

# 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens - Summary

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## **Habit 1: Be Proactive**

*Principle: I am free to choose and am responsible for my choices.*

The first habit of Stephen Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen Covey is to "Be Proactive". Being proactive means accepting that as human beings we are fully responsible for our own lives. Our behavior and our actions are the result of our choices, not our conditions.

To be effective we need to focus our time and energy. The things we are concerned is seen as our "Circle of Concern". There are things we can do something about, that can be described as our "Circle of Influence". When we focus our time and energy in our Circle of Concern, but outside our Circle of Influence, we are not being effective. However, we find that being proactive helps us expand our Circle of Influence. The essence here is to work on things you can do something about.

## **Habit 2: Begin With the End in Mind**

*Principle: Mental creation precedes physical creation.*

All things are created twice. We create them first in our minds, and then we work to bring them into physical existence. By taking control of our own first creation, we can write or re-write our own scripts, thus taking some control and responsibility for the outcome.

## **Habit 3: Put First Things First**

*Principle: Effectiveness requires the integrity to act on your priorities.*

Time management is an essential skill for personal management. The essence of time management is to organize and execute around priorities. Methods of time management have developed over time. A matrix can be made of the characteristics of activities, classifying them as urgent or not urgent, important or not important. List the activities screaming for action as "Urgent". List the activities contributing to your mission, value or high-priority goals as "Important".

## **Habit 4: Think Win-Win**

*Principle: Effective, long-term relationships require mutual respect and mutual benefit.*

The most important ingredient we put into any relationship is not what we say or do, but who we are. If our words and actions come from superficial human relations techniques (the Personality Ethic) rather than from our inner core (the Character Ethic), others will sense that duplicity. Interdependence opens worlds of possibilities for deep, meaningful associations, greater productivity, service, contribution and growth. It also exposes us to greater pain. In order to receive the benefits of interdependence, we need to create and care for the relationships that are the source of the benefits. We need to look for or create a win/win situation.

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### **Habit 5: Seek First to Understand Then to Be Understood**

*Principle: To communicate effectively, we must first understand each other.*

We often prescribe before making a proper diagnosis when communicating. We should first take the time to deeply understand the problems presented to us. The real key to influence is example – your actual conduct. Your private performance must square with your public performance. Unless people trust you and believe you understand them, they will be too angry, defensive, guilty or afraid to be influenced. Skills of empathic listening must be built on a character that inspires openness and trust and high emotional bank accounts.

### **Habit 6: Synergize**

*Principle: The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.*

The exercise of the other habits prepares us for synergy. Synergy means the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The relationship which the parts have to each other is a part in and of itself – the most empowering, unifying and exciting part. The essence of synergy is to value differences – to respect them, to build on strengths, and to compensate for weaknesses. The way to achieve synergy is through the creative process, which is terrifying, because you never know where the creative process will lead you.

### **Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw**

*Principle: To maintain and increase effectiveness, we must renew ourselves in body, heart, mind, and spirit.*

Suppose you came upon someone in the woods working to saw down a tree. They are exhausted from working for hours. You suggest they take a break to sharpen the saw. They might reply, "I didn't have time to sharpen the saw, I'm busy sawing!" Habit 7 is taking the time to sharpen the saw. By renewing the four dimensions of your nature – physical, spiritual, mental and social/emotional, you can work more quickly and effortlessly. To do this, we must be proactive. This is a Quadrant II (important, not urgent) activity that must be acted on. It's at the center of our Circle of Influence, so we must do it for ourselves.