

The Complete Guide To
APPLYING THE 7 HABITS
In Holistic Personal Development

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In Holistic Personal Development

MASTERING EVERY ASPECT OF YOUR LIFE IN HABITS,
RELATIONSHIPS, CAREER, MONEY, HEALTH AND YOUR
ULTIMATE CALLING USING STEPHEN COVEY'S TIMELESS MODEL

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Foreword

Stephen Covey created a sensation when he wrote and released *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. Suddenly, people began to sit up and take notice. They felt... there are so many ways they can implement to enhance their lifestyle. And that they can bring about these enhancements just by making minor alterations in their mindsets and their way of approaching things.

The book became a phenomenon because of the large number of lives it touched. It still continues to do that today. It is at the top pedestal on most bookshelves even today and the great clamor for it has still not died down.

However, there are more implications of this wonderful book than you might think. There are more ways to harness the vast richness of knowledge and wisdom that is housed in this book. Our eBook is an endeavor to make people understand this bestseller better, and include these tips in their lives so that they can live better.

But, our eBook is not just a different way of saying what the legendary Stephen Covey has already said. We will be peppering our eBook with many tips and suggestions throughout which can give a whole new positive direction to your life. So, keep reading. There is a lot to be learned in the pages that follow.

***The Complete Guide To Applying The 7 Habits In Holistic
Personal Development***

***Mastering Every Aspect Of Your Life In Habits, Relationships,
Career, Money, Health And Your Ultimate Calling Using
Stephen Covey's Timeless Model***

Chapter 1:

Stephen Covey's Timeless Model

Synopsis

Before delving into discussions of how we can use the seven habits to make your lifestyle and personality highly effective, it is most important to understand what these seven habits are. This first chapter is a guide on the seven habits, and their meaning in the truest sense of the term.



Stephen Covey's Timeless Model

When Stephen Covey first released *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, the book became an instant rage because people suddenly got up and took notice that their lives were headed off in the wrong direction; and more than that, they realized that there were so many simple things they could do in order to navigate their life correctly. This book was wonderful education for people, education in how to live life effectively and get closer to the ideal of being a 'success' in life.

But not everyone understands Stephen Covey's model fully well, or maybe there are some people who haven't read it yet. This is definitely true because we still see so much failure all around us. Now, I am not saying that by using Covey's model, or anyone else's model for that matter, you can become a sure-shot success, but at least we should have seen many more successes around us already judging by the number of copies the book has sold! So, where is the shortcoming?

There are two main problems here, and we are talking only about the people who have read the book already. The first problem is that most people are too lazy to implement the ideals of Stephen Covey in their lives. They consider his masterpiece of a book as a mere coffee-table book or a book that you use for light reading when you are traveling and then forget all about it. They do not realize that this book contains life-changing information. Or, they take the information and do not make the effort to actually utilize it so that it becomes knowledge for them.

The second problem is that a lot of people have a myopic view of Covey's ideals. These are people who are impressed by the book already. If you ask them what the seven habits are, they can rattle them off end to end, but then they miss the larger picture. They do not understand that Covey was trying to tell more than he wrote in words. There are hidden implications in this book, yes, and a lot of people have just failed to see through them.

That is what we are trying to do. We are trying to show you how Covey's book, or rather, his model, was a complete model in itself. There was nothing amiss about it. If you implement it, there should be no aspect of your life that should go untouched. The only thing is that you have to understand these ideals and try to implement them in your life.

But, before we barge into that area, it is extremely important to understand what these ideals are. What was the model that was propounded by Stephen Covey in his mega-famous book? We shall begin by trying to understand his model first, and then interpret it in such a way that it pertains to every aspect of our life.

Stephen Covey's Seven Habits

You must have read these habits in so many places by now. However, I do not mind repeating them for you here.

Habit 1: Be Proactive

Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind

Habit 3: Put First Things First

Habit 4: Think Win-Win

Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, then to Be Understood

Habit 6: Synergize

Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw



Habit 1: Be Proactive

To be proactive, according to Covey, means that you have to be accountable to yourself. Your life is not perfect right now, however rich or poor you are. You always think that there is something lacking. A proactive person knows that something is lacking, but they do not start blaming external factors for those shortcomings. They won't blame their parents, their family professions, their country's economy, their lack of education, the weather, etc. Proactive people will rise above all this. They will understand what the situation is, they will realize that it can be bettered and that's that. They do not sit down and play the blame game, which is never anything but a gross waste of time.

Proactive people know that they can make their choices. They can choose to be happy or sad, they can choose to be pleasant or angry, they can choose to be complacent or responsive, they can choose to say yes or no. They have every choice. They are aware of this, and they take benefit of this fact.

A proactive person will never depend on others to make decisions for them. They will analyze the situation perfectly well and then they will decide what to do based on the merit of the situation.

Most importantly, proactive people are always optimistic. They are never shrouded in apprehension. They use sentences beginning with 'I can', 'We can', 'We should', etc. They do not think about the negative verbs. They do not think that there is something beyond them. Even if there is something they have not achieved so far, they do not think that they are limited in doing so. If there is something

they have not achieved yet, it is only because they haven't tried it. They always harbor the optimism that if they put an effort into it, they will definitely be able to achieve what they have set their minds to.

Proactive people are positive people. They are always sure of doing things, whether it relates to their family, their profession, their love life, their health, etc. They do not handicap themselves with limitations.

Now, that doesn't mean proactive people always meet with success. But this is only the first habit; we are just getting started. There are six more habits to go... it is only when all these habits are put in place in the right manner that things begin happening the way they should.

At the same time, you shouldn't get the idea that proactive people are obstinately optimistic. That isn't so. Practicality rules over everything. For instance, if there is a natural calamity or some other uncontrollable incident, then even proactive people may change their line of thought. This is acceptable. But, at least, proactive people will put in the attempt. And uncontrollable factors won't faze them. They will know that there is a way out... it is only about finding out what it is.

So, be proactive. That's the first habit. Be accountable, take responsibility. Do not sit back and think that you cannot do things. You can do them. You have to set your mind to them. This is how you start on your journey of success.

Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind

Throughout history, we have observed that it is the farsighted people who have always achieved great successes. It is these people who have become legends and shaped the world in the way it is. Today, we see such people all around us. They are the people who begin with the end in mind. They are the people who are the diehard result-oriented people. They first think about what they want to do, what they want to achieve. The hows come later.

When you were young, you probably were asked many times, or maybe you thought about it yourself, as to what you would like to become when you grow up. This is actually a very common question and there are so many adults who ask it just for making a conversation with a kid. It becomes a nice filler when you are talking to children. But, the next time you ask that to a child, listen and watch closely. Look at how serious the child is about what he or she says. They may say they want to become a fighter pilot or an astronaut or the next great legend in sports. But don't scoff it off with a laugh. Look at how earnest they are. Their eyes become totally expressive and there is some kind of a thought process going on in their little mind.

Now take yourself back to when you were a kid... when you were asked the same question. Perhaps you don't remember it now, but in all likelihood you answered the question in the same way. You have the same fervent zeal and appeal. You were totally earnest about your ambition too, even if it sounded ludicrous to everyone else.

Then, what happened on the way? Why did your aspirations falter? Did you, like most people, make some kind of compromise for some reason and put a tether on your galloping horse of imagination?

Covey tells us, in no minced words, that that is not the attribute of a highly effective person. If you have to be highly effective, then one of the most important things you have to do is to stay true to your ideals.

And that is what you can do by beginning with the end in mind. First, sit down and think what you have to achieve. This may not be something as mammoth in proportions as your life's ambition. It may be something small like a business goal. But, sit down and think. Think hard about wanting to achieve that whatever you are thinking about. You should think so hard that you should begin visualizing the success already. You should be able to taste your achievement!

When you are able to do that, you will find that automatically everything that you do falls into place. By already envisioning what you want to do, you have already set the wheels in motion. Consciously or subconsciously, you are working towards those ideals.

Most people have it pegged on all wrong. They start with the start. That's wrong. You have to start with the end. Think about the end. Whatever you are doing, your efforts... why are you doing them? What do you want to achieve at the end of the day? What is the end you are chasing?

When you start from that point, you know precisely what you have to do. Every waking—and even sleeping—moment of your life becomes a step in the right direction.

So, the bottom line is that you have to start from the finishing line. Look at the finishing line with complete attention and move on forth, unflinching from your path. When you have your complete focus on the end, you are quite unlikely to move away from the shortest and the most effective route you can take to reach there.



Habit 3: Put First Things First

We are humans and we are born and have to live with certain limitations. One of these main limitations is that we cannot do everything that we want to do. We have only a fixed capacity—a limit of doing things—and it is very difficult for us to go beyond that.

However, successful people have crossed these troubled waters. The more successful you are, the more things you will have to tackle. Successful people have managed to keep the boat going by focusing on only the most important things that need to be done at a particular moment.

Prioritization.

That is the game successful people play. They always see what's on their platter and then they pick and choose those things that absolutely need to be done. They know the art of prioritizing very well. And that is the reason why they are able to accomplish tasks. Maybe they do not accomplish everything... maybe they are not able to do everything that they want to do... but they are definitely able to do the most important things. They are able to do the things that can take them and their teams towards success.

But, how do you decide things that are the most important? What gives you the ability to do that? One way to decide your priorities is simply to see which of the tasks in front of you are the most beneficial, and I am not speaking only in terms of money here. See everything that is on your agenda. List out the things systematically. Then highlight the things that absolutely need to be done.

Another way to do that is to decide which thing is important for the success of another thing. If there is something you could do so that another task's fulfillment becomes simpler, then you should do that basic task first. This way, you set up a chain of events, and it becomes convenient for you to accomplish your various tasks.

There is another connotation to this habit as described by Covey. This is a simple connotation actually, but has a profound significance. This implication tells us that we should get everything ready when we are setting out to accomplish anything. That is putting first things first too. Instead of directly plunging headlong into trying to fulfill something, we should sit down and think what we can do to in order to make the task fulfillment simpler... what ingredients or raw materials would we need?

Getting those things in order first would be an ideal way to chase that particular goal fulfillment. Once again, that would make the task simpler. Moreover, this is definitely a form of prioritization.

It is thus important to put first things first. When you are setting out to do anything, there are definitely a list of tasks in front of you. The best thing you can do in these circumstances is to decide which of these tasks is the most important and then go about fulfilling that first. In addition, when you are setting out on your task fulfillment journey, the first thing you should do is to get everything ready. This helps you do things in a much better way. The process becomes streamlined and you are surer to reach towards your ideals.

Habit 4: Think Win-Win

We have been conditioned to think, by our parents, teachers and society in general, that life is all about winning. Now, that is not wrong in itself, but the approach that we have been taught is definitely wrong. We have been taught to win at someone else's expense. Or, we have been taught to understand that if we lose, someone else will win. This has become our natural thought process, and we rarely do think in any other way.

But, what Stephen Covey tells us to learn is that life is not about winning at the expense of someone else... or losing if someone else wins. This is not the way successes are carved. In the world of successful people, the success has been of everyone.

Think of the inventor of the telephone... or the radio... or the person who first landed on the moon... or the one who created Microsoft... what is the common element in all these people?

The common strand is that it is not just they who won. When the telephone was invented by Alexander Graham Bell, everyone used it. Communication improved immensely, all over the world. When Guglielmo Marconi invented the radio, the whole world rejoiced at the new avenue of entertainment that had opened up. When Neil Armstrong and Edwin Aldrin landed on the moon, it was a giant leap for the entire humankind. When William Gates developed Microsoft, it is not just Microsoft Corporation that became the richest commercial organization in the world, but it is all of us who witnessed and benefited from that revolutionary phenomenon.

Our lives have been shaped by these things... by these people who did not stop to think about their individual victories. They only thought about how they could take someone else ahead as well... how they could improve the world that they lived in.

Thinking about the world is a long shot, but you should at least think about the people who are close to you. To give you the right interpretation of Stephen Covey's model for highly effective people, the one thing that is important is that you should not aim for victory at someone else's expense. Instead, you should think about how you can collectively move towards victory. Success, in the present times, is about collaboration and not competition.

The Internet has made this possible. The Internet has shown us that victory doesn't belong to a single person. In fact, if it belongs to a single person, it feels inadequate. Victory is something we need to share collectively. We have to think of the win-win situation in which everyone is a winner, no one is a loser.

We have to think about collective glory. This is not the age where a dictator could become successful by only considering his selfish gains. That sort of thing does not work today. What works is that we have to form a bond with the people we know and even with the people we don't, and then think about success. We have to think about victory for everyone.

Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, then Be Understood

Many self-help experts have spoken of the importance of communication. Surely, you have heard of several such methods as well. You have certainly heard how important it is to communicate with others if you want to make an effective impact on them and in general.

Nevertheless, what does communication mean to you? For many people, communication simply means talking. They have the impression that communication means speaking out their thoughts and opinions to others and giving advice.

However, that is the totally wrong meaning of communication. According to Stephen Covey's guidelines, if you think about communication in this manner as well, then you are bound to come up with great failure.

According to Covey, communication is just as much to listen as it is to speak. In fact, when you are talking, it becomes more important to listen to what others have to say. When you do that, you are amassing information and knowledge. This is where you understand what you have to do... what can be done... in order to solve a particular problem. This is what you need to do in order to attain your goals and be successful in society.

Remember that in conversation, listening is a method of input while talking is a method of output. If you want to enhance yourself, you should know that input is always better than output.

That is what this habit speaks about. You have to pay attention to understanding the other person. You have to understand what they are trying to say. Only when you have fully achieved that, should you go ahead and make the other person understand that. In effect, you have to hear out the other person first, and then put forth your ideas.

The correct method is first to listen what people are telling you. Evaluate the information you get. Is it right or not? Are you agreeable to what they said or not? You have to think about it. You have to see whether you are convinced of what you heard. The next step is to advice, if you have something constructive to say. If you realize there is a problem and you have a suggestion for it, this is the time to feel free and proffer that suggestion. Lastly, you have to interpret how the other person reacts. You have to see what their response is, and don't pass any judgments about what it might be.

This is how effective conversation needs to be done. Conversing is a means, communication is the end. The best way to communicate is to converse by first listening and then speaking out.

One of the most important traits of a highly effective person is that they want to find out their facts first, which they do by listening. Then they quietly strategize, and only when they are ready do they tell people about what they have thought. This is an important quality to be inculcated. You must always strive to first understand the other person. Perhaps, this will make it easier for you when you try to establish a fruitful impression on them.

Habit 6: Synergize

Synergizing is the most effective form of cooperation. This happens when you get together with people and then work in a constructive manner. You work in such a way that you pool in everyone's best skills and create a force that is beneficial for everyone. It is all about creative and constructive cooperation.

Look around you. The best people in the world—the richest people, the most successful people—have never been alone. They have their own coterie of people whom they hobnob with; people who have brought them towards their accomplishment of goals. Moreover, how are these people selected? They are most often handpicked by the successful people... they are people having different talents, talents that the successful people themselves are somewhat limited in.

This ties in with the first habit of being proactive. When we started out, we made no bones about the fact that everyone has their shortcomings. Even the most successful people in the world falter at some point. Being successful does not mean that you have to be perfect in everything. In fact, people who are really successful have just one main talent that they bank upon.

But, the world does not run on one talent alone. A person cannot reach the super zenith of success because they just have one amazing talent. This talent is on the fore, but in the background there are several other things working. A super rockstar has an amazing band to back them up. A hotshot politician has a whole cabinet of ministers to assist them. An Oscar-winning actor had the entire crew of the movie at their disposal. A writer had their inspiration and a good

publisher to market their books in the right manner. A prizewinning athlete had a coach and several other people to help them out.

The thing that you have to take away from this is that success is not an individualistic thing. Even though we feel that some single person has achieved success, the fact is that there are many hands to support them... hands that have carried them to where they have reached.

This is what synergy is. Synergizing with people means to choose people to guide you and then collaborate with them in the best manner possible. The person who can collect the right talent is the one who goes places.

Now, every person is going to be different. You may need someone for their particular skill but you may not like the person. Or you may not like a particular habit in someone. But, should you let that come in the way? People who are aspiring to be highly effective should not think about these petty differences. They should look at the larger picture and carry on. This is what needs to be done, if you are looking for real success.

Synergize! Get along with people who have different talents than you have, and make the use of these talents. Build a collective forge of talents and sally on forth. The world today is not about individualist glory at all. There are so many people helping each other out there. You make the most of it as well. Find the right people and seek their support. If you are looking for success, then this is one thing that you definitely cannot avoid.

Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw

The saw here refers to the biggest gift that you have, without which you are nothing. And that is—your own body. You are only as good as your body is, as its health is, and that is the reason you have to sharpen the saw repeatedly, which means you have to be very cautious about what you are.

Covey does not just mean the physical aspect of the body; he means to say we have to enhance our physical bodies, but we must also look at the spiritual and meditative aspect of our bodies. In general, we have to make our body better. We need to look at various aspects of our life and keep sharpening it as well.

To sharpen the saw, you have to start by taking care of your health. Is there any bodily ailment that is keeping you from reaching the heights that you want to reach? If yes, then your first attempt should be to take care of them. Secondly, are there any emotional or mental problems that are threatening to sap your strength? Once again, these are things that you should take care of. If needed, you should renew and revitalize yourself using whatever means are available to you.

The most important thing is that you don't just have to be healthy from the outside, but you have to feel good within. You may probably want to invest time in some fruitful activities or a hobby that you appreciate or something else that recreates you. This is a great idea, because it makes you a new person from within, full of good cheer and camaraderie. This is what you need to succeed.

In order to become a truly enriched person, you have to deal with the four most important aspects of your existence and make sure that they are in perfect order.

These four aspects include the physical, social or emotional, mental and spiritual natures of your body. These are the four prime areas that you have to focus on, if you want your body to assist you in your endeavors.



Chapter 2:

Analyzing the Seven Habits

Synopsis

Now that you have a very clear idea of what the seven habits of Stephen Covey's model are, you are in the position to analyze them. Why are they put forth in the order that they are?

What are some of the things you have to keep in mind to make these seven habits really work for you?

Here we shall be examining the seven habits together. Our purpose is to see how they stand collectively.



Analyzing the Seven Habits

When presenting the seven habits to the world, Stephen Covey has very clearly stated that if a person has to be highly effective, then all the seven habits need to be employed, and in the very manner that he has mentioned.

In short, there is no way that you can pick and choose your favorites here. You will have to implement all of the seven habits if you want to see your life heading in a better direction than where it is placed currently.

But, why is that important? If you have paid attention to the previous chapter where I laid out the seven habits for you in detail, you may have seen that the seven habits stand quite well individually as well. Each of them on their own makes perfect sense, and actually speaking, none of them wants the support of the other for implementation. You can implement each habit on their own merit.

So, why shouldn't we do that?

The reason is that Stephen Covey has a very particular pattern in arranging these seven habits. Let us look at this pattern first and then you will understand why these habits have the greatest strength when they are put into one collective whole.

Habit #	Statement	Interpretation
1	<i>Be proactive.</i>	Habit of personal choice
2	<i>Begin with the end in mind.</i>	Habit of personal leadership
3	<i>Put first things first.</i>	Habit of personal management
4	<i>Think win-win.</i>	Habit of interpersonal leadership
5	<i>Seek first to understand, and then to be understood.</i>	Habit of interpersonal communication
6	<i>Synergize.</i>	Habit of interpersonal collaboration
7	<i>Sharpen the saw.</i>	Habit of personal enhancement

Analyzing the Seven Habits

The first habit, as you can see in the above table, is a habit for making the best personal choices. You are empowered to make the right choices among various options. This habit makes you a person in better control of what is going on with you. You are responsible for yourself; you do not rely on anyone else to make your decisions for you.

The second habit puts more emphasis on yourself. From merely making the right choice, you get promoted to the right leadership qualities. You are basically a leader, because you think about the end

and then lead yourself and others to fulfill those goals. Whether or not you have the title of a leader, you are certainly acting as one.

The third habit teaches you the virtues of managing your personal assets and requirements. It tells you how you can do the best with the resources you have. It tells us how to put everything in place so that you can get to your achievements in the best possible manner. Incorporating this habit can make you a highly efficient and self-sufficient person.

The fourth habit trains you in interpersonal leadership. It takes the second habit one step further. It doesn't just tell you how you can be a leader, how you can guide people towards accomplishment of goals, but it actually tells you how you can collaborate with the right people and get to where you want to go. It is not just about the amelioration of your own ideals, but it is about success for everyone. This habit teaches you how you should seek the best in everybody and create a highly constructive force that is difficult to experience when you are working alone.

The fifth habit makes one equipped in interpersonal communication. It tells you what the right communication strategies are. It tells that communication is not just about talking, but it is also about listening. In fact, it tells that the greater emphasis should be on the listening part because that is what provides the input of knowledge.

The sixth habit is about collaboration. When we learn to synergize, we are learning to focus our energies in the most constructive manner. We are gathering our forces together and partnering with the right people, benefiting in the mutual pool of talent that we create and

move on towards success. Thus, the sixth habit takes the fourth habit one step ahead.

The seventh habit is again personal. It is about personal development. It tells that until and unless we do not take care of the resources that we have with us, we will not be able to make anything of our achievements, however big or small they may be. It tells us that we have to preserve our health—both physical and mental—if we are to take ourselves in a positive direction. It speaks of the futility of achievement if we cannot take care of our bodies. In culmination, our body is the most important asset, something that validates our existence and gives meaning to whatever accomplishments we make while we are on earth.

Comparing the Seven Habits

What is noteworthy for us to see now is how Stephen Covey has brought together various aspects of our individual and social life and formulated a beautiful model out of them, a model that is sure to lead us to greater glories in life.

We see here a perfect blend of habits for both personal and interpersonal development.

The first, second, third and seventh habits are about different aspects of personal enhancement. If these four habits are implemented, then we will be able to make our choices in life in a better way, we will be able to be better leaders, we will be able to manage our resources in a better manner and we will be able to preserve our resources in a better way, which includes our own bodies.

The fourth, fifth and sixth habits are about interpersonal development. We are not lone beings on this planet, and neither can we hope to live alone. We have to live in society. It is for this reason that the development needs to be interpersonal. If we want to evolve as better human beings, then we should be able create a mutual talent pool and dip into it whenever possible. This is what we learn through these habits. Here, we are taught how we can be better collaborators with other people, how we can lead collectively with other people and how we can be great at communicating our thoughts and expressions to other people and understand what they intend to say as well.

Thus, when all the seven habits are in place, it is a certainty that the different aspects of our lives—personal as well as interpersonal—will go through an enhancement. Our lives can be taken to a whole new level of success. The plan is all out there. It all fits neatly like a jigsaw puzzle, all of whose pieces are intact. Only, the implementation of the plan is what is needed.

This is what we shall be talking about in the further pages. In the pages that follow, you shall learn how to implement Covey's seven methods in different aspects of your life—personal relationships, family, career building, wealth management, health, etc. I had mentioned earlier about the seven habits being perfect. It is only that many people miss out on the basic meaning of these seven habits. They fail to see the larger picture; they fail to realize that the seven habits can be implemented to more aspects of their lives than they think.

The mission of this eBook is to reveal how that can be done. Read on.

Chapter 3:

Seven Habits for Enhancing Personal Relationships

Synopsis

For a lot of people, relationships are a very difficult aspect of their lives. They are not sure how they can make a great relationship tick, even if they have been fortunate enough to find one.

So, what is the big draw? Here we shall see how we can apply the seven habits to relationships and make a huge success out of them.



Seven Habits for Enhancing Personal Relationships

For most people, relationships are a very messy area. There are so many of our friends, people in our family and other people that we know that cannot carry on relationships well. We know these people, we know that they need to be in a relationship, they are great people too, but they do not find the partners that they so well deserve. Why does that happen?

Is this happening with you as well? If you are on the receiving end here, then you very well know the frustration and depression that goes along with the feeling of not being in a good relationship.

Or, maybe you have found someone you want to be with, but somehow things are not going the way they should. It is making you despondent and gloomy. You have become grouchy and ill-tempered and probably you have developed an inferiority complex about yourself. Maybe this is not the first time that a great relationship you were in hasn't worked out for you.

If that is the case, then you need to sit up and take notice. Remember that while a lot of relationships aren't working, there are a lot of great relationships out there too. And these are not necessarily the best people in the world, and they are not even the best matches for each other. But their relationship has still ticked. What has made it work for them?

The truth is that somewhere deep inside, consciously or not, these people have implemented the seven habits. They have first used it on themselves and then they have implemented them on their partners

as well. Through a very effective incorporation of the seven habits into their relationship, they have enhanced it to unbreakable levels.

Do you also want your relationship to flourish under the influence of the seven habits? Of course, you do, and you must! Here is how you should go about it.



Habit 1 for Enhancing Personal Relationships

Be proactive.

The first habit is about making the right choices. So, you start with that. Sit down and think. Are you making the right relationship choices? Is this the right person you are considering? There are all kinds of people out there and not all kinds of people are for everyone. So, where are you headed?

Do not be in a relationship, or approach it even, if you are sure this is not going to work. With such apprehension in your mind, you are not going to do well anyway. If you know that there is something about the other person that is not going to gel with you, do not make a compromise and still go ahead. Maybe initially you will do well at the relationship and even ignore the shortcoming in the other person, but it won't work in the long run.

You may, of course, think that you will be able to change your partner. There are people who think that way. But, again, this is not going to work. It is not fair on the other person. They are what they are, and expecting them to change would be quite unfair. At the same time, a person is the sum total of their actions and behaviors. It is for this reason that it is very difficult to bring even a teensy-weensy change in anyone. In short, do not make a compromise.

Relationships that are built on compromise don't generally go too far. You will have to contend with that limitation every step of the way and there will be a point when you will snap.

The shortcoming may be within you as well. If you are aware of it, then plan on improving upon it. Remember that you have the choice. You have the choice of deciding.

Do you want to sit and lament about your limitation and let it control the rest of your life? Or, do you want to accept the choice that you can do something about it, that you *will* do something about it, and everything will be for the better?

Perhaps you want to bring about these changes if you want your relationship to work, perhaps you don't. But, when you know that something is missing in you, it is your utmost responsibility to incorporate those changes within yourself.

At the end of it all, you have to remember that you always have the choice to make the right decision for yourself. Whether it is about improving yourself or about finding a partner that suits your ideals in a better way, you have the choice. Do not restrict yourself to availability. Spread yourself a bit more and you will see that the choice widens up as well.

Habit 2 for Enhancing Personal Relationships

Begin with the end in mind.

One of the best ways to improve your relationship is to think about the future. There are so many people who think that they will take life as it comes and then falter immensely when the moment comes. They think they will take it as they are served and then something comes on their platter that is totally indigestible. Eventually, they have to skip the meal.

Let that not happen to you. Maybe your previous relationships did not work because you never planned the future. Maybe you are not finding someone to be with now because you are still not sure about what you want.

When you have made up your mind to get into a relationship, the first and most important step is to be completely sure about it.

Do you really want to be in a relationship now? Do you have the time? Can you make the commitment? Do you have the mental space for it?

These are the things that you have to think about. Remember that a relationship is a thing in which two people are involved. It is not just about you. If you are planning to go out with someone, then you have to make sure that you can provide the other person what they are looking for as well, and not just look after your own selfish interests.

Also, if your relationship has already started, you have to make sure that you keep it working. The flame has to continue to burn. For that,

one of the crucial things for you to think about is how you plan to carry on the relationship? Are you into it for the long term? Are you thinking about it seriously? Or do you want just a casual fling? You have to have your priorities right. This is most important. If you are not sure about what the end of your relationship is going to be like, you are not going to make a good thing out of it.



Habit 3 for Enhancing Personal Relationships

Put first things first.

You have now decided that you want to be in a relationship and you have visualized the result you want. You know why you are in a relationship for and you also have an idea about where you want to take it. The next step now is to start gathering the reinforcements you would need to make the relationship work.

Your potential relationship is something that you need to work on. It is not something that will just happen; if you think of it that way, then it could be a complete nonstarter. You want the relationship to go in the direction you want it to take, so you have to give it the right push.

What reinforcements would you need to carry on the relationship? Maybe you have improve your mindset and behavior. You have to now start thinking as two instead of just one. You have to make sure you are always putting the other person in the picture as well. You have to behave in a way that is not demeaning to the other person, in a way that shows your appreciation for them.

You have to make sure you have time for them. It is not necessary that you spend whole hours with them, but you should have enough time to make your expressions clear. You may have to put in additional effort at times; you have to be prepared for that. There are so many things that you would need to make your relationship work. You have to ensure that even before you start out with your relationship, you are well-equipped.

A very important aspect of your life will begin to emerge when you are in a relationship. You will have to start prioritizing things. You will often have to think what is more important to you... your family, or your love life, or your job, etc. This is where you will have to focus all your efforts together and make the right decision. You will have to prioritize.

As you have already thought beforehand what you want to do with your relationship and how important it is to you, prioritization should not be too difficult. At least, you have a good idea of what is more important to you and what it not.

You have to also learn to accept the repercussions, because you will have to face them. Remember that you will not be able to achieve everything at once. You will have to let go of a few things. When you have your priorities decided properly, you will have a very good idea of what you should hold on to and what you can allow to pass.

Habit 4 for Enhancing Personal Relationships

Think win-win.

Relationships are a mutual process. It is not just about you and what you want. They are interpersonal. And that is why this habit is so much important. This is the first interpersonal habit in the list. It is a habit that tells you that you shouldn't just be looking for yourself, but at what others want as well.

Think of it this way. Your partner wants something. You make the effort to give it to them. You make them happy. It is because they are happy that they get closer to you. They get the security that you can be a provider for them if the situation calls for it. They know that they will be happier with you. Just by catering to your partner's needs, however small they might be, you have scored a veritable hit with them. They now begin to trust you and want to seal a more complete bond with you.

It is not that you should completely let go of your desires. When you are in a relationship, conflicts are going to happen. Several times it will happen that you want something but your partner wants something else. Issues will arise. At such times, what do you do? Who becomes the more important person? Do you compromise and do things for your partner to keep the relationship alive, even though you know that that is not going to make you happy?

The answer to that is a tricky one. This is the place where you need to go back to the first habit and be proactive. Always remember that you have the power to make a choice. What are the choices in front of

you? What are their repercussions? Do they fit in with what you have thought for the future? Do they match your ideals?

This is what you should think about and then plan your line of action. Maybe it would be good to pander to their desire, or maybe you should stick to your own guns. It takes conviction to do whatever you do. And when you are convinced, make sure that you are able to convince your partner too. This can take time sometimes, but if you are totally sure that yours is the right decision, and have no selfish interests in mind, then they are going to see your point.

This plan of action works for everything... whether you are just deciding where to go eat for the evening or whether you are planning on where to buy a home. Decisions can be small or big, but the way to go about it always remains the same.

Think of the interests of the other person, then think about what you want and then do what is mutually benefiting to both of you. Remember that it is only when both of you are happy that this will be a fruitful relationship.

Habit 5 for Enhancing Personal Relationships

Seek first to understand and then to be understood.

The importance of this one trait in a relationship can never be overemphasized. Since relationships are all meant to be totally interpersonal associations, communication becomes a very important aspect of it. You simply cannot ignore the importance of communicating with your partner, come what may.

When you are in a relationship, you are a significant part of each other's lives. The joys and sorrows of each one of you depends on the other person... what they think, how they behave, what happens to them... these are all things that are very important.

That is the reason it becomes so important to communicate.

Communication has different aspects when you are in a relationship. One form of it is through simple giving of information. If there is something you think your partner should know, don't hold back. Even if they just ask you what you ate last evening, there is no need to feel piqued about it. It is these trivialities that form a large part of a relationship. Do not be offended at being asked a straight question. It is acceptable when you are in a relationship with a person. Do not keep secrets. When they tumble out, they can leave a very gory mess.

Another aspect of communication when you are in a relationship is to listen to the other person. You have to give them ample opportunity to tell you what they have in their mind. Sometimes, these conversations may seem to be inane, but remember that everyone

needs someone to talk to. Maybe you are that pair of ears for them. This is not a bad thing either. You could be their pair of ears. They will be that for you as well.

Pay attention to what they say, even if they are just talking about their favorite place to hang out. These tell you what the person is like, and you can work at your relationship in that manner. These conversations are extremely important, because you are two people who should know as much about each other as possible.

So, when you are in a relationship, you have to seek to understand. Try to hear them out completely each time, and that is the way you can understand them in the best manner. When people are talking about them, you can get to know several things as well. Find out about their family, their friends, their pets, their work, their education, their interests, their favorite foods, the places they have visited, the charities they prefer... everything. Add this to your knowledge bank. When the time comes, you can spring surprises. You can do things that you know they will like. This is how you could carry a great relationship and keep it going.

Do not worry; a relationship is about you as well. But, you have to seek to understand first. When you make it an important point to learn as much as you can about the other person first, they will try to understand you better as well. They will do things that you like.

Both of you will thus be looking for mutual interests. You will not be selfish anymore, and that is a great thing, because relationships cannot work on selfishness.

Habit 6 for Enhancing Personal Relationships

Synergize.

This is actually the most beautiful habit to be implemented in a relationship. I never like to take my claims too far, but I can safely say about this habit that if you incorporate this in your relationship, it can go a long, long way... maybe even become an unbreakable bond that you want it to become.

So, how do you synergize when you are in a relationship? Basically, it means that you have to cooperate with your partner. You aren't a perfect person; you are certainly aware of that fact. Your partner is not a perfect person either. Nobody is perfect. But, at the same time, there are some things you can do well and some things they can do well. The most beautiful relationship among humans is one in which each partner *complements* the other.

You do what you are best at, and you let them do what they are best at. Even if you are in the same line of career, you will surely have your individual specialties. Each partner should allow the other partner to tap into their specialty.

This has so many different benefits. First, both of you are internally satisfied that you are able to do what you really like to do. There is no scope for arguments or bickering. Also, you are substantiating each other. When you do what you are good in, you are probably doing it right and getting some great results as well. This is mutually benefiting. If you have done some long term planning, which you

should if you are implementing the second habit, then you will see how this can help both of you give more stability and security to each other.

Do not detract the other person from whatever they are doing if you know it is the right thing for them to do. A relationship is not the place to bring egos and petty selfish interests into play. Let people work according to their forte. This will really work out.

Even in the small things, you can plan on doing this. For instance, if you are going for a movie, and you know that your partner is a good talker, let them book the tickets. They are good at it, they enjoy doing it, so let them do it. Giving each other their small joys is an important pillar of any relationship.

Do not demarcate a relationship by assigning gender-based roles to it. Why should only a woman cook? Why should only a man polish the car? If the other person likes doing the job, then why not? In a relationship, gender should matter only during biological acts such as having sex or motherhood. It need not matter elsewhere. Understand that and you will see your relationship blossoming to new levels.

Habit 7 for Enhancing Personal Relationships

Sharpen the saw.

The best part of a relationship is that you are not alone. But, probably that is the most difficult part as well. That is because now you are not thinking as a single individual, but you are thinking as two.

You are now two people with different interests and likes and dislikes. But, your responsibility increases as well. You now have to take more care of yourself... you owe it to the other person.

Personal health and fitness matters in a relationship, whether you accept it and give it importance or not. You have to make sure you are healthy and free from disease. You have to take precautions that you do not do those 'wild things' you once used to do. You have to keep away from vices. You have to ensure you do not put on excess weight.

You should exercise. You should live a healthy lifestyle. You should not take reckless risks. These are the things you should pay more attention to now because you are in a relationship.

You definitely paid attention to all these things before. But now, since you are with someone else, and because their joys and sorrows depend on you, you have to sharpen the saw a little more.

Remember that you don't need to look like the most beautiful or handsome person in the world, but you surely have to ensure that you live a healthy lifestyle. You owe it to them.

Think from the other person's point of view. Would you like it if your partner recklessly got drunk all the time? Would you like it if they binged on food and put on weight in an uncontrollable manner?

However sage-like you act about it, there is no way you can accept these habits for long. The same applies to you.

We have now seen how the seven remarkable aspects of Stephen Covey apply to various aspects of our relationships. Relationships are tricky business, they are not everyone's cup of tea.

They require dedication and time, and you have to be sure of what you are looking for. This may not be easy for everyone, but the beauty about this seven habits model is that it guides you one step at a time. You can do things slowly but surely so that you reach the goals you have set for yourself.

All the best in your love life! Implementing the seven habits is going to work amazingly well for you.

Chapter 4:

Seven Habits for Enhancing Your Professional Life

Synopsis

Your profession is a very important part of your life. Whether you are an entrepreneur running a business or are a salaried employee at a desk job, it is the means of your livelihood.

At all times, you know that you can take your professional life one step further. You know there are goals yet to be achieved, even if you get some success.

Stephen Covey's model of seven habits works brilliantly for the enhancement of professional life. If you are planning to give your career a whole new spin, maybe you should implement these habits.

You will be pleasantly surprised to see where these habits can take you in your professional life.

Seven Habits for Enhancing Your Professional Life

Your professional life plays a very important role in who you are. What you do for a living more or less becomes your identity. That's the reason you have to be sure about how your job or your business unfolds. It will not be wrong to say that if you succeed in your professional life, it is tantamount to succeeding in life itself.

Success in your career decides so many things for you. In a way, it also decides how your relationship goes. It decides what kind of equation you have with your family. It decides your financial position in life. It decides how much vacation you can take, and how much at peace you can be with yourself.

That is the reason you should put in constant effort to try and succeed in your professional life.

Like in every aspect of your life, the seven habits can be put to work amazingly well in your professional life as well. If you are looking for enhancement in your job or even in your business prospects, then this is something you can implement and make the most of in your life.

Here we are going to see how to use the seven habits to give a whole new spin to your professional life. Fasten your seatbelt and keep reading...

Habit 1 for Enhancing Professional Life

Be proactive.

Making a great career starts much before you actually begin with your job or your business or whatever other option you have for your professional life. Your career starts right from the time you make a decision on what you want to do.

The highly successful people find their calling in life at a very young age. When they are quite young, they have a very good idea of what they should do. This becomes their profession and hardly do they flinch from what they have decided.

You should know that you too are equipped with the power of making the right choice. It is all in your hands. Whether you want to become a professional with a salary check or you want to become an entrepreneur with checks coming in all the time or you want to become a rock star or a film star who gets a fat paycheck for every deal you sign up, it is your call. You have to make sure at the very outset of everything that you want to do it. Your determination needs to be extremely strong. And, once you have made that determination, it needs to be etched in stone. You shouldn't shake from what you have decided under any circumstances.

But you should know that all this begins quite early on. You don't wait till the end, till the time you complete your education, etc., to decide what you want to become. This calling of life should come like a snap. There should be an instant in your life when you hear the 'click'... when something somewhere within you tells you that this is indeed what you want to do.

When the time comes, this is what helps you take the right decision. You have to proactively think about what options you have in front of you, and once you have made sure you know about the options, you have to go ahead and choose the one that is the best fit for your desires and hopes.

How good you are in staying true to your dream will depend on what kind of decision you make. If your decision is rock-steady and a culmination of a great deal of thought and if your desire is really strong, then you shouldn't flinch from it, come what may. Being proactive also gives you the strength to develop an unflagging willpower that can turn the tide in your favor every time.

So, what do you want to become—a film star, a writer, a politician, an astronaut, an athlete, a stockbroker, a cab-driver? It is all within you. Think strongly about what you want to become. And once you have thought, be prepared to follow it through till the end. It is possible. The most successful people in the world have done things this way. They have ensured that nothing or no one can deter them from their path. That is the reason why they got to where they have reached.

That's the same ideal that you should emulate within yourself too. It is high time you did it yourself. Maybe you are in some kind of job already. But, are you satisfied? Do you want to make a shift? No one is going to improve your situation but yourself. Think about it. Think very hard about it. If you want to do something better, you have to think proactively. Make a decision if you want to make a change. Your change will be fruitful only if you are able to decide. Once your decision is staunch, you will see the path in front of you by yourself.

Habit 2 for Enhancing Professional Life

Begin with the end in mind.

Now that you have made the decision, you at least know that you are on the right path. The next step is to follow it through.

What you need to do, as the second habit dictates, is to begin with the end in mind. What are the goals you are aiming for? What is your eventual intention? When we take up any kind of career, we should first plan the future. Think about what we want to do about it.

It is important to be specific. For instance, if you just plan that you want to become a doctor, it will not work. What kind of a doctor do you want to become? What will be your specialty? What kind of patients do you want to handle? Where would you like to work? These are some of the questions whose answers you have to think about.

In fact, the best way is to actually visualize what you want to become. Think visually about your goals. How will you look in a doctor's garb? How will you deal with the patients? How will you talk to them, how will you treat them? How will you study for it?

Think about all these things. You will find out that the more you visualize, the more concrete shape your dream begins to take.

Do not hesitate from dreaming big. In fact, that is one of the things that you should do if you want to reach nearer to your goals. You should think about what the future holds for you and you should think so hard that you can almost taste it. When your end intentions

are very clear, you know exactly what you must do in order to achieve those goals. You see which direction you have to go in order to reach your destination.

So, begin with the end in mind. Plan your eventual future. Be clear in your mind about where you want to go. This is what helps you plan the journey as well. When your aspirations are crystal clear, you automatically get motivated to plan things the right way.



Habit 3 for Enhancing Professional Life

Put first things first.

Your next step would be to build the strategy. Whatever it is you want your career to be, you have to start building your master plan for it. You have to ensure that you will be able to go along with it the right way. Think of all the impediments and the difficulties that will strew your path. Think about all the options you will have in front of you. Think about what you will do in order to circumvent any obstacle that presents itself.

The most successful people in the world always had their plans in impeccable order. They did not take life as it was dished out to them. They sat and built their strategies. They thought about what they would do with their life, and then walked along the route they had planned for themselves.

You need to do the same as well. When you are thinking about the direction you want your career to take, you should make your strategy. Probably you are busy with some things in life right now. You have to make sure that you will be able to prioritize properly. Sit down and make a list of the things you have to do in life. Then ask yourself—which of these things do you want to do first? Which is the most important thing? Which is the thing on which another accomplishment depends? This is the way you should prioritize.

For example, if you want to become a software engineer, then your priority should be to gain a good education. The next step is to get the

degree. Then you need to look at all placement opportunities. This is the way to go about it. If you start looking for placement without having the right education, things are not going to work for you. This is a very simple and general example, but you see the point.

If you do things the right way, you see the path automatically simplified for you. You see that things become easier and you can move on from one station to the next quite easily. The secret is in streamlining your process in the most effective manner. Do not think that you will be able to do everything all at once. You have to make sure you take things one at a time, in the most proficient manner, because that is the only way in which things are going to work for you.



Habit 4 for Enhancing Professional Life

Think win-win.

Personally, I always think this is the most important habit to implement if you are looking for success in your professional life. This is the one habit that makes sure your profession has a steady base, a base that keeps you prodding on.

So, how does this habit manifest itself in your professional career?

The simplest implication is this... when you are looking for your professional growth, don't just look at what your career can do for you; think about the other person as well.

For instance, if you are taking up a job, do not just look at how much the job will pay you. This is a selfish way of going about it. It is not just going to make you very materialistic about your work, but it is going to rob you of any creative satisfaction from your job as well. The right attitude is to think about how your job will benefit the organization you will be working in as well. Think about what you can do for the company. Will you be an asset for them? When you are sure you have thought about this correctly, you could go ahead and see whether the compensation is right.

The same applies if you are an entrepreneur running your own business and selling some product or service. You should not just think about your own profits here. Most entrepreneurs think that way and they don't go too far. The ones who really become successful are the ones who think about their customers. They think about the

society at large. They don't just think about how many profits they are going to accumulate; they even think about how their business is going to benefit the world that they are living in. If you take a look at the most successful businesses in the world today, you will see that they are the businesses that have improved the world in some way or the other.

In other words, they have implemented the fourth habit. They have thought in a win-win manner. They have not just focused on their personal or individualistic growth, but they have thought about how everyone associated with them can improve.

Do the same. Change your professional outlook from today itself and don't just think about what you are receiving. Think about what you are giving as well. Your returns are secondary. And, rest assured, if you give something your best shot, then you are going to get back commensurate returns as well.



Habit 5 for Enhancing Professional Life

Seek first to understand, then to be understood.

A highly essential thing when you are looking for your professional growth is that you have to first try and understand every aspect of the profession you are aiming for.

If you are taking up a job, it becomes your most important prerogative to first find out what the job entails. The job description is a very important thing to know. That tells you what you will have to do, and whether it fits in with your visions and ideals. You come to know whether this is something you would like to do.

If you are planning a business, then get to know the industry very well. Understand every aspect of the industry. Some industries look good on the face of it, but you may not like everything that goes on with them. You may like some things about it, but not all. If that is the case, there could be problems later on, especially if the things you do not like interfere with the ideals you have built about your career growth.

Hence, it is very important to understand first. Get the right education about what you are plunging into.

Whether it is a new job or a new entrepreneurial venture that you are planning to start, get to know whatever you can about it. Don't just study about the scope and say that your education is over. Look at the various aspects you will have to handle and see whether they are in perfect tandem with the goals you have set for your life.

It is only after that that you can think about making yourself understood to people that matter. These people could be your employers or your partners or your clients, whoever they are that have an influence on your business. Only when you first understand every aspect of your business can you go out and make yourself understood and appreciated by them.

This also pertains to the right communication. When you are trying to learn something about your business or your job, it is very important that you listen to everything about it. It is only when you listen that you can learn. And when you have listened enough and know the ins and outs of the business, you can plan how to improve your impression in your niche.



Habit 6 for Enhancing Professional Life

Synergize.

In professional enhancement, it is always very important to synergize. You have to find the right people and forge the right kind of collaborations with them. You have to seek the benefit of the best in them. You should make plans for your individual growth, but never refute the importance of other people in helping these plans to succeed. You should, in fact, contemplate on enlisting the support of various people so that your growth takes place.

The professional world is a strange world. When you solicit someone's assistance for your growth, you are growing yourself as well. You are automatically getting assistance from that person as well.

This is so prominently happening in the Internet marketing world today. People with different websites and blogs are popularizing themselves on each other's space. This is not eating into the competition; in fact, everyone is getting a higher number of visitors and that is certainly helping everyone to grow.

In fact, the major reason for this humongous success of the Internet marketing world is that everyone is pushing the other towards success. This is all the more rampant in the world of Web 2.0, where the line between the buyer and seller has blurred so much that everyone is buying from the other. It is a healthy market scenario, one that you should plan on having for yourself as well.

You should be able to secure such support from everyone in your own professional growth as well. Look for support from everyone that is

associated with your profession. If you are doing a job, then your colleagues, your subordinates, your superiors and even your employer are people that you should synergize with. When you are working with the company, you are associated with all these people. Your success is dependent on their success and theirs is dependent on yours to an extent.

The world today is a happy family where everyone is helping each other. Even in the world of business, any entrepreneur cannot hope to subsist alone. It is important that they collaborate with their teams and their partners and their customers as well if they want to see growth.

In today's world, we are not surprised to see competitors collaborating with each other as well. They are combining their strengths to create a stronger force that proves to be mutually beneficial to them.

This is a broad-minded approach that works today. You have to synergize with people who will be of help to you. Synergizing is all about pooling talents together, something that you should definitely do without fail.

Habit 7 for Enhancing Professional Life

Sharpen the saw.

This habit directly refers to the need for self-growth and development. Enough can never be said about how important this is. The professional world of today is improving by leaps and bounds. It is very difficult to keep this progress in check. The only way you can keep one up on your competitors is by being kept updated with the modern technologies and methods. You have to see what is going on in the world around you and you should not be reluctant in implementing those changes.

When you sharpen the saw, in the professional context, it means that you are improving yourself. So, you are becoming better at your profession by improving your knowledge of the subject, or maybe by going for some kind of training that works for the professional growth. There are many such things professional people do in order to enhance their career growth.

It is not just about improving your knowledge and accepting new technology. In fact, a lot of things that you might think of as trifles could also be very useful when it comes to improving your professional attributes. For instance, just changing your wardrobe could make an impact.

You could take some speech classes and improve your oratorical skills. You could do something about your personality development. These are all things that work... and are important to you, especially since you are looking for anything and everything you can do to improve your impression in society.

The main thing here is that you have to keep on improving. It is not enough if you simply make a decision about what job you want to pursue or what business venture you want to start.

You have to also see how you fit in, and once things start, you have to see whether everything there suits you or not. Once you have done that and are sure that this is what you would like to do, then you can plunge into sharpening the saw and making yourself better for the people you are hoping to work for.

In conclusion, your professional life can be enhanced greatly if you can use the seven habits to your advantage. You have to first make the right decision about the direction that you want your career to take, you have to visualize your goals, you have to gather all the resources you need, you have to think about the improvement of everyone involved, you have to communicate properly, you have to forge the right energies of every person who is with you and you have to keep improving yourself. If you can include all these ideals in your professional life, then you can see measurable growth in everything that you do.

All the best for your professional enhancement! Keep going!

Chapter 5:

Seven Habits to Enhance Your Health

Synopsis

Health is a very personal and individualistic aspect of our lives. All the same, it is a highly influential factor... it influences the way we live our lives.

A lot of people spend more on their healthcare than on anything else. For a significant majority of these people, health is directly related to longevity. That is the reason people go to drastic lengths to improve their health.

But, you should know that you can implement the seven habits Stephen Covey has told us in no mean words that we can use his seven habits to whatever it is that we are doing.

The true benefits of the seven habits are fully apparent only when these habits are made a part and parcel of our daily lives.

Seven Habits to Enhance Your Health

Your health is your chief asset. You are only as successful as you are healthy. This is one aspect of our lives that we should give the highest priority, but, sadly, there are a very few people who take care of their health.

However, if you take a look at the daily routines of the most successful people from around the world, you will see that they have always been keenly observant about their health. They make sure that they live healthily, abhor all vices and take care of not only their physical but also their mental health.

You could also control the reins of your health, and you should do it now before it gets too late. Health is something that keeps deteriorating if it is not taken care of. The most terrible thing about it is that after it deteriorates beyond a point, then there is nothing you can do about it. When such a point arrives, all the money, relationships, goodwill, fame, etc. that you have built all through your life become a sordid waste.

If you want to be a really successful person and keep control over your success all through your life, then you should tread cautiously at every moment in life. It is never too early to begin.

The interesting point here is that the seven habits can be quite effectively used to improve personal health as well. Yes, that is true. Though you might feel that health is a purely biological thing and

there is very little you can do about it in most cases, the fact is that there is a lot more you can control about your health than you think.

If you are optimistic and follow the right practices, you will not only be able to master your health, but you will do it in an amazing manner.

In the following pages, we shall see how the seven habits can be used to improve your health. Now, I am not going to tell you that you will live forever using the seven habits, because the Good Lord hasn't ordained it to be so. But, every moment that we exist on the earth should be filled with health and happiness. We should be able to do what we please as long as we are alive. Our health should not be an impediment in doing that.

Stephen Covey's model can be used to do that... to gain mastery over health. Though you cannot change biological inevitabilities, you can at least ensure that as long as you live, you are healthy and don't have to succumb to the dictates of poor health any more than you should.

Habit 1 for Enhancing Health

Be proactive.

The first thing that you need to realize is that there are several things you can do about your health. You have the power to make the choice. You have the power to decide whether you want to live a lazy, indolent life, or you want to be active and do things that you have always set your mind to.

Some people, quite unfortunately make the former choice. In fact, a lot of people do so. That is the reason why success graces but a few people while the vast multitude just keep teeming in depression and frustration, depressed that they could not do things in life that they should have done.

The choice is eventually yours to make. You can decide whether you should eat a healthy diet or not, whether you have to quit smoking or not, whether you have to kick that alcoholism habit or not, whether you have to hit the gym or not, whether you have to meditate or not, whether you have to go to that health spa or not.

It is all up to you. Some people hide behind excuses such as the lack of time or company, or some people say that they work so hard that they need their binges now and then. But, are these really worth it? If you know that something is going to take you down Doomsville, then why would you go that way?

The one—and the most important—thing that you have to realize right now that you can make a proactive decision about your health.

Think about the kind of person you want to be, the things that you want to achieve and then keep moving that way in an unflinching manner.

Even if your health is a problem, there are things you can do. Probably you are suffering from an ailment that you cannot get rid of easily. Maybe it is a chronic problem. But, there is hope. Our medical science has advanced in great leaps and bounds, more so since the last 10 years.

Do not let anyone or anything tell you that something cannot be done, or that you cannot do something. You are the only person who knows yourself fully well. You know what's going on within your body and mind and you know what you can do about it. If you have a dream, chase it. Make the choice to get the right treatment for your ailment; do not become a victim of it, because that would be a very sorry waste of everything.

Once you stand up and make your mind to follow through with a solution, you will find that the path before you gets better illuminated. You suddenly realize that there are things you can do. You may even start getting better just because you made up your mind to get better.

There are other things that you should try to get out of your system. Is that weight around the abdomen getting to be a problem? Do you have a problem running a mile? Do you think you cannot concentrate on something that you should? Do you have bad sleeping patterns? Do you get tired easily? Do you suffer from certain allergies? Are some phobias in your mind keeping you away from doing the things you should? Are stress and depression sapping you from within?

If any of these problems are occurring with you, you know that the solution lies in your own hands. You know that there are things you can do to resolve all of these above-mentioned problems and more.

You know that if you have complete determination and if you put in the effort, you can bring back your health to the level you were at before. But, then, what is stopping you? What is deterring you?

The reason why these things are not happening is because you are not making a proactive choice. You have considered yourself defeated and compromised. You just want to sit down and take things as they come. This is not going to happen so easily. You have to plan things out. You have to make the choice to live a better life.

So, make the choice and see. Just coming out of denial and building a determination to live a better life is something that will veer your life's boat in the right direction.

Habit 2 for Enhancing Health

Put first things first.

When you make up your mind to live better, you will see that the improvement already begins to happen. You are happy that you made that decision, and you are happy because you are now following it through.

It is recommended that you get started by gathering all the things you would need. The first thing you need is a rock-steady determination and you have already got that. But you will need other things as well.

Maybe you should look at the support of your family members. If you tell them that you are going to take control of your life, they will be happily with you. Just tell your partner that you are going to do all you can to get a better body shape and see how they support you in that! Tell them that you are planning to quit your chain-smoking habit and they will be with you through all those difficult times of withdrawal and actually make that phase easier for you!

Another thing that you should gather before you start on your healthy life expedition is to gather all the information you can. What can you do to improve your health? What options are available? How are you supposed to do them? Can you do things on your own? What supplements, etc. can you use? What kind of food must you eat? What exercise will be needed? These are some of the things that you should be knowledgeable about. When you get to know these things, you understand what you can do. Things start becoming clearer to you... they start appearing more doable.

Maybe you should go out and get a medical opinion as well. A full body checkup should do good. You will know what's lacking in you and what you should focus on. Do not delay those medical checkups; they are more important than anything else you do in life.

Begin your tryst with a healthy life equipped with these things. You will find things easier to do, and because you have educated yourself about what you are doing, you will be more optimistic about the results as well. You will know what will happen when you do something healthy, and that would be your incentive for doing that. But, this ties up with the third habit, so we shall talk more about that on the following page.



Habit 3 for Enhancing Health

Begin with the end in mind.

So you have fostered within yourself a perfect determination to live a healthy life. That's good. But, do you think your determination is going to last for the long term?

Millions of people around the world make New Year resolutions to do healthy things the year round, but then forget that they had even made such a resolution by January 31st of that year! They do not even pursue their health determinations for the whole month, forget the year. So, why does this happen? Why do people not carry out their plans to live in a healthy manner?

If this is a problem with you as well, then the third habit can definitely help you. You have to begin with the end in mind.

Think about your goals when you are embarking on a healthy life. What is it that you are trying to achieve? What are trying to get by living healthy? There should be some short term and long term incentives for you. When you have such incentives in mind, you find that it is easier to stick to your determination.

For example, if you are trying to lose weight, you could make a short term incentive of fitting in one-size tighter jeans by the month-end. Actually, go to the store and buy the sexiest, most expensive jeans you can find which is one size tighter than what you normally wear. Don't hesitate in making the purchase. After all, you have created a solid determination within yourself, haven't you?

Then go home and hang the jeans in the prime position in your wardrobe. You will see how this proves highly effective in your endeavor of losing weight.

When you are on the treadmill and want to step down after 3 minutes, all you have to do is to think about that jeans hanging in your wardrobe and you will move along faster. When you think you will order that sizzling brownie in the café, you will suddenly remember the jeans you spent so much on and desist. Just because you created an 'end', you do not want to give up.

This is a short term incentive. But you can plan long term incentives as well. We have seen some amazing examples throughout history. Louis Braille comes to mind.

The person who lost his vision wanted to 'see' and he succeeded in a way. He prepared the first script for the visually challenged people. Sudha Chandran, a popular dancer from India who lost her leg wanted to continue her dancing career. She saw herself on stage and kept her determination high.

She was one of the first people to get fitted with a prosthetic foot in India and continued her passion for dance. She went on to win several accolades for her dancing prowess, and the world forgot that one of her feet wasn't what she was born with.

These are people who have not allowed anything to shake them from their path of self-enhancement. Why could that happen? That happened because they visualized the end. They actually saw themselves doing the things that the world said they could not do.

They saw their victories so strongly that they followed through with their passion with reverent zeal.

You are no different. Whatever your health setback is, do not worry. There are people who have overcome all their limitations and created records for themselves.

Think about what you want to achieve. In fact, think about it so hard that it becomes a real thing for you. It could just be a 'moment', but you have to make it real within your mind. When you think about such a real moment, your entire life is automatically going to reorient itself in a direction of achievement.



Habit 4 for Enhancing Health

Think win-win.

Even when you are thinking about your own health, there are situations in which you could think in a win-win manner. Think about it. Suppose you have a family. Now, when you are taking stock of your health situation, it is not affecting just yourself.

You are also benefiting your family by doing so. You are getting fitter and healthier, which means you can do more things for your family as well. So, your health is not as personal a thing as you think. There are other people who are influenced by what you do about it.

This is more significant in a relationship between two partners living together, and those who are dependent on each other for physical, material and spiritual reasons. Ill health of one of the partners can affect the other partner seriously.

Hence, it becomes very important that both partners take their health seriously. In fact, with partners the best thing is that they can embark on a healthy journey together. This really helps because both of them get support from each other while they are planning to live healthy and things become more interesting. The slightly competitive edge that that brings in is also good for health!

But, I should exhort you to think in broader terms. When you are thinking about your health constructively, it is not just you and your family that is benefited. You should think more than that. Your being healthy can have a positive effect on the world at large. Why not? You

have a job, a business, whatever. You are doing your best with it. You are benefiting a lot of people with the products or services that you are offering.

Should you offer even a slight health malady to cheat your loyal people of the things that you can give them? By spoiling your health, you are lowering your productiveness at work, and this is tantamount to belying the trust of people who have placed their faith in you.

That is a wide outlook, but a really serious one. People who have a responsibility towards society think of it this way.

What would happen if a head of state or an entrepreneur running a business that employs thousands of people or a popular film star on whom millions are riding on fall sick? The entire affairs of the state, company or the film could be in a mess. When you are at a position of power, you have to act more responsibly as well.

Habit 5 for Enhancing Health

Seek first to understand, then to be understood.

Throughout your journey in life, you will find that the better you try to understand people, the healthier you can be. We are not just talking about physical health here. Health encompasses your mental framework as well.

If you are more comfortable with the people around you; if you can understand what these people mean and what they are looking for, then you will have a better idea about yourself as well. You will find that you can live in a more contented and satisfied manner just because you sought to understand people.

Also, think about understanding your health situation. Can you do anything about your health as long as you are in denial? You cannot! You have to first understand that something wrong is happening with you, something that you have to take care of. When you do that, only then will you be able to take better control of the situation.

So, try to understand... understand the world, understand the people around you, understand yourself. It is only with this enlightenment that you will be able to master your body and mind in a better way.

Habit 6 for Enhancing Health

Synergize.

Synergizing in the health context implies seeking better support and help from the people around you. It also means trying to form a closer relationship with your own body and mind, which helps you become a controller of them. When you are trying to give your health a truly positive direction, this is a very important thing to do.

You could falter in your journey towards good health if you don't have good support from your family and friends. You need to tell them what you are trying to do and then get help and assistance from them. Even a mere word of support from them could mean a lot to you.

Synergize with your doctor as well. What do they tell you about maintaining your health? These are people who are ready to work with you, especially the doctors you know you and have taken care of you for a while. They will give you the best advice if you want to take better control of your health.

But, the most important being that you have to synergize with is yourself. You have to know what your body needs, what your body is comfortable doing, what your body's capacity is, what your mental needs are, what makes you happy and what makes you sad, etc. these are the things you need to realize, and then you have to do the best you can to give your body and mind the exact things that they are looking for... things that can keep you healthier.

Habit 7 for Enhancing Health

Sharpen the saw.

You need to be sharpening the saw at every moment of your existence. You have to improve upon what you are, bodily and mentally. This is a constant process, and you should dedicate yourself to do it in an unfaltering manner. Let go of it, and you will see that your health begins to drastically decline.

Keeping your health in check should be always on your agenda. You have to consistently think about preserving your health and for that you should plan several things.

Maybe you could go for a jog every morning. Maybe you could include salads and fruits at every meal. Maybe you cut short on the drink and the smoke. These are things that you have to do in a consistent manner if you have to keep your health in proper order.

Remember that health is not just a physical thing; it relates to your mind as well. This is also an aspect that you have to constantly keep improving. Identify those stressors and work them out. Do not get unduly depressed. Do not get overworked; do not let things get to you. These are ways in which you should keep sharpening the saw of your mental health.

There are many benefits of preserving your health in a consistent manner. Firstly, you stay healthier in both body and mind. You are able to achieve more, and you are able to do a better job for the

society. You are able to fulfill your family responsibilities in a better manner as well.

But there is more than that. When you constantly keep your body and mind in good order, you are taking care that you stay at your productive best. When you go for an early morning jog every day, you find that the energy that it creates stays with you throughout the day. It freshens you up to face the whole day in a better way. This is something that is much needed to you. After all, it is only when you stay suitably energized that you can do a better job at whatever you do.

Consider staying healthy as a habit. That is definitely not a very difficult thing to do. After all, you have the greatest incentives in front of you—a better life! But, there is another thing that is to your advantage as well. Experts have analyzed that if you carry on with a good thing for more than 7 days, then it becomes a habit that you will find very difficult to get out of.

So, it is actually very simple to get into that jogging, gymming or healthy eating habit. You just have to work in the complete determination to do everything precisely for a week. If you can follow it through, then it will be a habit that will not be able to get out of for your entire life!

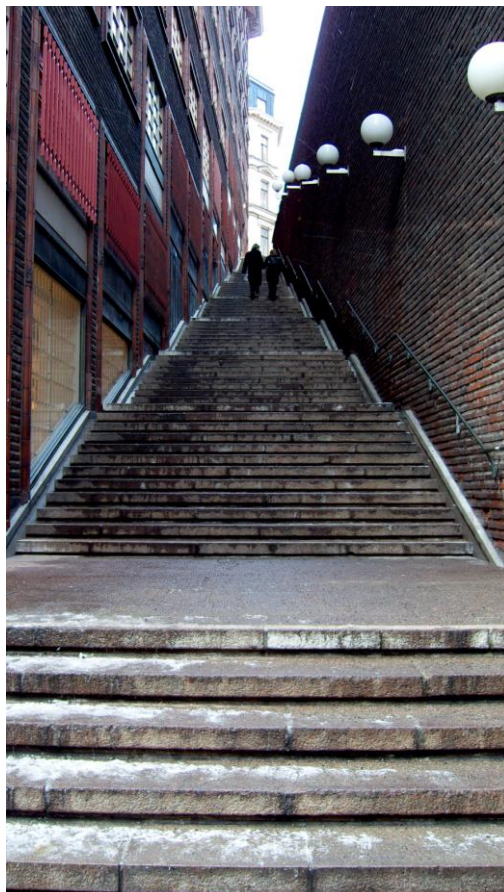
Chapter 6:

Learning the Game of Living Successfully

Synopsis

There is such a lot to be learned from the seven habits, but all of it cannot be learned by simply reading. You have to actually make the effort to go out there and put it to use.

In this last chapter of the eBook, we shall sum up what we have learned and see how we can utilize these habits in other aspects of our life.



Learning the Game of Living Successfully

Your health is your chief asset. You are only as successful as you are healthy. This is one aspect of our lives that we should give the highest priority, but, sadly, there are a very few people who take care of their health.

It should be your constant endeavor to live in the most optimal way you can. Why should you compromise at anything? It is all within you—you can plan your life. Do not let it pass by you in a blur... that will only have you repent later about things that you could have done but did not.

And this applies to every aspect of your life—your personal life, your relationships, your family, your finances, your business, your education, your health, your spiritual life, etc. It is wholly within you to be the best at everything.

The seven habits are universally true. They have been designed by Stephen Covey in such a way that you can implement them in every aspect of your life. We have already seen how they can enhance three most important areas of our lives—our relationships, our work and our health.

But, the concept can be expanded to cover every other aspect of our life as well. There is nothing that the seven habits cannot reach and improve... it is within us to understand them and then unleash their potential on different domains that govern our lives.

Take stock of your life. You can be proactive and make the choice on what you want to do, whatever aspect of your life it pertains to. You can always prioritize and you should always start thinking keeping the end in mind.

You can always think in a way that is mutually beneficial to everyone because that is the way in which real progress lies. You must be better at communication and try to understand more than you try to tell.

Your focus should be on synergizing with every person you meet because that is what can multiply your potential. And you must always try to improve yourself from whatever you are already.

If you take care of these seven important habits, then you will find that the different areas of your life undergo a major improvement. Life becomes more meaningful and you start walking on the path of success unfailingly.

Wrapping Up

The seven habits are now all yours to use in whichever way you want. They are laid bare in front of you and now you know what you should do in order to unleash their potential in different aspects of your life.

Knowing that you can turn your life in a different way, will you want to sit back and let it unravel itself in front of you? Would you want to treat it like a box of assorted goodies in which you blindly plunge your hand and remove things one by one, not knowing what will come up next? Or do you want to take control of your life and make it go in the direction you want it to go?

There are plans to make, there are actions to take. Life isn't going to wait until you wake up and smell the coffee. You have to do it yourself.

Start implementing the seven habits in your life as soon as you can. A whole new world of opportunity and success awaits you ahead!