

Book Review

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People

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- Author(s) Stephen R. Covey
- Language English
- Publisher Free Press
- Publication date 1989

DR STEPHEN R COVEY was born in 1932. He spent most of his life in Utah with his family. Sadly, he died in a bicycle accident as he was seriously injured in that accident and lost his precious life, at the age of 79 years on July 16, 2012.

Dr. Covey has graduated from Harvard University in MBA and has served mostly at Brigham Young University as a professor of business management and organizational behavior. In addition to it he has also completed his doctorate from Brigham Young University.

Covey is a co-founder of Franklin-Covey organization specializes in the application of Covey's principal-centered approach to leadership and management. Across the world Thousands of other organizations, including many of the Fortune 500 companies, have adopted his innovative techniques on leadership, teamwork, and customer-focused service.

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Books written by Dr. Stephen R. Covey

- Spiritual Roots of Human Relations (1970)
- The Divine Center (1982)
- The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People (1989)
- Principle Centered Leadership (1990)
- First Things First, co-authored with Roger and Rebecca Merrill (1994)
- 6 Events: The Restoration Model for Solving Life's Problems (2004)
- The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness (2004)
- The Leader in Me: (2008)
- The 3rd Alternative: Solving Life's Most Difficult Problems (2011)

Introduction to Seven Habits of Highly Effective People

Seven habits of highly effective people was first published in 1989, it is a self-help business oriented book authored by Stephen R. Covey. More than 25 million copies of this book have been sold in 38 languages worldwide, and 15 million copies of the audio version have been sold, and have remained one of the best selling and most popular business books.

U.S. President Bill Clinton read the book of seven habits of highly effective peoples and invited the covey to advocate him on read the book and invited Covey to Camp David to counsel him on how to incorporate the book into his presidency.

The author - Stephen R Covey tries to suggest life-modification ideas for becoming an effective person in all walks of life, such as family, emotional wellbeing, professional competence, spiritual and thereby

producing contentment, peace happiness and satisfaction from all our comings and goings. The author puts across seven habits, which will help us be more effective in spite of the way our minds are habituated to think.

Covey argues against what he calls "The Personality Ethic" and promotes what he labels "The Character Ethic", aligning one's internal values with the so-called external principals, which are "universal and timeless" principles.

Covey proclaims that people's behaviors are governed by value, while the principles ultimately determine the consequences. Covey presents his lessons in a chain of habits, demonstrating as a progression from dependence through independence to interdependence.

Contents of the book are:

1. Be proactive
2. Begin with the end in mind
3. Put first things first
4. Think win-win
5. Seek first to understand and then to be understood
6. Synergize
7. Sharpen the saw

Review

Inside-out

The changes in the world continues drastically but the seven habits of highly effective people remains effective throughout because as the humans and there problems are universally resemble, boarder free, sect free, and culture free so basic solution to these problems should always universal and timeless. as the change is a continuous process and rapid change brings problems and complication so a very need for the seven

habits arise to cope with it in an appropriate manner, because it based on natural principals that lead toward successful and happy life.

Problems mainly arise when there is a dissonance comes between culture based principals and natural principals and the best solution is to keep both in mind and to deal with it in a balanced way, is the key of success.

The culture based principals need is to be independent but the natural principals is one step further is to be interdependent to develop the skills of interdependency to successfully live in this interdependent world and this could be achieved through continuous learning about self and the world.

To learn and not to do is really not to learn and to know and not to do is really not to know.

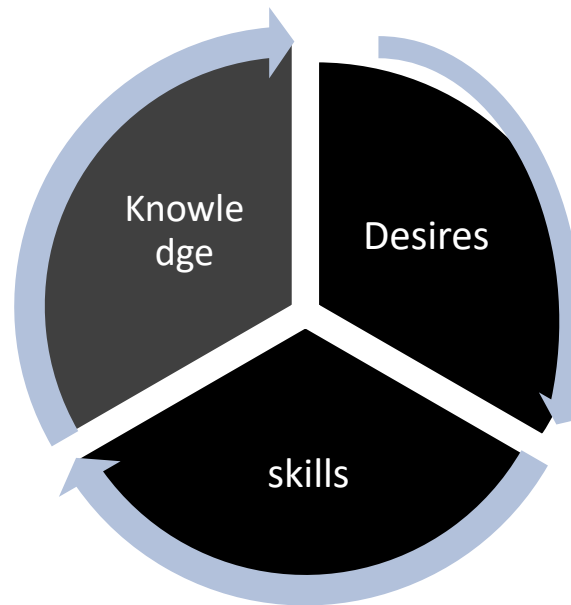
The character ethics is too as important for achieving interdependency. With the passage of time after world war one personality ethics replace character ethics that it lead toward success but it always a success for short term because if there is incongruence between basic inner traits and outer representation of it, soon this dual presentation gets clash and creates problems in achieving long-term success because ultimately one reap what one saw and healthy seeds of character ethics becomes a tree that are strong enough and maintain its strength for a longtime. The way things are perceived and conditioning occur effect our attitude and behavior toward others and perceives others in that specific way and if negatively, but as soon as the paradigm shift occur, our way of thinking perception, attitude and behavior toward other peoples get change if the paradigm shift based on real principals, fairness, integrity, honesty, human dignity, excellence and growth.

Individual mostly attribute causes of the problems to others and the problems remains problem. As they shift the attribution toward self the sooner the problem solved. To change the environment first change yourself or to conquer the world first conquers oneself.

Habits

Habits are the combination of knowledge, skills, desire. Habits have gravity full and it's difficult to get out of it but ones the individuals gets

out of it; it let them toward freedom of choosing, to select a new dimension and to move from dependence through independence and to interdependence for achieving basic aims and goals of life.



The seven habits of highly effective people is based on the effectiveness lies in the balance what Stephen call the p/pc balance stand for production of desired results, the end product or the golden eggs. PC stand for production capability, the ability or the asset that produces the golden eggs.

Habit 1

Be Proactive (principal of personal vision)

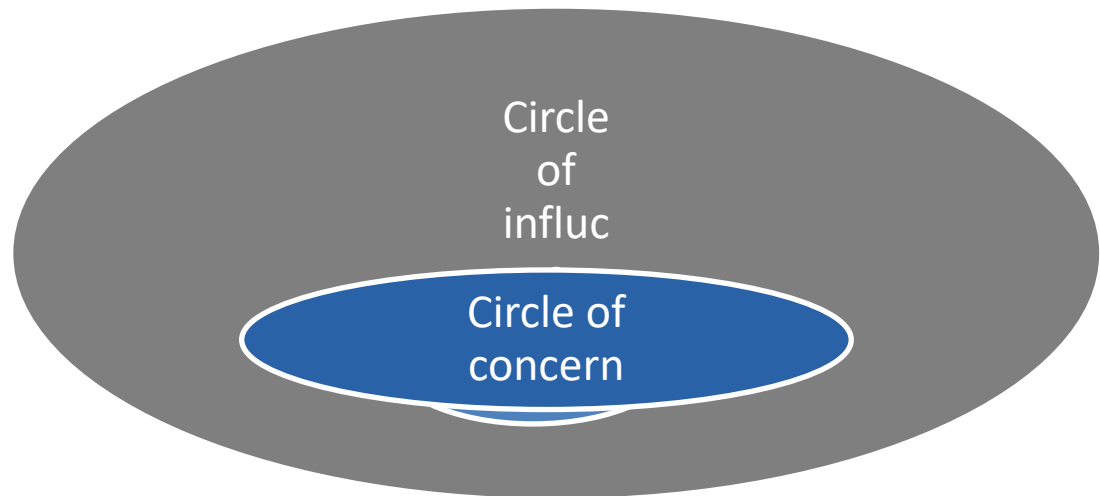
“I know of no more encouraging fact then the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by conscious endeavor”.

Proactivity means that every individual is responsible for his/her own life. Individual's Behaviors are the resultants of his/her thought patterns, judgment and decision not of the circumstances. Individual have the ability to subordinate their feelings to values. Individual have the initiative and the responsibility to make things happen. Because the word

reasonability shows that it is the ability to choose your response. Highly proactive people are well acquainted with that ability.

The ability to choose a response for a condition whether positive or negative is not determined by genetic determinism, psychic-determinism or environmental determinism but by the individual free will, whether to control by the negative traits of others or to be in control of negative environment. And no one can grab your free will without your consent. To be proactive means to take initiative that will open the opportunity for the P/Pc balance in your life upon which individual develop the seven highly effective habits.

Proactive peoples focus their efforts in the circle of influence when they faces problems that they control directly, indirectly or they have no control over it they solved these problems by directing there positive energies toward things they can do something about that will open the channels of possibilities for them to control their environment and to make adoptive response toward environment that neither or less likely effect them because they make their self responsible to solved these problems and the self are in their direct control or they are with internal locus of control so they are not effected by environment like individuals who blame environment for there problems and focus on the circle of concern and on things which they can do noting about and there problem remains as problem because the locus of control is external.



Habit 2

Begin with the end in mind (principal of personal leadership)

“What lies behind us and what lies in front of us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us words of Oliver Wendell Holmes”

To begin with the end in mind means to start with a clear understanding of your destination, to have a clear understanding of your motive that you try to complete before your life ends and to take only those steps that support your motive and to overcome those that can create hurdles in achieving that motive.

To accomplish the goal or aim of life one must keep the end of their life in the mind and after comments given by your children for you as mother and father, by your parents, your friends your co-workers and by the religious scholar that will be positive or negative depend on the way you spend your life.

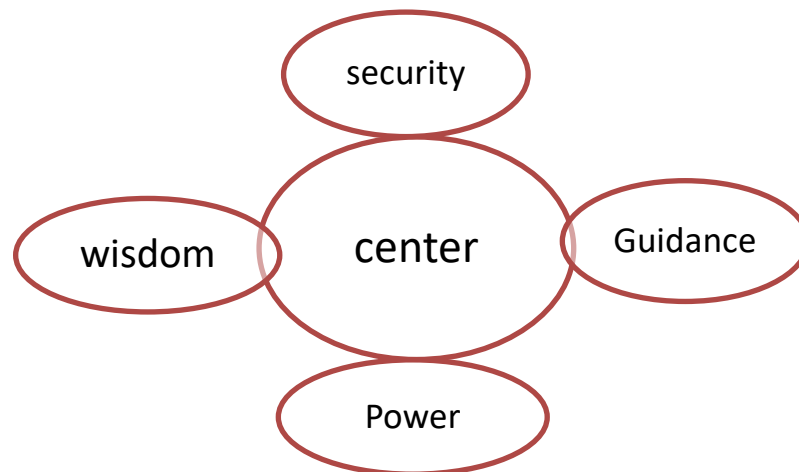
As all things are created twice and as human beings are natural beings they are created with natural principals but for them the script for their living is come from peoples not from their natural principals which mislead the individual from their real motive. God gives to humans the unique capacities of imagination, conscience and self-awareness that

enable the individual to scrutinize their first creation and to take charge of it to write their own script, habit one say “you are the creator” habit two “is the first creation”.

Effectiveness does not depend only on the efforts individual puts but on the management of that effort to do things right and on leadership to do the write things or to understand which efforts lead exactly toward goals.

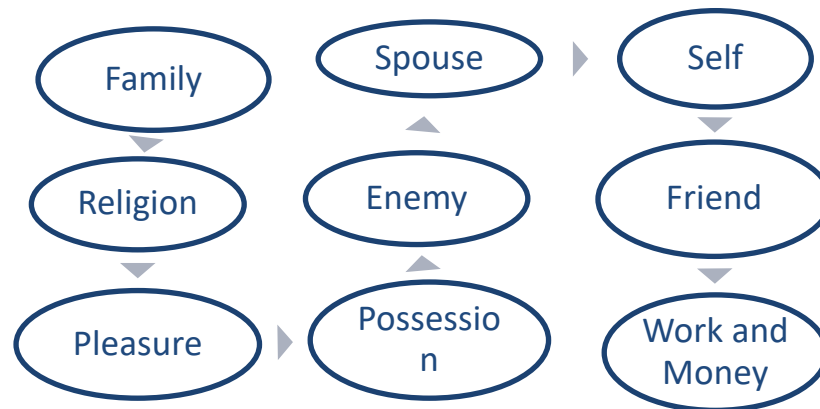
The personal mission statement is the first step to begin with the end in mind. It focuses on what individual want to do and to be and on the principals or values upon which being and doing are based. To write a personal mission statement one should be aware of their values whether they values correct principals, the principals that leads the individuals toward the correct territory.

When security, guidance, wisdom and power are present in a balance form in personality it makes it a dignified personality a balanced character and a beautifully integrated individual.



Wisdom is the judgment of how to create a balance in different principals of life and power is the ability to make choices and valuable decisions in life but if individual get fail to bring balance among alternative center and strongly adhere to one of them i.e. spouse centered,

friend centered, possession or work centered at the cost of all others effect the four core principals through which one lives effective life.



Habit 3

Put first thing first (Principal of personal management)

“Things which matter most must not be at the mercy of things which matter least”.

In addition to conscience, imagination and self-awareness the four human endowments is independent will which really make it possible for an individual to be pretty much effective in managing their self. Effective management is putting first thing first which is decided by effective leadership and it is the management that puts them first, day-by-day, moment by moment. Management is discipline carrying it out.

Hard-work for achieving actual goal of life requires to say no to all activities that’s individual really want to do from which individual get fun and yes to the tasks that leads individual to achieve its goal and it is require the power of independent will to be function of your values rather then to fulfill your impulses immediately.

Third generation has made significant contribution, people understand of time management and its efficiency and productivity by fulfilling the urgent need first and on daily basis. The fourth generation recognize time-management, that something is are urgent and important while other

are important but not urgent, urgent task are those that require immediate attention

Urgent tasks become urgent when they are lifted for completion on day last or day before and it increase list of urgent tasks which effect quality of product and individual too but if individual starts work for the important tasks from day first it shrinks or decrease list of urgent tasks so it does not overburden individual and sharpen their skills of effective time. Management which is a real key to success and mentally and physically healthy life.

	urgent	Not urgent
Important	I Crises Deadlines	II Prevention Planning Opportunities
Not important	III Calls Meetings	IV Mails Pleasant activities

The time management matrix

To be effective producer or manager or executive one must to follow Stewardship delegation to leave individual free to select a way for achieving goal and to make individual responsible for the result which makes the individual responsible , independency and feeling valuable for most of time will leads toward a better results, and to avoid gofer delegation means to go for this and go for that which grabs individual

potential and autonomy and one cant blame the individual to be alone responsible for poor results.

Habit 4

Think win/win (principal of interpersonal leadership)

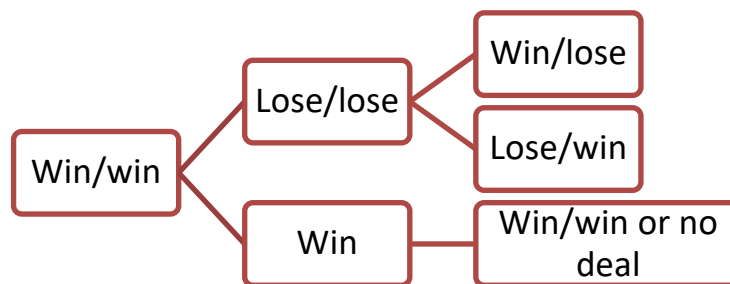
“We have committed the golden rule to memory; let us commit it to life”.
(Edwin Mar khan)

Win/win is a philosophy of human interaction.win /win means that consequences should be fruitful for both the parties and that the action that leads toward consequences should be of cooperative type not of competitive type.

The mentality of win/lose are mostly incorporated in individuals mostly by the family members when they compare one child with other, and the child schemas about love become fixed or conditioned that If I will do better then my brother so the parents will love me more.

The lose/win mentality is more damaging then win/lose, this mentality has no standards no demands no vision and that’s why the win/lose mentality love them because they love their weakness by which they easily get what they want because of the pessimistic nature of individuals with lose/win mentality. Both mentality based on personal insecurities.

When two win/lose people interact the result will be most probably lose/lose, because the individuals with this specific type of mentality are so inflexible and revengeful that blind them to all the other sides that indirectly leads them toward lose so they lose others at the cost of their own lose.



Which option is best?

Depending on the condition, one option is best in one situation and the other is better in another situation as the lose/win mentality in love or the win/lose mentality in games and the most suitable option in businesses is win/win. The win/win or no deal is the better option there when one did not want to lose other at their own win but one win will lead toward the win of other. If it is not possible then the best option is no deal because one win leads to the lose of other so to discontinue and to search for other alternative that leads to win /win.

Character is the base of win/win mentality and the three character traits that are essential to win/win is the integrity to know about you and to develop an independent will to get meaning of life and the individuals should be mature enough to consider other feelings when they express their own to create balance between self. Confidence and respect for others.

To go for win/win one must not only to be empathetic but also courageous one.

Abundance mentality means that everybody have enormous amount of opportunities it depends on them how much they get of it. While the scarcity mentality thinks that there are few opportunities because a lot of them are available by others and they are left with nothing. The building blocks for strong relationships are trust, the more one deposits trust in the emotional bank account the more stronger the relationship bond will be so it will leave no space in the outer most shell for misunderstanding. In the win/win agreements one has to identify the desired result, the guidelines that how to achieve the goal and the resources needed for it.

If a system did not support win /win it can not survive there and the win/win end can be achieved only through win/win process not on win/lose or lose/win process.

Habit 5

Seek first to understand, and then to be understood (Principal of empathic communication)

“The heart has its own reason which reason knows not of”. (pascal)

As humans are social being and their social need is to be involve in effective interpersonal relationships which is achieved only through effective interpersonal communication. And for achieving skills of effective interpersonal communication is to first understand the point of view of others then to understand them their own points of view that convey meaning of trust and understanding is the key good relationship.

Most of the people do not listen other for the reason to understand them but they only listen them to give answer in return or they preparing their answer not to understand other and this is the most basic reason due to which our loved-Ones can avoid sharing with us because they are of the view that we can never understand them and this ineffective interpersonal communication brings gapes in interpersonal relationship and we feel powerless to rebuild them.

As like it is hard and risky to prescribe for a disease before you diagnose it, same it is risky for effective interpersonal communication to understood other before you understand them. Emphatic listening involves four stages. The first is to reflect back to the individual what they just said as it is. The second stage is to rephrase the content but the meaning of the content remain the same so that the other individual feels that u get what they said .the third stage is the understand the feeling individual have behind their word. And the fourth stage is to reflect back the content and the feelings so that the individual feels that you understand their feelings and u see the world from their frame of reference or from their view and it's the basic key to get other trust which is the building block for effective communication and in turn for relationship. And this is the right time to make others ready to understood what u say, because you are prescribing for the exact problem after correct diagnosis that mostly leads toward effective and long-term solutions or cures.

Habit 6

Synergize (principal of Creative Corporation)

“I take as my guide the hope of a saint;
in crucial things unity___ in important things, diversity_____
in all things, generosity”. (George Bush)

All the first five habits prepare us to create synergy. Synergy means that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Or the power of five individuals when they work together is greater than when they work individually in the same project or process. Synergy is everywhere in nature i.e. if two plants are planted together, the roots combine and improve the quality of soil and the plants grow better than if they were separated. The main idea of synergy is to value difference, to respect them, to build on strengths, and to compensate for weaknesses.

When communication is done synergistically both the parties open their mind, heart, and possibilities for new alternatives and options that might be more suitable because they come through mutual discussion and individuals get more clear about it. When the parties begin with the belief that they will gain more insight, the excitement of that mutual learning and insight motivates the individuals for more and more insight, learning and growth.

Synergy is very important in a classroom where the teachers and all of the students share their ideas, experiences and also the self. Doubts in a trustworthy relationship enable the individual to be open to share their own and to listen to the ideas of others and to learn from them. It opens a way for brain storming where the spirit to evaluate becomes less important to the spirit of imagining, creativity and intellectual networking. In this way the entire class which are having with different ideas become transformed into a new trust, a new idea, a new direction that are applicable to all involved.

Because effective communication is very important in each and every field of lives whether it is personal or professional, and this effective communication comes synergy. When there is high level of trust and cooperation from both sides they go through healthy confrontation and lead toward creative or synergistic (where 1 + 1 may equal to 8, 16, or even 1,600) and toward better position than was originally produced such communication produced win/win. When there is medium level of trust and cooperation it will lead toward respectful and polite communication where the ugly confrontation are avoided but not emphatically, so it does not lead toward creative and better solution to a problem but just toward compromise means where

1+1 is equal to 1 ½.

When there is low level of trust and cooperation it direct toward a defensive communication and such communication only produces win/lose or lose/lose.

High trust and cooperation	Synergistic win/win
Medium trust and cooperation	Respectful(compromise)
Low trust and cooperation	Defensive

Fishing for the third alternative means if there is condition that lead toward one lose and other win with a high probability to deteriorate their relationship , a very need for third alternative arise that leads toward win/win and a better solution for both then originally proposed. But if they were trying for third alternative that will lead to one win or other lose or other win and one lose as dependent peoples do either for gaining power or prestige or for recognition is in example of negative synergy because only the positive synergy leads to win/win.

Habit 7

Sharpen the saw

Principal of balanced self renewal

“Sometime when I consider what tremendous consequences come from little things.....

I am tempted to thing.....

There are no little things”

Bruce Barton

Sharpen the saw means exercising the four dimension of our nature (Spiritual, Physical, mental, social/emotional) regularly and consistently in wise and balanced way.

Physical dimension involves caring for our physical body through taking healthy food on regular basis with regular exercise. Exercise is quadrant II activity that is important and should be in the list of first preferences but mostly it is ignored and when health gets deteriorated it becomes the urgent quadrant one activity which may be not that much effective as to be focused from the very start. The greatest benefit one can experience through exercise is the development of habit, by saying no to all forces that keeps the individual away from exercising and acts on the value of physical well-being that promote in individual self-esteem, self-confidence and integrity.

The spiritual dimension provides leadership to your life. The spiritual dimension is ones core center and ones commitment to ones value system. It is very private area of life and supremely important one. It basis on the sources that inspire and uplift you and tie one to the timeless truths of all humanity and every individual do it in a different way.

Most of our mental development comes through formal education and high quality educational and entertainment programs. Continuing education and expending the mind and involving oneself in creative activities are very important for mental renewal. The social and emotional dimension of life is very close to each other because the emotion positive, negative or neutral is mostly expressed in our relationship with others.

Renewal is the principal that motivate or empower individual to move in an upward spiral of growth and change of continuous improvement. And to keep progressing line must learn commit and do and learn, commit and do.

Critical analysis

In support of book

The seven habits of highly effective people given by Stephen R. Covey is an evergreen book means it remains effective from day of publication till today and will remain effective till the world exist because the book based on natural principals.

Whatever the social, political, and economical condition of the world remains and would be the book of seven habits remains and will be effective because one can get benefit from this book in each and every situation irrespective of its nature. With evergreen quality, this book is all-rounder too; it is effective for children, adults, and elderly peoples irrespective of its gender, profession, culture and religion. It help parents to inculcate these habits of highly effective people in their children from the very beginning, so that it will become part of their personality and there would be much probability for him or her to be a successful individual in the future. The seven habits of highly effective people is not only a theoretical manual but a practical manual too, because one can get a full benefit from the book, when they applied it practically in their daily lives so that it becomes their habits or permanent part of their personality. Because only reading of the books makes it part of the memory but the uniqueness of this book is the author focus on the practical implication of it.

The inside-out describe by Stephen Covey makes individual aware of themselves by focusing their attention on self that are in their direct control and through which in individual can adopt or control each and every situation in a psychologically healthy way whatever the severity of the situation would be because the internal locus of control makes the individual flexible to mold self in the way situation demand. Rather than blaming the external environment that are not in their direct control where is a very less chances for individual to change it and by focusing on it individual can get nothing out of it. And it can deteriorate relationship with other and can create psychological problems that grabs the individual potentials to deal in effective way with the critical situations.

The focus on the character ethics makes the individual to be aware of their core values, trustworthiness, honesty and integrity to

accumulate it in personality not only to use it for projection purpose but for its real purpose to create congruence in ones inner self and outer representation of it.

The personal mission statement makes individual focused and direct them to the long-term and original goal of life by working for its achievement on daily basis that will make them more responsible, time manageable they avoid all those activities that can create obstacles' in the long-term life goal and takes each step in a careful and responsible way because each step they take count to their long-term life goal which enable the individual to be remain away from acts that are harmful to others and from themselves which makes the worldly life and life after death awesome and one can achieve it through inculcating 7 habits of highly effective peoples in personality.

Criticism

The detail and some difficult concept of this book can create obstacles in reading of the book especially for adolescent and for students for whom it is very necessary to read it as early as possible to makes these habits part of personality that will help them throughout their life.

Improper in excitation for authors whose concept or phenomena's are used in the book.

Suggestion

My suggestion is to develop booklet version of it with a more focus on students, adolescents and parents with easy and comprehensive concepts.

Comparison with other authors

- Ivan Pavlov
- Abraham Maslow
- Gestalt psychologist
- Albert Ellis

- Client centered psychologist

The concept of paradigm shift given by Stephen R. Covey is more or less similar to the classical condition of Ivan Pavlov's Pavlov describe when individual are conditions to a specific phenomena or situation the act in the same way to other more or less similar situation which effect their genuine evaluation but as soon reconditioning in a positive way occur then they see the same situation in a different light. Same as the paradigm shift occur but in a positive way change the individual evaluation about other and environment in a positive way.

As Stephen R. Covey says that if individual inculcate habit one in personality only then they can develop habit two in an effective way or to achieve public victory individual must have to start from the very base line to achieve the private victory first. Same phenomenon is given by Abraham Maslow in his theory of Maslow need hierarchy to fulfill the social, esteem and growth needs one must to fulfill the basic needs.

The phenomena of synergy or whole is greater then the some of its parts given by Stephen Covey is similar to the gestalt phenomena of whole is greater then some of its parts.

Like Albert Ellis whose focus is on realistic thinking and on individual rational and irrational beliefs that makes the individual reaction healthy or unhealthy toward environment is same with the Stephen Covey focus on the natural and realistic principal and his focus on individual self or internal locus of control makes individual adaptation to critical environment healthier.

The phenomena for emphatic communication given by Stephen R. Covey and the tactics he describes for achieving that level (reflective understanding , rephrase content , reflect feeling and rephrase content and reflect feeling) is similar to the phenomena of emphatic communication with client to attain level of trust for better understanding of client problem and for good prognosis.

Conclusion;

- Stephen Covey's virtuous approach is not a quick-fix recommendation for personal growth. But said by Covey's that if an individual work hard in adapting these principals and learn it

well, think about them deeply and thought them to others, they will eventually become internalized. it will lead to fundamental change because they will affect who you are – your character – for the better__always.

Ending Note.....

Seneca “said about human character, you will see how acquiring new habits leads to a fundamental change of character.

Sow a thought, reap an action

Sow an action, reap a habit

Sow a habit, reap a character

Sow a character, reap a destiny”.