totally wrong.

Jones thinks Shakespeare's women are not heroes and some of them are downright evil, like Lady Macbeth. Jones sounds pretty convincing too.

"Now what do I do?" you ask. Well, you enter "heroic women in Shakespeare" into the search box on the discovery service and look for more opinions. You'll find lots of them, and eventually you'll come up with your own opinion, maybe somewhere between Smith and Jones. That's when you can start writing your paper.

College research is not that difficult: You look at what others have said on a subject, think about it for yourself, and then present your own opinion. The librarian can help you every step of the way.

"Can the librarian help me write the paper?"

Some libraries have writing services, but even if they don't, the librarian can point you to the college's free tutoring service. The point is, the librarian can be your research partner and sometimes even your writing partner.

"How about preparing for exams? Can the librarian help me there?"

Of course. Suppose you're preparing for a test and you run into something you don't understand. You could ask the teacher, but he or she might not be available. Especially during exam weeks, most college libraries are open early and late, and you can even instant message or email the library for help at 10 o'clock at night and sometimes later. Somebody is usually there to help you.

This might sound unexpected, but the librarian can often help you even with personal problems. If you're

sick or you have money problems or an issue with a teacher, ask the librarian. He or she will point you in the right direction to someone who can really work with you.

I can't emphasize enough that librarians are available and would love to help you. If at any point you feel stumped, reach out, stop by, call us, send us a text or an email. Many students hear about the library at orientation but they don't use it. They suffer alone, thinking there's no place to go for help.

But you can always go to the library. Your college library is the center of the campus for a reason—it's the one place you can go that crosses all the boundaries between people.

You can even take a nap there. Go ahead.

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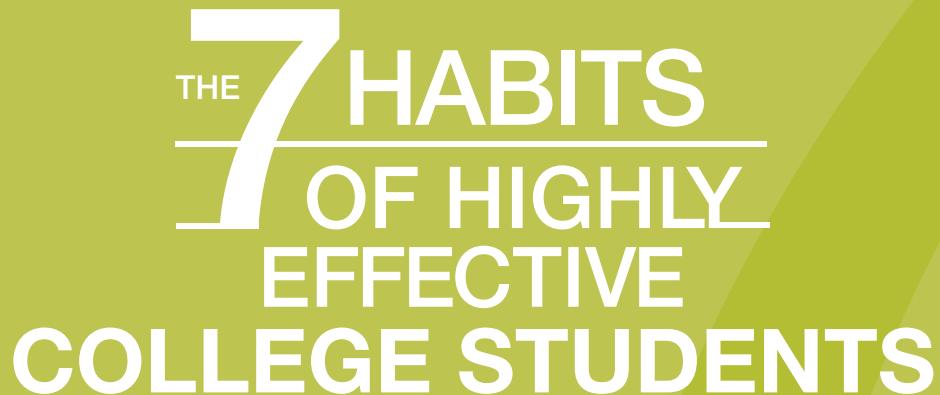
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