the seven habits of highly effective people ®

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

Dr Stephen Covey (1932-2012) was and remains a hugely influential management guru. Covey’s most famous book, The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, became a blueprint for personal development when it was published in 1990. The principles may be used for life in general - they are not limited to workplaces, management, leadership, etc. Covey’s concepts actually can help people to grow, change, and become more effective in really any other aspect of human responsibility that you might imagine.

Covey’s Seven Habits are easy to understand, but like all the best and simplest models, can be a little more difficult to apply in practice. The ‘Habits’ seem very simple, and in many ways they are, yet to varying degrees they may entail quite serious changes to thinking and acting.

Be inspired by Covey’s ideas nevertheless. They are wonderful.

The ‘Seven Habits’ are a remarkable set of inspirational and aspirational standards for anyone who seeks to live a full, purposeful and good life, and are applicable today more than ever, as the business world - and life beyond business and work - become more attuned to humanist concepts.

Covey’s values are full of integrity and humanity, and contrast strongly with the authority-driven process-based ideologies that characterize management and leadership thinking in earlier times. Indeed Covey’s methods extend and adapt with increasing relevance to many more areas in the modern world, for example parenting, relationships, mediation, counselling, etc.

Stephen Covey, as well as being a renowned writer, speaker, academic and humanist, also built a huge training and consultancy products and services business - Franklin Covey [1] which has a global reach. Stephen Covey at one
time or other also consulted with and provided training services to most of the world’s leading corporations.

Covey produced a substantial body of educational and teaching work. The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People was his first significantly popular creation, and probably remains his greatest.

Here is a quick summary. I encourage you to explore and use his ideas.

**Stephen Covey’s Seven Habits of Highly Effective People ®**

**habit 1 - be proactive ®**

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

**habit 2 - begin with the end in mind ®**

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

**habit 3 - put first things first ®**

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

**habit 4 - think win-win ®**

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

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

One of the great maxims of the modern age. This is Covey's habit of communication, and it's extremely powerful. Covey helps to explain this in his simple analogy 'diagnose before you prescribe'. Simple and effective, and essential for developing and maintaining positive relationships in all aspects of life. (See the associated sections on Empathy [5], Transactional Analysis [4], and the Johari Window [5].)

**habit 6 - synergize ®**

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

**habit 7 - sharpen the saw ®**

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

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

This 7 Habits summary is just a brief overview - the full work is fascinating, comprehensive, and thoroughly uplifting. Read the book, or listen to the full audio series, which is particularly impressive because it features Covey speaking to an audience.

In his more recent book 'The 8th Habit', Stephen Covey introduced (logically) an
the eighth habit, which deals with personal fulfilment and helping others to achieve fulfilment too, which aligns helpfully with Maslow’s notions of ‘Self-Actualization’ and ‘Transcendence’ in the Hierarchy of Needs model [6], and also with the later life-stages in Erikson’s Psychosocial Life-Stage Theory [7]. The 8th Habit book also focuses on leadership, another distinct aspect of fulfilment through helping others. Time will tell whether the The 8th Habit achieves recognition and reputation close to Covey’s classic original 7 Habits work.

N.B. Various phrases on this page are registered trade marks belonging to Stephen Covey [8].

Stephen Covey’s principles are protected intellectual property and feature strongly in the Franklin Covey [9] organization’s portfolio of products and services.

see also

Other inspirational concepts explained on this website, for attitude to life and personal development, for example:

browse categories

- business/selling[10] sales, marketing, strategy, business management
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- teambuilding/games [13] activities, games, icebreakers, quizzes, puzzles
- lifestyle/environment [14] climate change, sleeping aids,
- personal development [16] personal development, self-discovery, self-help, life balance
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17. http://www.businessballs.com/leadership-management.htm