

The 7 habits of highly effective people®

Dr Stephen Covey's inspirational book - 7 Habits Of Highly Effective People®

Dr Stephen Covey is a hugely influential management guru, whose book *The Seven Habits Of Highly Effective People*, became a blueprint for personal development when it was published in 1990. The Seven Habits are said by some to be easy to understand but not as easy to apply. Don't let the challenge daunt you: The 'Seven Habits' are a remarkable set of inspirational and aspirational standards for anyone who seeks to live a full, purposeful and good life, and are applicable today more than ever, as the business world becomes more attuned to humanist concepts. Covey's values are full of integrity and humanity, and contrast strongly with the process-based ideologies that characterised management thinking in earlier times.

Stephen Covey, as well as being a renowned writer, speaker, academic and humanist, has also built a huge training and consultancy products and services business - [Franklin Covey](#) which has a global reach, and has at one time or another consulted with and provided training services to most of the world's leading corporations.

Stephen Covey's Seven Habits of Highly Effective People®

habit 1 - be proactive®

This is the ability to control one's environment, rather than have it control you, as is so often the case. Self determination, choice, and the power to decide response to stimulus, conditions and circumstances

habit 2 - begin with the end in mind®

Covey calls this the habit of personal leadership - leading oneself that is, towards what you consider your aims. By developing the habit of concentrating on relevant activities you will build a platform to avoid distractions and become more productive and successful.

habit 3 - put first things first®

Covey calls this the habit of personal management. This is about organising and implementing activities in line with the aims established in habit 2. Covey says that habit 2 is the first, or mental creation; habit 3 is the second, or physical creation. (See the section on [time management](#).)

habit 4 - think win-win®

Covey calls this the habit of interpersonal leadership, necessary because achievements are largely dependent on co-operative efforts with others. He says that win-win is based on the assumption that there is plenty for everyone, and that success follows a co-operative approach more naturally than the confrontation of win-or-lose.

habit 5 - seek first to understand and then to be understood®

One of the great maxims of the modern age. This is Covey's habit of communication, and it's extremely powerful. Covey helps to explain this in his simple analogy 'diagnose before you prescribe'. Simple and effective, and essential for developing and maintaining positive relationships in all aspects of life. (See the associated sections on [Empathy](#), [Transactional Analysis](#), and the [Johari Window](#).)

habit 6 - synergize®

Covey says this is the habit of creative co-operation - the principle that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, which implicitly lays down the challenge to see the good and potential in the other person's contribution.

habit 7 - sharpen the saw®

This is the habit of self renewal, says Covey, and it necessarily surrounds all the other habits, enabling and encouraging them to happen and grow. Covey interprets the self into four parts: the spiritual, mental, physical and the social/emotional, which all need feeding and developing.

Stephen Covey's Seven Habits are a simple set of rules for life - inter-related and synergistic, and yet each one powerful and worthy of adopting and following in its own right. For many people, reading Covey's work, or listening to him speak, literally changes their lives. This is powerful stuff indeed and highly recommended.

This 7 Habits summary is just a brief overview - the full work is fascinating, comprehensive, and thoroughly uplifting. Read the book, or listen to the full tape series if you can get hold of it.

In his more recent book 'The 8th Habit', Stephen Covey introduced (logically) an the eighth habit, which deals with personal fulfilment and helping others to achieve fulfilment too. The book also focuses on leadership. Time will tell whether the The 8th Habit achieves recognition and reputation close to Covey's classic original 7 Habits work.

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Reference website: <http://www.businessballs.com/sevenhabitssteven Covey.htm>