

BOOK REVIEW

Book Reviewed by:
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Title of Book: The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

By **Stephen Covey**

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The Book 7 Habits of Highly Effective People is a highly researched book which will help us mirror us about many things of life. It is almost a Bible on Personal Management. It provides a yardstick for a guidable change and in few areas a measureable change. In this review, we have tried to provide many of skills which we felt were most important for youth. It is suggested that individual should make an independent reading of the book, before drawing any perceptions. It is highly recommended book for today's youth.

The Author has divided the book into 7 major skills (Habits) that needs to be developed, for a balanced life. The brief discussion of 7 habits as given by the author is as follows:

Habit 1:

The author in this section talks about reaction to a stimulus. We as human being are the only species, who have been given free will by God to choose or to reject. Stimulus comes from a variety of sources but the question that comes to us is how we react to these stimuli. We can neglect them or we may react or may over react but in all above situations it depends on our free will. For e.g., look at how Sachin Tendulkar has been attacked by many for a variety of reasons, the greatness of this man comes from his ability to distance himself from such criticisms. This ability of his not gets carried away by praises and get bogged down by criticism makes him what he is today. Furthermore the author touches another important concept of "Act or be acted upon". Environmental pressures change you (being acted upon),It has been seen during recession that

many people lose their jobs and the best thing they do during this time is take up courses to get their jobs back (being acted upon). Had they taken these courses during good days *(acted) firstly they wouldn't had lost their jobs and secondly they may have also got promotions.

Habit 2: Begin with end in mind.

If you give a fish to a man then it will have a good one day meal. If you give him a fishing rod he can eat for his entire life.

If you plan for 10 years from now grow a tree, if you plan for 100 years, educate. Both the above thoughts advocate same the thought "Begin with end in Mind".

Ultimately, it depends how far the end is and how far you can see. The author here tries to say that think and act according to what you think, what you want to do and achieve at the end. Develop your personal mission statements accordingly. The author also touches the wonderful concept of ALL Things are Created Twice i.e., once in mind and once in reality. If you don't have the courage to dream big (creating in the mind) how can you turn it into reality. So dream, that's when it is created first and then it creates an opportunity to be created in reality (second time). Further, the author touches another concept "The Center". He says human beings live in different centers, few are wisdom, Guidance, Security centric while few are Enemy, Friends centric etc. But my personal belief is that we are a bit of all centers with few superseding the others. The author also touches the idea of having Personal Mission statement which sums up all of above.

Habit 3: Put First Things First.

"Things that matter the most should not be at the mercy of things that matter the least."

"Organize and execute around priorities"

Here the author deals with important concept of time management. He discusses different Eras of Time Management, Further he divides all our activities into 4 quadrants, quadrant 2 which has activities such as Relationship building, Recognizing new opportunities etc., are at the heart of personal Management, which will reduce the time spent in quadrant 1, which involve activities which are Urgent and produces Crisis situations. Author also advises to avoid spending too much time in quadrant 4 which involves time wasters like phone calls, mails etc. Although in my personal opinion everybody gets burnt out so everybody needs change and some amount of time wasters will relieve you of the stress developed in quadrant 1.

He also focuses on the importance of learning to say NO when you want to say NO

Habit 4: Think Win-Win.

The author discusses here different 6 different paradigms through which we humans interact with others such as WIN- WIN, WIN - LOSE, LOSE -LOSE - WIN, LOSE - LOSE, WIN and NO DEAL. The question that arises what is the best of all these paradigms. Well, it is relationship specific, there is no perfect recipe for human relations. If you are playing a cricket match you definitely do not want a win-win situation, but in personal relationships, you do not mind a lose win situation although you may prefer a win-win situation. The author also discusses about few people who prefer a WIN situation it doesn't matter to them, what happens to the competitor. They are happy as far as they win.

Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood.

You tell your children that they never listen to you, yes it may be true that they don't agree with your opinions. But why is the question important? Did you listen to them enough to understand their problems or what lies within their mind before prescribing to them a readymade prescription from 30 years of your life experiences, assuming it worked for you hence it will work for them? The author gives a wonderful example where he asks "would you go to an Optometrist who gave you his spectacles without diagnosing your eyes just because these spectacles worked for him"? It's important to have good communication skill and listening becomes the most important of them all. What the author is trying to say here, is to become an emphatic listener.

Habit 6

The author discusses the concept of third option where he emphasizes on the need for communication. It is about looking out for a third alternative which takes into consideration different people position and the coming out with a solution which is acceptable to all with due respect and dignity. In habit 6, the author also expresses the need to synergize, the power of two is always greater than 1, two minds are better than 1. The author expresses the need to synergize all the 5 previous habits and shows the power of using them in synergy. He also speaks about creative cooperation within families and classrooms, spouses and societies etc.

Habit 7

In the fast changing world, where product life cycles are getting shorter than ever before, skills get redundant faster, and technology changes at a rampant speed. We cannot be living with skills that were sufficient in the past. In Habit 7, the author expresses the need to continuously sharpen your saws (skills). As it is said sharpen your swords every day. The author further expresses the need to be healthy, from various perspectives such as Physical, Mental, Spiritual Social and Emotional skills (Saws). What he means to say here is the need to continuously redefine oneself so as to pick challenges of the New Era of Globalization.

In conclusion, we would like to say that although life is dynamic in nature; few golden principles of Personal Management expressed in this book can be a good launch pad to keep things well under control. It is good book for reading so one must this book.