The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People

by Stephen R. Covey

Speaker: Welcome to “The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People”, restoring the character ethic. This tape is based on the book of the same title by doctor Stephen R. Covey and on his work as an internationally known human resources consultant.

Dr. Covey: This is a life – changing program, I am not using hyperbolically, I am not trying to exaggerate for effect. It is an absolute guarantee that if you will understand these habits, teach them to other people and learn them will and then apply, live them until they become part of your nature, it will change your life in a very fundamental way for good.

Speaker: Dr. Covey is chairman of his own training firm and of the institute for Principle Centered Leadership in Provo, Utah. He is also the author of “The Spiritual Roots of Human Relations”, “Marriage and Family Insights” and “How to Succeed with People”. In this tape you’ll hear Dr. Covey at one of his seminars. First he’ll explain the basic ideas on which the 7 habits of highly effective people are built. He’ll make you aware of your paradigms, the subjective ways you see and understand the world. And he shall show you that many people need to make a paradigm shift to a new way of thinking based on natural laws that shape human happiness and effectiveness. Then Dr. Covey will explain the 7 habits with clear examples and personal anecdotes. Through this tape you’ll understand that ultimately, what you are, your character and values, communicate more than what you say or do, and you’ll learn specific techniques to help you make the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People work for you.

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People are so basic that they don’t just apply to individuals like you, they also apply to marriages, families, businesses, in fact to private and public organizations of every kind. But before we get into the habits themselves it is important for you to know that this is not a quick – fix program, it is not based on some technique or some instant kind of revolution. To acquire the 7 habits, to internalize them, you have to be willing to do three things with the information in this tape: learn it, teach it and then do it, which means apply it to your life.

Dr. Covey: Work very diligently to understand, learn, in other words, work with your mind to think deeply in sustained ways about this material, to teach it to other people. Surely, after you learn this material, teach it (by “surely” I mean within 24 to 48 hours), you simply will learn better when you teach. All of us have had that experience because your whole sense of responsibility is significantly increased. You know that you’re expected to teach someone else or another group the same material that you’re learning. It also will give you a sense of commitment to the material, simply because you’re making a statement when you teach this material. It socially commits you. And that’s powerful reinforcing to your own motivation, to live the material, to live the principles, to cultivate the habits.

Speaker: One thing that happens when you agree to teach something is that you change your role. You no longer think of yourself as a student, but as a teacher. In your mind you have a different role, a different picture of yourself.

Dr. Covey: If you really want to significantly improve people’s behaviour, change people’s pictures of their roles. I’d like to use a scientific term for a moment to describe what I’m presenting. It’s called “paradigm”. A paradigm is kind of the way you see the world, the way you see the universe, the way you see your role is a paradigm.

Speaker: Now, there’s the chance for you to share a paradigm — shifting experience that Dr. Covey had.
Work with your mind and empathize with this situation and see if you don’t also experience a paradygm shift.

Dr. Covey: It was a Sunday morning in New York. I was on the subway, alone; it was a rather quiet morning. The subway was no more than, perhaps, one third filled, very unlike, I’m sure, the rockous night before. People were just quietly sitting there and some were reading their newspapers, just kind of a pleasant quiet morning. Now, empathize, project your consciousness into the scene. All of a sudden, a man and his children, a large group of children, got into the subway. And they were so loud and so noisy, so rockous, that instantly the whole climate had changed.

The man sat right next to me and did nothing about this whole situation. Everybody was yelling back and forth, throwing things, even grabbing people’s papers. I mean it was very, very disturbing. The man next to me did nothing. You’re sitting next to him and you witness this – disturbing everybody, how irritating, how upsetting. So, I turned to him after a few minutes and said: “Sir, your children are really disturbing a lot of people. I wander if you couldn’t control them a little more.” And he was looking down, kind of lifted his gaze as if to come a consciousness of the situation and said: “Oh, I guess I should. Oh, we just came from the hospital in there. Their mother just died about an hour ago. And I guess I don’t know what to think and I guess I don’t know how and what either”.

Now, do you see that situation differently? I did instantly as you do. Notice, how free, flowing and spontaneous your attitudes of helpfulness and sympathy are. Notice how your behaviour flows from that. I said: “Oh, I’m so sorry. Your wife just passed away. You just let… oh she is so… I don’t know what to think”. He was almost beside himself. “What can I do to help?” See, I wanted to. Look, how your attitude and your behaviour are a function of your paradygm, of how you see the situation. It isn’t what happens to us that affects our behaviour, it’s our interpretation of what happens to us. And if we can learn to get a better paradygm, get it a different level of thinking, we are on the road to significant improvement.

Speaker: Now, that you’re familiar with paradymes and paradyyme shifting let’s define what a habit is. As Dr. Covey has mentioned “The Seven Habits of Highly - Effective People” are based on principles, ideas that seem to make sense to most human beings regardless of social conditioning. So, a habit is a principle you internalize, particularly if it’s a habit of effectiveness.

Dr. Covey: For instance in business. A principle would be to value the customer and to adapt your whole approach in business to the customer. That’s a principle. If I’ve internalized that principle to where I know, how to do that and I want to do it and I know what to do, that’s a habit. So, the habit is the overlapping of knowledge, skill and attitude. Knowledge is what to do, skill is how to do, attitude is why to do or you could say, want to do. See I may know how to treat the customer with value to build the relationship, I may know what I should do but not want to, because I may not feel like I’m treated that way. So, that’ll be a habit. In another case I may know what to do to build my relationship with this teenager who is going through this terrific identity crises and feels alienated from his parents, from the family. I may want to do it, know that to do, but not know how to do it. I don’t have the skill. So, if I lack the skill, it’s not a habit. I might even have certain skill and knowledge, but not want to. A habit is the overlapping of what to do or knowledge, how to do or skill and why to do, want to do or attitude. When they overlap you’ll see a habit.

Speaker: There’s one more word in the title of this tape, which you may be wondering about: “Effective”. Since the 7 habits are habits of effectiveness, let’s define what that word means.

Dr. Covey: What do we mean by effectiveness? It’s the most interesting term. I’d like to give a very simple definition. I call it the P.P.C balance. P stands for production of desired results; PC stands for production capability. To quickly illustrate: You’d like to have a clean house. You’d like your children’s room to be clean, wouldn’t you? That’s the desired result, that’s P, see, production of desired results. P.C. means that your clild is committed to keep that room clean, cheerfully, without being reminded, bored, supervised, controlled, manipulated, threatened, beaten up, carried and sticked. That’s P.C. Now you can get a clean room by doing it yourself. What’s happened to P.C.? What’s happened to the asset, the person, the resource, to clean a room? What’s happened to that person’s motivation, desire, habit, patterns, skill, knowledge and attitude combined into a habit? That’s P.C. That’s production capability. So, I suggest effectiveness is to get the clean room and to have the kind of relationship, atmosphere in the home where people want to do their own job on their own cheerfully.
I am sure all of us, have studied Aesop. Sometime in our life have heard his fables. The one that I like using in teaching the P.P.C. balance is one about this very poor farmer. He’s really down on his luck, down on his spirit and totally impoverished. He comes across this favourite goose and, at the sight of it is a brilliant glistening gold egg. He’s thrilled, but then, he realized, instantly: “Someone’s tricked me, it’s bogus”, so he throws it into the bushes. Then on second thought he says: “Well, what have I lost? And he tests it. He finds out, it’s pure gold. He can’t believe this. This win full of fortune. The next day he finds another one and tests it. Again pure gold. Next day the same thing. On and on, every day he goes back. Soon he becomes fabulously wealthy, becomes also impatient. He didn’t want to go back every day, he wants them all, he wants them now. Out of this greediness he lops off the head of that goose, reaches inside to get them all. Only to find none.

To maintain the PPC balance — the balance between the golden egg, the thing we want and the help and welfare of the goose. Production capability is a difficult judgement call. It’s allusive. But I suggest it is the very essence of effectiveness; it balances short term with long term. It balances going for the grade and paying the price to get an education. It balances the desire to have that room clean and the building of the relationship, so that the child is internally committed to do it, cheerfully, willingly, without external supervision. It balances getting cooperation between those worrying departments and producing the fruits of that cooperation with the cultivating of a culture and an atmosphere that causes the two departments to empathize with each other and understand each other’s concerns and problems and to create new solutions that are better solutions, then either department originally proposed. You can apply this thinking to any field of endeavor you wish. For instance, how many here have ever had the experience of neglecting an appliance and found that it only lasted one season like a loan mower? How many have neglected the car proper maintenance? Proper feeding and caring for the goose, if you see what I mean, and found that the golden eggs started to go down?

Take your finances. Have you ever confused interests and principle? Have you ever invaded principle in order to live better? Used it as income, started to eat away the goose in order to live higher on a hog to have the things you want? Is that effective? Eventually, the goose dies. There’s no more golden eggs.

Speaker: As you listen to more of this tape it will become clear that the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People are not a set of separate or piecemeal techniques. They can move you sequentially, progressively on what Dr Covey calls a continuing of maturing from dependence to independence to interdependence. For example, when you were an infant, you were totally dependent on others to nurture and direct you. Then gradually as you got older you became more and more independent until eventually you could take care of yourself and as you continue to grow and mature you become increasingly aware that all of nature and society is interdependent. In a similar way the 7 Habits continue your growth and maturing along you continue them.

Dr. Covey: Dependence is the attitude of “you”. You take care of me. You come through for me. You didn’t come through. I blame you for these results. The attitude of independency is “I”. I can do it. I will. Self-reliance. Takes self-confidence to be self-reliant. The attitude or word symbol of independency is we. We can do it. We will do it. We’ll cooperate. We’ll accomplish this. Dependent people need others to get what they want. Independent people can get what they want through their own effort. Interdependent people require their own effort and a cooperation of others to get what they want. It doesn’t take much, though, really, to realize how much more mature interdependency is than independency. Think of that we learn in the field of ecology. I just recently read an article on what happens when the rain forests in the south American Continent are depleted, the effect that a has upon weather and upon vegetation and animal life and humankind else here. Many people were speculating about this hole in the Ozone layer, the thinning of it. The bad air, the bad water there can come when people violate ecological principles. Everything is related to everything else like the domino effect. We’re highly interdependent beings. We can only achieve interdependence if we first become independent to a very high degree.

Speaker: So far in this tape we’ve defined the words “habit” and “effective”. But there’s another phrase in the title that may be even more important, restoring the character ethic. If comes from Dr. Covey’s extensive research on so called success literature, published in the United States since 1776, in searching for the keys to successful living he’s looked through thousands books, articles and essays in field such as self-improvement, popular psychology and self-help and he noticed a startling pattern
Now, wait a minute. If I have the power to choose I could choose not to be miserable. I could choose not to buy into that. But the more I thought about it, the more I swallowed that biller pill, I came to realize: I’m the full-time nurse to the most miserable and groanful man you can possibly imagine. And for you to have the goal, the presentiveness to stand up there and to suggest: “I’m responsible that I chose to be miserable”. There’s no way I can buy into that. But the more I thought about it, the more I swallowed that biller pill, I came to realize: Now, wait a minute. If I have the power to choose I could choose not to be miserable. I could choose not to blame your misery on fate or someone else’s behavior. But when people do become proactive it can have dramatic consequences.

Speaker: So, when you’re proactive, you tend not to blame people or circumstances for what happens to you. This is very hard for many people to except emotionally especially if you’ve had years and years of blaming your misery on fate or someone else’s behavior. But when people do become proactive it can have dramatic consequences.

Dr. Covey: One time in Sacramento I was talking on this to a large group of people, when a lady stood up and literally became so excited, she started talking to people then growing very sad back down and talked privately. I could hardly wait for the break to find out what had happened and went to her. She said: “You cannot believe what’s happened to me”. She said: “I’m the full-time nurse to the most miserable and groanful man you can possibly imagine. And for you to have the goal, the presentiveness to stand up there and to suggest: “I’m responsible that I chose to be miserable”. There’s no way I can buy into that. But the more I thought about it, the more I swallowed that biller pill, I came to realize: Now, wait a minute. If I have the power to choose I could choose not to be miserable. I could choose not to blame...
to be miserable I could choose not to be any more controlled by this guy that I’m a full-time nurse to, who’s made my life so miserable, who never even acknowledges me, let alone express appreciation. No longer am I going to, using my language now, empower his witnesses to control me, to mess my life out, and she said: “At that moment I stood up”.

I was led out of ........, I was led out of prison. I wanted to proclaim my liberty, I wanted to proclaim my freedom. Swelling honestly, never knowing anything with more personal vision and excitement and then realization I am able to choose my own response to whatever happens to me.

Speaker: Being proactive is really just being true to your human nature. Your basic nature is to act and not be acted upon. That’s true, despite widely accepted theories of determinism used to explain human nature. Determinism says that you don’t really choose anything that what you call choices are nothing more than automatic responses to outside conditions or stimuli. There are three types of determinism.

Dr. Covey: The first is called genetic determinism. That means - your grandparents did it to you. That’s why you have a sure fuse because your parents had one that they learnt from their parents and decided that you’re Irish; and that’s the nature of Irish people. Yeah, I have a sure fuse. And in my family it seems to go for the generations.

The second is called psychic determinism. That means your parent did it to you. That’s why you’re an.................

You’re not good in the morning, right? Neither were your parents. Or you’re a compulsive punctual. You just literally ............... if you’re late, because you can remember deep inside the emotional script, when you were very vulnerable and tender and dependent, the punishment that came the rejection, the comparison with somebody else when you were late to school or to some appointment or something of this nature. That’s called psychic determinism.

The third is called environmental determinism. That means that it is your boss that’s doing it to you, it’s your spouse, it’s that bratty teenager. That’s what’s messing up your home life. Or it’s the economics if you like. That’s what’s doing it to you. That’s why you’re so unhappy and miserable. Or because of national policy, so the absence of certain programs or whatever.

The language of reactive people, of people, who were determined by their environment or by their conditions or by their conditioning or their genetic makeup is "I can’t do it. That’s my nature. Can’t. Don’t have time." “I have to. I have to, I must’. See, the whole spirit of that language is to transfer responsibility. “I’m not responsible, able to choose my response”. The spirit is “I’m not responsible.” Psychologically, it’s not easier to say that “I am a flake and irresponsible”. The problem is: this is a self of alimprofesy.

People, who believe they are determined, will produce the evidence to support their belief. And they increasingly feel victimized and out of control. They are not in charge of the life, of their destiny at all.

Speaker: When you’re proactive, you don’t deny that genetics, up-bringing and environment make a difference. But you see them as influences only a proactive person exercises free will, the freedom to choose the response that best applies to your values in that way you gain control of your circumstances rather than being controlled by them.

Dr. Covey: One of my favorite books on this subject is called "Men Search for Meaning", written by an Austrian psychiatrist by the name of Victor Frankle. In it he describes his autobiographical experiences in the death camps in Nazi Germany during the World War II, where he was imprisoned as a Jewish political prisoner. It’s hard to describe the depth of pain, torture, indignity that he experienced I read many of his other books to get a deeper understanding of how he developed his theories of logal therapy; logal means meaning. The concept is that if you have a “why” you can live with any “what”, any “how” as long as there is a purpose or meaning some value to be served or actualized. And of the highest value is how you deal with suffering with difficult circumstances, that’s where your greatest influence with others is. Frankie one day put on the white lights, stripped naked all, he began to perform these ignorable sterilization experiment upon his body, discovered what he called the last ultimate freedom: he had a personal vision of his proactive nature. I’m using my words, not his. But he called “the last ultimate freedom could not be taken from me”. They could hurt my body, but they could not hurtme, who lives in this body. And to a series of disciplines – mental, emotional, moral, principally using memorial imagination he exercises small embryonic freedom until it grew larger and larger until he had more freedom than his captors. They had more liberty than he. Liberty as a condition of the
environment. Freedom is a condition of a person.
Liberty means you have many options to choose among in the environment freedom means you have the internal power to exercise these options that’s what it means to be proactive. That’s what it means to be in charge of your life, to emotionally accept this. This is very hard doctrine and particularly you’ve had years and years of explanation as to why you are unhappy and miserable in the name of somebody else or something else. You have to swallow the better pill, but once you’ve swallowed it, it is completely liberating, exciting, at a level you’ve never tasted before.

Speaker: Of course, you don’t have to go through an extreme experience like Victor Frankle to recognize and develop your own proactivity. You do it in ordinary everyday events like how you make and keep commitments, how you handle a traffic jam, how you respond to an irate customer or how you handle a disobedient child. And you do it in how you view your problems, where you focus your energies and what language you use. Remember you are responsible for your own effectiveness and your own happiness. And that responsibility is fundamental to all of the other habits we will discuss.

Habit number two. Begin with the end in mind. That literally means to begin today with an image or picture of the end of your life, as your frame of reference, as the criteria by which you examine everything else in your life if you like to see what that’s like, try this visualization exercise right now.

Dr Covey: I want you to think on this for a moment and get yourself into the frame of mind of attending a funeral of a dear one. In your mind’s eye see yourself driving to that funeral, arriving, spin held at a church, getting yourself situated in a back seat. And you come to a growing awareness that it is your funeral. That it is you in that casket, three years from now. There are four speakers. The place is packed. And there’s a great feeling of love, appreciation and rezoneting value of this person, your life. The four speakers are these: one from your family, not just your nuclear family, but, aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents have come from all around the country to attend; one from your friends that give a sense of what you were as a person, as a friend; one from your work, your profession or outside activity; and one from your church or some community organization where you’ve been involved in giving service.

Now, think, who would you like to have said three years from now, about you? As a member of an inner generational extended family, as a friend, as a working associate or a public servant? Who would you like to have said about your character, about your contributions and about your achievements? Think carefully on those roles and write the unities.

Speaker: If you’d like to seriously consider your answers to the questions Dr. Covey has asked turn off the tape for a few minutes and think about them. If you participated seriously in this exercise you touched for a moment some of your deep fundamental values. You may have even found your definition of success, and maybe it’s very different from the definition you thought you had in mind. This habit “to begin with the end in mind” means to start with a clear understanding of your destination and it’s based on the principle that all things are created twice.

Dr Covey: There are always two creations. The physical creation follows the mental creation. Take the building of the house that you’re in now. It was created in every detail before the earth was touched. Right or wrong? If wrong, you’ve got some pretty expensive change orders in its structure that might have significantly increased the cost of it, even double the cost of it. The carpenters rule. Oh, it’s true. Measure twice cut once. So, what’s habit two? Simply, begin with the end in mind. Decide what your own value system is. Write your own philosophy, your own mission statement, your own creed, your belief system and get it written into your mind and into your heart through the use of imagination and your emotion. Don’t tie yourself to your history. Tie yourself to your potential. And if you learn to imagine vividly enough and also to try heavily upon the inner sense or conscience of that is right or wrong, you come to detect the most fundamental principles that pertain to your life and you can distill them in a form of a mission statement or a value system, or a purpose statement, whatever you wish to call it. This is the essence of habit two.

Speaker: You might call habit two “the Leadership Habit” as you’ll hear in a next part of the tape, habit three is called the management habit”. Before we go on, let’s define what we mean by leadership and management.

Dr Covey: Leadership deals with direction management deals with speed coordination, logistics in going in that direction. Have you ever claimed the ladder success and got to the top wrong and realized it was
reclining against the wrong wall? If you want a clear understanding of the difference between management and leadership imagine the scene: someone going through the jungle with a machete cutting the undergrowth clearing it up. There are the producers down there, see, the workers. Here all the managers are, back here shuffling the machetes for them, putting on muscle development classed for machete wilders, setting up working schedules for machete wilders, handling jurisdictional disputes between machete wilders. The leader climbs the tallest tree in the jungle, surveys the entire scene, studies the larger picture and screams out “Wrong jungle” and all the managers shout back: Shut up we are making progress.

We manage things, we lead people. However management also is important after we have decided what the right things are to do, we want to do them right. We must focus on Efficiency, we must focus on the bottom – line. But habit two focuses on leadership, on the top-line, what is it worth fundamentally about.

Speaker: To make this point clearer, here’s a example of the difference between leadership and management. It comes from Dr. Covey’s extensive experience as a consultant to corporations.

Dr Covey: I remember talking on this one time up in Seattle at one of our year – long executive development programs, and I talked on this second time on the twelfth time, the twelfth month. The president of an oil company came up to me and said: “Stephen, when you pointed out the difference between leadership and management on the second month, I looked at myself as the president of this company and realized “I’ve never done habit two really. I’ve never been into leadership. I’m deep into management. I’m buried by the details of day-to-day logistical management, or, as one person puts it, “the thick of thin things”. So I decided to withdraw from management, get other people to do that which is a necessary function and get deep into leadership. It was so hard I went through such windrow pains because I was taking the longer view, not dealing with a lot of the pressing urgent matters right in front of me. I didn’t receive the satisfaction of those small accomplishments, all I dealt with was the direction issues the culture building issues, the deep analysis of problems, the seizing of new opportunity issues. Others also went through withdraw pains because they wanted my accessibility as I had been before. They wanted me to be available to them, to respond and to solve them on a day to day basic. They wanted me in the management, but I persisted. I was absolutely convinced — I needed to revive leadership and I did. Today this was about 11 months after the experience, the learning experience. He said: “Our whole business is different. We are more in a line with our environment. We have doubled ourselves and quadrupled our profits. I am into Leadership.

Speaker: As doctor Covey mentioned before, the key to habit number two is developing and writing down a mission statement, a statement of what you want from your life and the values and principles on which you base your life. It can be invaluable, too, for corporations, but it’s also important for individuals or families, or groups of any kind.

Dr Covey: Recently our family reworked our mission statement as a family to reflect kind of the situation as it is now and to improve it, to straighten it and it was a meaningful experience, in fact, we are still in the process. I’m convinced you should not do it rapidly. I encourage businesses to, at least, take six months to a year, maybe two years, to write a mission statement, because the key is to have it written in people’s hearts and minds and unless they’re significantly involved, it will not take place. The key to commitment is involvement. No involvement — no commitment. Write it down, mark an asterisk, circle it. It’s an absolute crack principle. I don’t have to get involvement of front.

Sometimes you hire new people. How do you involve them? Deep education. Train them. What does it mean to serve the customer this way? Why is it we have this?

Train them before you bring them on board so that they buy a mission statement before they come on board. Then, a mission statement is used as the criteria or the frame of reference by which all of the decisions are made; how we relate to the customer how we relate to each other, so that affect the style of the managers and the leaders. That affects what is rewarded in the compensation system. It affects the kind of people you recruit, attract, how you train and develop them. That is what habit two is. It’s the determination of developing a center, to get centered around a set of principles, values and purposes that trains them day to day.

Speaker: Habit three, the management habit, is “Put first things first”. This habit deals with many of the questions addressed in the field of time management. The real challenge is not actually to manage time,
but to manage yourself, to gain control of time and events in your life by seeing how they relate to your mission. Two dimensions — importance and urgency create categories of time demands.

Dr Covey: Let’s us define these terms. Important means it attaches to habit two, you mission, your roles and goals. That’s what’s important. It’s habit two. You’ve decided what’s important, you’ve decided the wall to lean your ladder against, you’ve decided the direction. That’s important. Now, what’s urgent? Urgent is that which is pressing upon you, that which gives a sense of urgency. You must act upon it like a ringing phone that phone which is ringing may just be a total waste of your time. It’s not attached to your missions, your roles and goals at all but it wants to be answered and you can get easily side. Tracked and go into management of the wrong things in the right way.

Speaker: “Putting first things first” habit three helps you focus your priorities it helps you pay attention to how you spend your time, as you act on your priorities day in, day out, moment by moment. Dr. Covey has come up with four divisions of time. That are all combinations of the two words he’s just defined importance and urgency. To help you visualize these divisions take a moment now to draw a square on a piece of paper. Then make a cross within the square, dividing it into four smaller squares what you’ve just drawn is a time management metrics and the four squares are called quadrants. Label the four quadrants this way: label quadrant one “urgent and important”, quadrant two “no urgent, but important”, quadrant three “urgent and not important”, and quadrant four “not urgent and not important”. Now you can refer to the box you’ve drawn as Dr. Covey talks about the metrics.

Dr Covey: Quadrant one is “important” and also “urgent” We usually call those “problems”, “crisis”, and they need to be attended to or you don’t survive. If you got an important meeting come up, that would be quadrant one, because if you don’t attend that meeting you’re going to have a major problem. What’s quadrant two? It’s important, but not urgent. That means it attaches to your mission, your roles and goals, but there isn’t a sense of “now” about it.

What’s quadrant three? It’s urgent, but not important. It’s pressing, it’s proximate, it’s in front of you, it’s that ringing phone, it’s that unanswered mail. It’s all of those other distracting things that are important to other people. Maybe, but you don’t really attach it to your overall mission, or the organization overall mission.

What’s quadrant four? It’s a combination of being “not urgent” and “not important”, - a lot of time wasting, pleasant things, extensive Monday morning quarter backing, extensive television, unnecessary meetings, unprepared meetings, interruptions that can just consume the entire day where you are very busy all day long and at the end of the day feel like I accomplished nothing”.

Now, what I’d like to ask you to do if you would is to think of one activity in your life, one activity that if you did superbly well and consistently that you’re absolutely convinced it would produce marvelous results, the kinds of results you desire. Think of one activity. Think of one in your personal life. And then think of one in your work life, your public life, O.K? Just think for a moment. For instance, someone might say “If I were to spend deeper one on one time with my key-associates at work and with my loved ones at home, I’m convinced that those kinds of deposits would make a big difference on the kind of results I want.

All right. Now, what quadrant is the thing you wrote in. There’s only one quadrant it’s two. Notice the question: “One activity you know if you did it superbly well and consistently that it would have marvelous results. Already you said “it’s important”, and you’re also saying “it’s not urgent”. Will you be doing it? See you do it superbly will and consistently. See quadrant two.

Speaker: As we continue through the 7 habits of highly effective people you’ll find that everyone of them is in quadrant two. “Important but not urgent”. And in business Dr. Covey has found that quadrant two is the key to management.

Dr Covey: Platon the great Italian philosopher in the field of efficiency came up with what’s called the 80-20 role 80% of the results flow from 20% of the activities. There are the role quadrant two activities all of them. What do you think happens to quadrant one if you neglect quadrant two. If you neglect prevention what’s gonna happen to problems? It’s gonna grow and grow until there’s almost no other quadrants. It may consume your life. That’s called “management by crisis” and management by crisis just beats you up, burns you out, fatigues you, gets very-very large.

What’s gonna happen to quadrant one, if you attend to quadrant two? Jets smaller and smaller. You still have some other things you hadn’t anticipated at all. Constant changes in our environment will
create some of that, but it'll be manageable, it’ll be workable, but you always have a sense that you’re working on prevention and seizing new opportunities. Now, where’re you gonna get the time and attention to get in quadrant two? That has to come from free and four. Quadrant four is a totally worthless quadrant. Can you name one thing of any value or worth in quadrant four? Leisure. Is leisure important? Yes, then it’s quadrant two. There’s nothing of worth or value in quadrant four. Quadrant three also is essentially without value except on the part of other people. So, basically you get your time for quadrant two from three and four. Just keep doing it. Just keep steaming a little of quadrant three and quadrant four. Lean to say “no”, pleasantly, smilingly, happily but say “no” because in saying “no” to quadrant three and four you’re saying “yes” to quadrant two. When you say “yes” to quadrant two, you make quadrant one increasingly small. Then you’re working on things that matter most, not on things which matter least. Things which matter most must never be at the mercy of things which matter least. However the problem is it takes certain capacities to work on quadrant two. What’s the fundamental capacity? We’ve already talked about it. What is it? You have to be proactive. Why? Quadrant one works on you, quadrant one acts on you; quadrant two must be acted upon. We are made in our essential humanity, to act not be acted upon. That is quadrant two. All deep relationship-building - quadrant two; planning and organizing - quadrant two; personal preparation – quadrant two, exercise - quadrant two; reading, broad deep reading, continual education - quadrant two. Quadrant two is the key.

Dr. Covey: Now, I want to show what happens when people cultivate those three habits. It produces an internal source of personal security. It produces a sense of self-reliance, of independence, and you don’t get your sense of worth from being compared with other people. You see most people have derived their sense of value and worth from such comparisons. In the world of the normal distribution curb, in the social world – if you belong because you conform to certain norms and expectation, in the athletic world – you’re number one. You’re number one or you’re not – you’re number two. Most of people’s experiences have given them a sense their worth is based on the people’s opinions, comes from an external or an extrinsic source. If love is given unconditionally in the first few years of children’s lives, it gives them an inner sense of security that will last for the rest of their life. If it is given very conditionally they begin to define themselves in relation to other people with whom they’ve been compared. Now, if they want to exercise their proactive capacities and write new scripts this is if they’re giving themselves a new childhood. Otherwise those scripts will direct them, guide them and haunt them for the rest of their life. The child is farther to the man - psychic determinism teaches. It is a lie, but for people who believe it it’s true. When you move on to a totally different path, a different road, as Robert Frost wrote in his poem “The road less troubled,” I took the one less troubled. Two paths - the words I took the path less troubled. That made all of the difference. I’m talking about the totally different path. It’s habits one, two and three. It’s building your security on your integrity to your value system. That’s what it is. That’s character. Now, what happens? Do you want to see the immediate fruit? You don’t compare yourself with others. It produces what I call “the abundance mentality”, but the people have been deeply scripted into comparison for their sense of personal worth. They develop a scarcity mentality. There’s only so much, see, only, so many people can be “A-students”, only one person can be number one. Then, they immediately begin to compare themselves with other people. Those individuals have a hard time being happy for the successes of others, particularly of those others are right around them, even members of their own family. They may experience a marvelous success, you know, they might say to those: “I’m so happy for you, that’s wonderful…...”, but it’s eating their heart out.

Secretely they even harbor hopes that people can experience misfortunes. Those are the fruits of the scarcity mentality.

Speaker: So, habits one, two and three help you build a deep base of character and personal security.
Once these three habits become part of who you are you’re then ready to begin building rich, enduring highly productive relationships with other people and that’s where habits four, five and six came in. These are the habits that lead to interdependent relationships.

Before we look at each habit individually, let’s see how they connect. Habit four — “Think: win - win” — is the attitude of seeking solutions, so that everyone can win. How do you do that? You communicate. That’s habit five — “Seek first to understand, then, to be understood.” Habit six is the habit of creative cooperation. It’s called “energize”. Energize happens when two sides in a dispute work together to come up with a solution better than either side first proposed. Now Dr. Covey is going to talk about habits four, five and six together, and, then will go in to each one more specifically.

Dr Covey: Let’s say that I’m communicating with a key-person in my life, it may be my boss, it may be a key subordinate in a work setting, it may be my spouse or child in a home setting, it may be a neighbor. We’re talking about an issue that is important to us, even jugular and we are approaching it differently, we see it differently. Watch the three habits — four, five and six. First “think, win-win”. Say to the person something like this: “What if we agree to communicate until we can find a solution we both feel good about? Would you be willing to do that? In almost all cases people will say “yes” to you. Now watch habit five. Let me listen to you first; most people do the very opposite. They want first to be understood. And then both parties want to be understood simultaneously that is called “the collective monologue”, “the dialogue of the death”. They are not really listening. They are either speaking or preparing their speech. So the fifth habit is “communicate first by listening, then expressing”.

Now, what’s habit six? That’s where you’re very creative and you think through new and better ways, new and better solutions. For instance, let’s say that I want to go on a vacation out into the lake country, and you want to go on a vacation closer to you ailing mother. That’s important to you. The other is important to me I’ve looked forward to it. I’m a fisherman at heart. The boys are excited about it, but your mother is ailing and you don’t have an opportunity to see her very much and that’s important to you. Now, I’m deep into a therapeutarianism I might say: I don’t really care what you think that much. When I want your opinion I’ll give it to you. We’re going fishing” or I’ll beat it out of you. Or I’m into. I might say: Well, have your ways with me. It’s the way it always is. I always lose”. “In the former case I mean “to win – lose” in the latter case I mean “to lose - win”. Or we could apply habit four, five and six as soon as we have an abundance mentality and enough internal security to carry on this communication and say, “Let’s agree to communicate until we can find a solution we both feel good about. Would you be willing?” – “All right, let’s do it” – “ Let me listen to you first. I understand that visiting with your mother is so important because you haven’t seen her for their and here’s your situation, and you could relieve your sister who’s been taking care of her, and you keep expressing till the other person feels deeply understood”. But you know what we’ve been doing with these boys, and how much time and effort we’ve been giving into these lessons? And they want to get into this fly fishing and it’s just a perfect situation”. And then I’m understood, I am empathized, too and the spirit of mutual understanding creates such an affirmation, such a respect for each other. Where can I go for “win – lose” or “lose-win”? Now on we’re gonna keep compromise. We create new options, new alternatives in our minds. We find a lake near the mother. Maybe it’s not as good as the lake we had prepared, but I feel much better about it because I respect my wife and I love her her mother and want to attend to that important need in a way that would also meet my boys’ need to have an expression their fishing opportunity. It’s a “win- win” solution. Is it compromised? No. It’s a better solution. Some might say: “It’s compromised. You really wanted to go to this lake. You’re compromising’. Not so. I really don’t, because I care about my wife and I care about her mother. Neither is it a compromise to her. She doesn’t want to see those boys just climbing walls, or she tends her mother takes care of her, has some good family visits. She’d like to see those boys involved in doing the thing they’d been preparing to do. So, they go for a “win-win” solution.

How this little story could be amplified in any conceivable situation, my friends? Seriously, I am convinced that almost without an exception, if people practise four, five and six, they can take almost any difference and produce a third alternative better than either the other two. I’ve done it too many times in negotiating proceedings, in team building, in legal battles, in warfares, even with marriages that are broken. Get deep into habit four, five and six, listening, communicating with respect. Then, use your creative capacities to produce options or alternatives that would have “win-win” benefits in them. It
Dr Covey: The deepest hunger the human soul is to be understood. Once a person feels understood, many people say: It’s like that look for solutions that allow everyone to win. It’s an idea that appeals to many people especially in the business world. But you may be wondering: Is it really realistic?

Dr Covey: Many people say: “Well, you know Stephen, I like this “win-win” idea”. In fact I had a man say that to me, use the present large chain story who’s said: “Stephen, I like the “win-win” idea, but it is idealistic. I bet a lot of you love a feeling like that. Tough competitor in the business world doesn’t quite like that”. He said that. I said: “Really? Try going for “win-lose” if you’re a customer. Is that realistic? He said: “Well, no”. “Why not?” I lose my customer and go for “lose-win” with the customer, give away the store. Is that realistic? – “No. No margin, no mission. The only one, the only one that is realistic is “win-win”. He said: “I’d better tie it to my experience. That’s true with customers, but not suppliers.” I said “Oh, you are the customer of the supplier. Why doesn’t the same principle hold? Well, right now, he said: “In the middle of re-negotiating our least arrangements of the mall operations and owners. You as a consultant counsel this to go for “win-win”. We did. We’re open, reasonable, conciliatory, have a “win-win” attitude. They see our attitude as weakness and softness and they took us to the cleaner’s. Minutely I shot back: Why did you go for “lose-win”? – “We didn’t. We went for “win-win” – I thought you said they took you to the cleaner’s”. – They did.” – In other words, you lost” – Yeah.” – And they won/” – That’s right. What’s that called? What he thought was “win-win” was really what? Lose – win”, being nice, being nice guy, nice guys finish last. “Win, win is much tougher than win – lose for more rigorous that authoritarian behavior. Why? Because you have to not only be nice, you have to be courageous, you not only have to be empathic, you have to be confident, you not only have to be considerate and sensitive you have to be brave. It’s the balance between courage and consideration, the balance between self-respect and respect for others. That is the essence of the fruit of habits one, two and three which enable you to practice the fruits of habits four, five and six. I hope, you’re beginning to sense the sequential nature of how these habits are organized and are inwardly becoming persuaded that you need to do the character work before you work on techniques on personality. You simply cannot harvest the crop if you have not planted in the spring, watered, weeded and cultivated during the summer. There is no quick fix when you emotionally accept that you stop looking for them and if you have a strong sense of mission and sense of values you go to work.

Speaker: As good as “win-win” sounds you still may be wandering: “What do I do when it appears as if I can’t work out a “win-win” deal?” Well, there is an alternative to “win-win” that may even be superior. The alternative is called “win-win” or no deal”.

Dr Covey: Sometimes, you go for “no deal”. We agree to disagree agreeably I’ll tell you the marvelous thing about the “no deal” option. You stop manipulating. Let’s say you want something very bad in your business or in your family life. You want it real bad, o.k.? And it involves other people’s cooperation. Just try it, say to them: “If we cannot work out this “win-win” deal. Let’s agree to disagree agreeably. Let’s go for “no deal”. That’s better. They don’t have to have hidden agendas, I don’t have to manipulate you. I can be very open. I can try to understand the deeper issues underlining your positions. I don’t have to get into positional bargaining where we fight from each other’s positions and we’re each talking to our own constituencies. We’re going to avoid that whole scenario.

Speaker: Remember, “win-win” is not a personality technique. It’s a total paradigm of human interaction. It comes from having a character of integrity and maturity and from having the “abundance mentality” the belief that there’s enough to “go around” for everyone, and you achieve it through a process begun in habit four that continues in habits five and six.

Habit number five summarizes in one sentence, the single most important principle Dr. Covey has learned in the field of interpersonal relations: “Seek, first, to understand; then, to be understood”. If you want to interact effectively with someone, to influence them whether your spouse, your child, your neighbor, your boss, your co-worker, your friend, you first need to understand them, and for many people “seeking, first, to understand” involves a very deep paradigm shift, because what most of us want is to be understood and that means we don’t know how to listen.

Dr Covey: The deepest hunger the human soul is to be understood. Once a person feels understood,
they relax, defenses are lowered, they become open. That’s why habit five is the key. You’ve got to get deep into their head, empathic, where you understand how they see it, how they feel about it. And they feel that you do. That’s habit five. That takes energy, tremendous energy. So much harder to listen in that kind of depth without kind of empathy than it is to speak. See, the natural tendency in most people is to prescribe out of their own autobiographies: “Let me tell you about my experience, let me tell you how I pulled myself out of that”. I had one father say to me “You know I can’t understand my kid. He won’t listen to me at all”. – “Now, let me state what I heard you saying. You don’t understand your boy because he won’t listen to you” – “That’s right”. – “Let me restate it again. You don’t understand your son, because he won’t listen to you”, - “That’s right. What’s your point, Stephen?” “What I thought, to understand another you needed to listen to him”. – “Oh, yeah, well, I already understand him. I mean, I’ve gone through I could tell you the things”. Now that’s your other biography. Do you listen from within the frame of reference of another? That takes not only skill, but emotional strength which comes out of habits one, two and three. That’s why most people cannot listen in depth. What are you risking if you deeply listen to another? You might be changed and unless there’s a changeless core about you, that is your integrity to your own changeless value system. You can afford that risk. You don’t know what is going to happen people lie as if they don’t care about other people’s opinions. “Care too much, what other people think.” That’s why they’re defending themselves against listening. Why? They’re too vulnerable. They could be wiped out”. What if they didn’t like me where am I going to hide then? What would I do then? The real strength of the ability to practice habit five comes out of the first three habits.

Speaker: So, “listening in depth” or “empathic listening” can feel risky. That’s why habits one, two and three came first in this tape: “Be proactive”, “Begin with the end in mind”, “Put first things first”. They are your foundation. They give you a changeless inter core, a principle centre from which you can handle the more outward vulnerability with peace and strength. Dr Covey has tough many people the skill of “empathic listening” and seen dramatic results.

Dr Covey: I was back in Chicago and it was a two-day seminar on the 5th habits I said: “Practices at night”. One guy came in the next morning and said: “Let me tell you what happened last night I was in a hotel room. We were trying to sign this real estate deal, the big institution real estate deal, and the participants, the principles were there, their attorneys were there and for the first time another real estate guy was there and it looked as if I was going to lose the deal. And I’ve been working on this now for many months, all six months. I’ve had no other income. In a sense, all of my eggs were in this one bushel, all of them in this one basket. And didn’t know how I was paniced and I did everything I could to pull out the stops to use every technique I could. Then I said to myself: “I am not to lose this deal. Why not practice what I learn today: seek first to understand, then, to be understood”. So I stopped all of my techniques and manipulations and just said to the man: “Let me see if I can understand what your position is, fully, until you feel like I understand it and then we’ll see whether my proposal has any relevance or not”. And he said to the man: “I really want to understand. I sense your concerns are these”. And the man opened up a little. Furthermore, I sense that you worry about these, and if you don’t go in this direction, these kinds of things will result. Do I understand? More was opened up, more empathy expressed until that person in the middle of our conversation said: “Excuse me a minute”, stood up, walked to the other side of the room, picked up a phone, called his wife, turned around and with his hand over the mouth piece, said : “You’ve got the deal”. He said: “I was totally confounded”. I had no idea what had happened. I explained the dynamic is that if you meet the human need to be understood, you’re also meeting the need to be appreciated and people feel………. they feel affirmed as a human being. And when he came right down to it those human deposits were more important than the technical dimensions to the deal. And he became aware the kind of the investment, the effort, the energy you put into it over a long period of time and it went in your favour, even though technically it might have been better the other way. Seriously it is an absolute miracle principle, the 5 th habit we have full all day seminars. I’ve done on them every one of these 7 habits all day on each one. The one most requested over all the years is the 5 th habit because it’s so powerful.

Speaker: Habit number six – synergize – is the habit of creative cooperation. As Dr. Covey has already explained, synergy happens when two people in a dispute use their creative capacities to come up with a solution better than either person came up with alone, and as you can probably see now synergy is
built directly on habit four "Think: win-win" and on habit five "Seek, first, to understand; and then, to be understood" in which you listen and communicate with respect for the other person. And one more thing worth repeating about synergy – it’s not the same as compromise.

Dr Covey: Compromise means "one plus one equals one and a half". Synergy means: one plus one equals three, four and five. Most industrial disputes end up in compromise, most legal suits end up on the court-house steps. It’s better than continuing the fight, obviously, because "win-lose" against - "win-lose" produces "lose-lose" and sometimes it’s the only realistic thing you can go for, and you might, if you want to, call it a synergistic compromise, but the real essence of synergy is, at the whole, greater than the sum of its parts. As one put it: “I want that window closed”. – “I want it open”. – “Closed!” – “Open!” – “Closed!” – “Open!”

Look at the ego battle around that issue. People can invest their ego into their position, see. The key is to practice habits, four, five and six. Why don’t we communicate to get the final solution, we both feel good about. Habit five. Let me listen to you, first. Why is it you want that window closed? – “Well the draft blows my papers about? Then to be understood: “Why is it you want it open?” – “I like the fresh air. I get a kind of claustrophobic feeling without it habit six "synergize": What can we do to give the fresh air without the draft?" We pulled open the windows in the next room. It’s a better solution it’s not a compromise solution. I think it’s better even if I wanted that window open because I care about you and a human relationship is certainly as important, if not more important, than the physical environment however, if you’re into an ………. bank account or where you don’t particularly care, then you are hung up on your position’s and you might call such a final conclusion a compromise. It all depends on that emotional bank account.

Speaker: The key point of habit six "synergize" is that when people communicate with respect and creativity, they learn, gain insight, and can then produce solutions to problems and issues better than any originally proposed in a way synergy is the crowning achievement of all of the previous habits and it works whether in a family or an organization.

The final habit number seven is the habit of self-renewal, it’s the self-maintenance habit it’s the habit that if you do it right, and do it completely, and do it regularly, you will automatically develop the other six. It’s called sharpening the saw. And there’s a little story to illustrate why.

Dr Covey: Just invision in your mind coming across someone who is sawing down a tree. Really and vigorously. And you come up and you say: “What have you been doing?” – “Can’t you see, I’m sawing.” – “I know, but how long? – “Oh, I don’t know I’ve been at this for hours: -“I bet you’re tired. Oh, I can’t believe why don’t you sharpen the saw?” - “Too busy sawing, damn, damn”. That’s the 7 th habits. Take time to sharpen the saw. Sharpen the saw regularly even if you’re too busy driving to take time to get gas.

Speaker: So, “sharpening the saw” is preserving and enhancing the greatest asset you have – you, its continual daily self-renewal of the four dimensions of your nature your physical self, your mental self, your spiritual self, and your social, emotional self.

Dr Covey: To sharpen the saw means, basically, to exercises all four dimensions. And they organize your life so that you have time in quadrant two to do that. One hour a day – minimum. Well, I believe, maintain these other six habits. To really get good of these six habits it takes more than that. What does this involve? Physical exercise the best kind is stretching and aerobics and a little muscle toning kind of a combination of the three. Aerobics is the kind of exercise that deals with the cardiovascular system, the respiratory system which enlarges the capacity of the body to process oxygen. And that’s the key to energy – oxygen as well as interest. Stretching should proceed or follow briefly aerobics. Muscle toning like calisthenics or weights, or things of this nature are also helpful. And if people can cultivate a habit of at least, 30 minutes every other day, they can maintain. To really enlarge the capacity of the body to work they may have to do just a little more. But if they do even half an hour their body becomes more efficient their heart muscle stronger. More oxygen is pumped to the body. And they have more vitality, more energy inside. So, I recommend you to make your mind up if you do not know how to have a good exercise program to start one: a little stretching. Then, go on a vigorous walk, or a jog, or a bike, or a swim, but a good vigorous walk for, say, twenty minutes and then a little stretching at the end and a few calisthenics and you’ve got a minimum physical exercise program. What if you only spend three hours in a week, of a week that’s made up of a 168 hours. If that disproportionate with the only instrument
you’ve got? I think it’s better to try to give about an hour a day every other day. But at least give half an hour every others day or four days a week.

With regard to spiritual exercise that involves habit number two. That’s where you renew your commitment to your well—developed value system. You do it in a way that is congruent with your own philosophy. It’s done differently. Some people read important literature, even sacred literature. Other people meditate, pray, think deeply about key fundamental issues. This kind of, we could say, spiritual activity is providing leadership, habit two. Then, the mental planning and doing in staying with that leadership is habit three. So, you visualize and plan your roles and goals for that week and then review it for each day, to make sure that your life is in harmony with your mission and your overall long-term roles and goals. That’s the mental habit, the mental creation habit two and three. The spiritual creation is habit two. The mental creation is part of habit two, cause you’re still planning and thinking but it’s also having the mental toughness to stay with it in habit three. When perhaps there’re distractions and temptation that would lead you to capitulate and give in to lesser important items, items of low priority. The social—emotional “sharpening the saw” embrace habits four, five and six, so that you say to yourself: I’m going on a process relationship with the “win-win” attitude I need to seek, first, to understand, then, I also want to be understood, but I will not seek to be understood until the other feels like I understand. And then I’m getting to creative problem solving with that person: synergize to see if we can come up with better solutions than what originally we proposed to each other, come up with a better psychological agreement. Those are the four basic dimensions of the human personality that basically express and develop all of the other habits if that’s well done, in a balanced and regular way, it would do exactly that. One story and a final quote to conclude.

It was a dark and stormy night. The officer on a bridge came to the captain and said: “Captain, captain, there’s a light in our ceiling. And they won’t move”. What do you mean “they won’t move”? Tell ’em to move! Tell ’em “Starboard” right now!” The signal is sent out: “Starboard! Starboard!” The signal comes back: “Starboard yourself!” “I can’t believe this! What is going on here? Let ’em know who I am!” The signal sent out: “This is the mighty Massery Starboard!” The signal comes back: “This is the light house”. My friends, correct principles are light houses. They do not move. They are natural laws. We cannot break them; we can only break ourselves against the them, utilize them and be grateful for them. Then, it enlarges us and emancipates us and empowers us. T.S. Elliot once said something, something. I think, is appropriate, as we come to the conclusion of our visit together. He said: “We shall never cease from striving, and at he end of all our striving we’ll be to arrive where we began and to know the place for the first time. I suggest all we have covered we inwardly already know as they’re self-evident principles. Perhaps, not yet habits. We already know them. But what is common sense is not common practice. Let’s learn them, re—learn them, listen over and over again until it becomes part of the software of our heads, then teach other people, socially commit and then begin to live them and we ourselves will become light houses for other people’s life. Thank you. Everyone.

**Speaker:** You’ve been listening to a presentation by Dr. Stephen R Covey, author of *the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People Restoring the Character Ethic*, another in a series of sound ideas from Simon and Tudson.