

The 7 habits of Highly Effective People by Stephan Covey

This book abstract is intended to provide just a glimpse of this wonderful book with the hope that you may like to read the original book at leisure and enjoy its real beauty.

Foreword:

One of the most profound learning of my life is this: if you want to achieve your highest aspirations and overcome your greatest challenges, identify and apply the principle or natural law that governs the results you seek. How we apply the principle will vary greatly and will be determined by our unique strengths, talents, and creativity, but ultimately, success in any endeavour is always derived from acting in harmony with the principles to which success is tied.

Most common human challenges:

Fear and insecurity, "I want it now", Blame and victimise, Hopelessness, Lack of life balance

"What's in it for me?", The hunger to be understood, Conflict and differences, Personal stagnation.

How many on deathbeds wished they would spend more time at the office-or watching TV?

This book is an exciting learning adventure. Share with loved ones. Start applying what you are learning.

Part I: Paradigms and Principles:

The power of paradigm:

Both the Character ethic and personality ethic are examples of social paradigms. It's the way we "see" the world in terms of perceiving, understanding, and interpreting.

If you have the right map of Chicago, then diligence becomes important, and when you encounter frustrating obstacles, then attitude can make a real difference.

Maps can be divided into two categories: maps of the way things are, or realities, and the maps of the way things should be, or values. We experience everything through these maps. We seldom question their accuracy; we are even unaware that we have them. We simply assume that the way we see things is the way they are. Or the way they should be.

And our attitudes and behaviours grow out of these assumptions.

Example: Picture of a woman is shown in a class. One group insists that the woman is very young and beautiful. The other group is convinced that the woman is a very old one. The picture is the same, but different viewing angles create so much difference. Which one is true?

Basic flaw of personality ethic: To try to change outward attitudes and behaviours does little good in the long run if we fail to examine the basic paradigms from which those attitudes and behaviours flow.

We see the world not as it is, but the way we are-or, as we are conditioned to see it. When we speak, we describe ourselves. When others disagree with us, we think that they are wrong.

Listen to others and be open to their perceptions, to get a larger picture and a far more objective view.

If we want to make significant, quantum change, we need to work on our basic paradigms

The Principle Cantered Paradigm:

The Character ethic is based on the fundamental idea that there are principles that govern human effectiveness-natural laws in the human dimension that are as real, as laws of gravity. Principles are like lighthouses. They are natural laws that cannot be broken.

Principles: Fairness, integrity and trust, human dignity, service, quality/excellence, potential-growth, patience, nurturance, encouragement. These are not practices. Practices are situation specific. Principles are not values. Values are maps. When we value correct principles, we have truth. Principles are self-evident.

Principles of growth and change:

The personality ethic is illusory and deceptive.

In all of life, there are sequential stages of growth and development. No step can be skipped. True in all phases of life.

If you are an average tennis player but decide to play at a higher level to make a better impression, what will be the result? Would positive thinking alone enable you to compete effectively against a professional?

On a ten point scale, if I am at level two in any field, the desire to move to level five, I must take the step toward level three. "A thousand mile journey begins with the first step" and can only be taken one step at a time.

If you don't let a teacher know at what level you are-by asking a question, or revealing your ignorance-you will not learn and grow. You can't pretend for long, for you will eventually be found out. Admission of our ignorance is often the first step in our education. Thoreau taught, "How can we remember our ignorance, which our growth requires, when we are using knowledge all the time?"

To relate effectively with others, we must learn to listen. And this requires emotional strength. It requires patience, openness, and the desire to understand.

The way we see a problem is the problem:

A new level of thinking: This is what seven habits is all about. It is principle cantered, character based, inside-out approach to personal and interpersonal effectiveness. Private victory precedes public victory. Make and keep promises to yourself before doing it for others.

It says that if you want a happy marriage, be the kind of person who generates positive energy and sidesteps negative energy. Be trustworthy to be trusted.

Many of the principles are already deep within us. We need to recognise and develop them and use them.

An overview:

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then is not an act, but a habit. Aristotle

Our character, basically is a composite of our habits. Sow a thought, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny.

Habits are powerful which express our character and produce our effectiveness/ineffectiveness. These can be learned and unlearned. But it isn't a quick fix. They have a tremendous gravity pull. "Lift off" takes a tremendous effort, but once we break out of it, our freedom takes on a whole new dimension. Gravity pull can work with us or against us. Same thing with our habits.

Habits defined:

Habit is an intersection of knowledge, skill, and desire. Knowledge tells us what to do and why. Skill tells us how to do. The desire is the motivation-the want to do.

Happiness can be defined, in part at least, as a fruit of the desire and ability to sacrifice what we want now to what we want eventually.

The maturity continuum: From dependence to independence to interdependence.

Dependent person depends on others, and circumstances for success and happiness. Independent person relies on himself for the same. Interdependent person works effectively with others to have greater good for them. Life is highly interdependent. Only independent persons can be interdependent. Involves sharing.

Although, the seven habits are sequential, we don't need to be perfect in one to work on the other.

Effectiveness Defined:

Because these habits are based on principles, they bring maximum long term beneficial results.

For improving production (P), we must improve production capability (PC).

We have physical, financial and human assets. The P/PC balance is required in all three.

How to use the book:

You may read the book completely through once. But the material is designed to be a companion in the continual process of life.

You may also shift your paradigm from a learner to that of a teacher. Learn with a purpose of sharing within 48 hrs. Those you teach will see you as a growing person, and help you in this journey.

What you can expect:

"No one can persuade another to change. Each of us guards a gate of change that can only be opened from inside."

If you can decide to open your "gate of change", several positive changes will occur.

First, your growth will be evolutionary, but the net effect will be revolutionary.

The first three habits will increase your confidence tremendously. You will know yourself better-nature, deepest values, unique contribution capacity. You will be infused with exhilaration and peace.

With next three habits, you will discover and unleash desire and resources to heal and rebuild important relationships that have worsened.

The seventh habit will renew first six and charge your batteries.

Part II: Private Victories

Habit 1: Be Proactive

Principles of Personal Vision:

I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by conscious endeavour. Henry David Thoreau

Can you look at yourself almost as though you were looking at someone else? Can you identify the mood you are in? Is your mind quick and alert? Your ability to do this is called self awareness.

We are not our feelings, moods or even thoughts.

The Social mirror:

If the only vision we have of ourselves comes from opinions, perceptions of others, we will be miserable.

There are three social maps: Genetic determinism (genes responsible), Psychic determinism (parents, upbringing responsible), Environmental determinism (spouse, children, boss, circumstances responsible).

Stimulus and Response:

We are conditioned to respond to a particular stimulus in a particular way.

Victor Frankl was a Jew psychiatrist, imprisoned in Nazi death camps. His parents, brother and wife were sent to gas ovens. One day, during torture, he became aware of “the last of human freedoms” his Nazi captors could not take away. Between what happened to him, or the stimulus. And his response to it, was his freedom or power to it, was his freedom or power to choose that response.

In the midst of his experiences, Frankl would imagine lecturing students about his death camp experiences, after release from the camps. Through use of memory and imagination, he exercised his small embryonic freedom until it grew larger and larger, until he had more freedom than his Nazi captors. He became an inspiration to others including his guards. He helped others in finding meaning and dignity in their prison existence.

Proactivity Defined:

It means that we are responsible for our lives. Responsibility means “response-ability”-ability to choose our response. They do not blame circumstances, or conditioning for their behaviour. We are by nature, proactive. Our reactivity is because of our unconscious decision to abdicate responsibility.

Eleanor Roosevelt observed “No one can hurt you without your consent.” In the words of Gandhi, “They can’t take away our self respect if we don’t give it to them.”

It is not what happens to us, but our response to what happens to us that hurts us. Of course, things can hurt us physically or economically and cause us sorrow. But our character, does not have to be hurt at all. The difficulties forge our character.

Taking the initiative:

If you want better job, take initiative- take interest and aptitude tests, study the industry, even specific problems the organizations they are interested in are facing, and then develop an effective presentation showing how their abilities can solve their problems. It's called "solution selling".

Many people wait for something to happen or someone to take care of them. But people who get good jobs are proactive who solutions to problems, not problems themselves are. They are resourceful and take initiative.

Act or be acted upon:

What's happening to us? What's the stimulus? What's going to happen in future?

What is our response?

Listening to our language:

Our language is a very real indicator of our proactive nature.

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Reactive language

Proactive language

There is nothing I can do

Let's look at the alternatives

That's just the way I am

I can choose a different approach

He makes me so mad

I control my own feelings

They won't allow that

I can create an effective presentation

I have to do that

I will choose an appropriate response

I can't

I choose

If only

I will

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If you don't love (feeling) someone, love (verb) him.

Circle of concern/circle of influence:

Another effective way of self awareness is to examine where we focus our time and energy. We have a wide range of concerns (personal, family, social, national, global). The things on which we have control are in the circle of influence. The circle of concern is bigger than that of influence. Proactive approach enlarges the latter.

Direct, Indirect, and no control:

We have problems where our action/behaviour makes a difference-direct control. Problems where others are also involved-indirect control. Past, or situations-no control.

Direct control problems can be solved by Private victories. Indirect ones through Public Victories. For no control problems, we genuinely smile and peacefully accept them and live peacefully with them.

Prayer of Alcoholics Anonymous: Lord, give me the courage to change the things which can and ought to be changed, the serenity to accept the things which cannot be changed, and the wisdom to know the difference.

It is important to realize that in choosing our response to circumstance, we powerfully affect the circumstance.

Gandhi looked at ways to widen the circle of influence.

The “Have’s” and the “Be’s”:

Anytime we think the problem is “out there”, that thought is the problem.

In proactive approach-I can be more resourceful, creative, diligent, and cooperative.

Happiness/unhappiness is a proactive choice.

The other end of the stick:

While we are free to choose our actions, we are not free to choose consequences of those actions. The latter are in areas of concern.

It is not what others do or even our own mistakes that hurt us the most; it is our response to these things. It is important to immediately admit and correct our own mistakes so that they have no power over the next moment and we are empowered again.

Making and keeping commitments:

At the heart of circle of our influence is our ability to make and keep commitments and promises to ourselves and others. This is proactivity. Through these we begin to establish an inner integrity that makes us responsible for our own lives and makes our honour greater than our moods.

The Thirty Day Test:

Make small commitments and keep them. Be light, not a judge. Be a model, not a critic. Be part of a solution not a problem.

Don’t argue for other people’s weaknesses, or your own. Admit, correct and learn from them immediately. Work on yourself.

Look at weaknesses of others with compassion. It’s not what they are doing or not doing that’s the issue. Your response to the situation and what you should be doing is the main issue.

People who exercise their embryonic freedom day after day will, little by little, expand their freedom.

We are responsible for our own effectiveness, happiness and most of our circumstances.

Habit 2: Begin with the end in mind

Principles of personal leadership:

Imagine your funeral. What would you like the speakers to say about you? Jot down your impressions.

What it means to “Begin with the end in mind”

The serious visualization described above puts you in touch with your inner guidance system.

Although habit 2 applies to many circumstances and levels of life, the most fundamental application is to begin today with the image, picture or paradigm of the end of your life as a frame of reference. It tells you what is most important for you. Every day’s activities can be examined in this light.

Before you work hard, check whether the wall the ladder is leaning against is the right one.

All things are created twice:

There is a mental or first creation, and a physical or second creation to all things.

Carpenter’s rule: Measure twice, cut once.

For any endeavour, define what you want to accomplish. The extent to which you begin with the end in mind often determines the success of the endeavour.

By design or default:

Although the principle applies to all things, but not all first creations are by conscious design. If we are not aware, we empower people or circumstances to shape our lives.

Habit one says “you are the creator.” Habit 2 is the 1st creation.

Leadership and Management:

Management is doing things right; leadership is doing right things. We are all caught in management paradigm.

We are more in need of a vision and a compass and less in need of a road map.

Rescripting: Becoming your own creator

Anwar Sadat, past president of Egypt rescripted himself in prison. He discovered there that real success is success with self. It’s not in having things, but in having mastery, having victory over self.

I can change. I can tie myself to my limitless potential instead of my limiting past.

Begin each day with values in mind. Then as challenges come, I can make my decisions based on values. I can act with integrity.

A Personal Mission Statement:

The most effective way to begin with the end in mind is to write a Mission Statement. It focuses on what you want to be (character) and to do (contributions and achievements) and on the values or

principles upon which being and doing are based. Because everyone is unique, this statement is also unique for each person in content and form.

Example:

Succeed at home first. Seek and merit divine help. Never compromise with honesty. Remember people involved. Hear both sides before judging. Obtain counsel of others. Defend those who are absent. Be sincere yet decisive. Develop one new proficiency per year. Plan tomorrow's work today. Hustle while you wait. Maintain a positive attitude. Keep a sense of humour. Be orderly in person and work. Do not fear mistakes-fear only absence of creative, constructive, and corrective responses to those mistakes. Facilitate success of subordinates. Listen twice as much as you speak. Concentrate all abilities and efforts on the task at hand, not worrying about the next job or promotion.

Example:

I will balance career and family as best as I can. I will be self-starting individual who exercises initiative in accomplishing my life's goals. I will always keep myself free from addictive and destructive habits. My money will be my servant, not my master. My wants will be subject to my needs and means. I will help others through service and charity.

Mission statement is a personal constitution. Like national constitution, it's fundamentally changeless. It becomes the basis for making major, life-directing decisions, daily decisions in the midst of the circumstances and emotions affecting our lives.

People can't live with change if there isn't a changeless core inside them. With mission statement, we can flow with changes. We don't need prejudgements and prejudices.

Our personal environment is also changing at an ever increasing pace. Such rapid change burns out a large number of people without mission statement.

Victor Frankl learned the principle of proactivity and meaning of life.

Mission gives you vision/goals. Your constitution is one against which every decision concerning most effective use of your time, talents and energies can be measured.

At the Centre:

In order to write a mission statement, we must begin at the very centre of our circle of influence.

It is also here that our focussed efforts achieve greatest results. This is highest leverage PC work, significantly impacting the effectiveness of every aspect of our lives. This improves our Security, Guidance, Wisdom, and Power.

Security: Sense of worth, identity, self esteem

Guidance: Source of direction in life.

Wisdom: Perspective on life, sense of balance. Embraces judgement, discernment, and comprehension.

Power: Capacity to act, the strength to accomplish something. Vital energy to make choices and decisions. Includes capacity to overcome deeply embedded habits and cultivate higher, more effective ones.

These factors are interdependent. Security and guidance bring true wisdom. And wisdom sparks release of power.

Alternative Centres: Spouse, family, money, work, possession, pleasure, friend/enemy, church (religion), self.

Principle Centre:

By centring our lives on correct principles, we create a solid foundation for development of the four life support factors described earlier.

We can validate principles in our lives through experience. Admittedly, our knowledge and understanding of correct principles is limited by our own lack of awareness of our true nature and the world around us and by the flood of trendy philosophies that are not in harmony with correct principles.

We are limited, but we can push back the borders of our limitations. The principles don't change, our understanding of them does.

Remember that your paradigm is the source from which your attitudes and behaviours flow.

As a principle centred person, you try to stand apart from the emotion and from other factors and evaluate your options. Looking at the balanced whole, you will try to come up with the best solution. With this, you see, think, and act differently.

Writing and using a Personal Statement:

Frankl says we detect rather than invent our missions in life. "Everyone has his own specific vocation or mission in life." "Ultimately, man should not ask what the meaning of his life is, but rather must recognize that it is he who is asked. And he can do so by being responsible."

A mission statement is not something you write overnight. It takes deep introspection, careful analysis, thoughtful expression, and often many rewrites to produce it in final form. It may take you several weeks or even months before you feel comfortable with it, before you feel it is a complete and concise expression of your innermost values and directions. Even then, you will like to review it regularly and make minor changes with more insight or changing circumstances.

The process is as important as the product. Writing and reviewing mission statement changes you because it forces you to think through your priorities deeply, carefully, and align your behaviour with your beliefs.

Expand Perspective:

The death of a loved one, severe illness, a financial setback, or extreme adversity can cause us to stand back, look at our lives, and ask ourselves some hard questions: "What's really important? Why I am doing what I am doing?"

But if you are proactive, you don't have to wait for circumstances or other people to create perspective expanding experiences.

There are number of ways of doing this. Through imagination. Visualize your own funeral, write your own eulogy. Be specific. Visualize 25th or 50th wedding anniversary. What would you like the

relationship to be. Visualize your retirement. What contributions, achievement, you would like to see? What plans you have after retirement?

Visualize in rich detail. Involve as many emotions and feeling as possible. Involve as many senses as you can.

Tell students: "Assume that you have only one semester to live, and that you are to be a good student. Visualize how would you spend the semester?" They are told to keep a diary of their experiences. You suddenly have a different perspective. Values quickly surface that weren't even recognized.

The results are revealing. They start telling, parents, siblings, friends how much they love them. The dominant theme of their activities is love. Principles and values become more evident to everybody.

When people start seriously identifying what really matters most to them in their lives, what they want to be and do. They start to think in larger terms than today and tomorrow.

Visualization and Affirmation:

Personal leadership is not a singular experience. It is, rather, the ongoing process of keeping your vision and values before you and aligning your life to be congruent with those most important things.

A good affirmation has five basic ingredients: it's personal, it's positive, it's present tense, it's visual, it's emotional. E.g. "It is deeply satisfying (emotional) that I(personal) respond(present tense) with wisdom, love, firmness, and self-control(positive) when my children misbehave." Then I can visualize it. I can spend a few minutes each day and totally relax my mind and body. I can think of situations in which my children might misbehave. I can visualize them in rich detail. Then I can see something very specific which normally makes my heart pound and my temperature to flare. But instead of seeing my normal response, I can see myself handle the situation with love, the power, the self-control I have captured in my affirmation. I can write the program, write the script, in harmony with my values, with my personal mission statement. And if I do this, day after day my behaviour will change.

Get in a very relaxed state of mind through deep breathing and muscle relaxation technique so that you are very quiet inside. Then visualize yourself right in the heat of the toughest situation imaginable. Then see yourself responding calmly, with power, self-control to the situation. You will see that you will imagine options that you normally don't.

Research work on peak performers, both in athletics and business has shown that almost all of them are visualizers. They see it, they feel it, they experience it before they actually do it. They begin with the end in mind.

You can do that in any area of your life. Before a performance, presentation, a difficult confrontation, or a daily challenge of meeting a goal, see it clearly, vividly, relentlessly, over and over again. Create an internal "comfort zone." Then, when you get into the situation, it doesn't scare you.

Subliminal programming, neurolinguistic programming, and new forms of relaxation and self-talk processes help in this.

Identifying Roles and Goals:

Just as breathing exercises help integrate body and mind, writing is a kind of psycho-neural muscular activity which helps bridge and integrate conscious and subconscious minds. Writing distills, crystallizes, and clarifies thoughts and helps break the whole into parts.

We have a number of different roles in our lives and each of these is important. One of the major problems is that we don't think broadly enough, lose sense of proportion, the balance. Neglecting health for work success is very common.

Your mission statement shall be much more balanced, much easier to work with, if you break it down into specific role areas of your life and the goals you want to accomplish in each area. This brings balance and harmony. Review these frequently to see that this balance is not disturbed.

An effective goal focuses primarily on results rather than activity. It identifies where you want to be, and, in the process, helps you determine where you are. It gives important information on how to get there, and tells you when you have arrived. It unifies efforts and energy.

Just identifying the various areas of your life and the two or three most important results you feel you should accomplish in each area to move ahead gives you an overall perspective of your life and a sense of direction.

Identify long term roles and goals that relate to your personal mission statement.

Family Mission Statements:

Many families are managed on the basis of crises, moods, quick fixes, and instant gratification-not on sound principles. Children who observe this think that the only way to solve the problems is flight or fight.

The process is as important as the product. The very process of writing and refining a mission statement becomes a key way to improve the family. Working together builds PC capacity to live it.

Put mission statement on the wall in the family room so that we can look at it and monitor ourselves daily.

One of the fundamental problems in organizations, and families is that people are not committed to the determinations of other people in their lives.

No involvement, no commitment.

HABIT 3: Put first Things first

Things which matter most must never be at the mercy of things which matter least. Goethe

Habit 3 is the personal fruit, the practical fulfilment of habits 1 and 2.

Habit 3 is the second creation, the physical creation. It's the exercise of independent will toward becoming principle-centered. It's a day-in, day-out, moment by moment doing it.

The Power of Independent Will:

The degree to which we have developed our independent will in our everyday lives is measured by our personal integrity. Integrity is the value we place on ourselves. It's our ability to "walk our talk."

The successful person has the habit of doing things failures don't like to do. They don't like doing it either necessarily. But their disliking is subordinated to the strength of their purpose.

Four Generations of Time Management:

Organize and execute around priorities.

The third generation adds the important idea of prioritization. In addition, it focuses on setting goals-specific long, intermediate and short term ones towards which time and energy should be directed in harmony with values. It also includes concept of daily planning, of specific plan to accomplish goals.

However, the efficiency focus creates expectations that clash with the opportunities to develop rich relationships, to meet human needs, and enjoy spontaneous moments on a daily basis. As a result, many people get turned off.

The fourth generation recognizes that the challenge is not really manage time, but to manage ourselves. Satisfaction is a function of expectation as well as realization. And, both lie in our Circle of Influence. It maintains P/PC balance.

Quadrant II:

Time Management Matrix

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Imp	I Activities: Crisis, pressing problems Deadline driven projects	II Activities: Prevention, PC activities Relationship building, Recognising Opportunities, planning recreation
Not Imp	III Activities: Interruptions, some calls, some mails, some reports, some meetings Proximate, pressing matters, popular activities	IV Activities: Trivia, some mail, some phone calls, time wasters, pleasant activities

Two factors define an activity are urgent and important. Urgent: Immediate attention. These things act on us. Urgent matters are visible. They insist on action.

Importance has to do with results. It contributes to your mission, values, high priority goals.

We react to urgent matters. Important matters that are not urgent require more initiative, more proactivity. We must act to seize an opportunity, to make things happen.

Quadrant I is both urgent and important. These are “crises or problems.” It consumes many people. There are people who thrive on this. If you focus on QI, it keeps on getting bigger and bigger until it dominates you. A huge problem knocks you down. You struggle back up only to face another one which knocks you down.

Some people are beaten by problems all day, every day. They only have relief from QIV activities. 90 % of their time is in QI and 10 % in QIV.

Some people mistake urgent but not important activities as QI activities.

People who spend time almost exclusively in QIII and QIV lead irresponsible lives.

Effective people spend most of their time in QII and shrink QI activities.

Peter Drucker says that effective people are not problem minded; they are opportunity minded. They feed opportunities and starve problems. They think preventively. They keep P/PC balance by focussing on what is important, but not urgent, high leverage capacity building activities of QII.

What one thing could you do in your personal and professional life that, if you did on a regular basis, would make a tremendous positive difference in your life? Our effectiveness takes quantum leaps when we do them.

Whether you are a student or with any role, if you know what lies in QII and proactively go after it, results would be dramatic. Pareto Principle: 80 % results come from your 20 % activities.

What It Takes To Say “No”?

The only place to get time for QII in the beginning is from QIII and QIV activities. To say “Yes” to QII activities, you have to say “No” to QIII and QIV activities, sometimes apparently urgent things.

You have to decide which are your highest priorities. And have courage-pleasantly, smilingly, non-apologetically –to say “no” to other things. For that, you must have a bigger “yes” burning inside. The enemy of the “best” is often the “good.”

Keep in mind that you are always saying “no” to something, probably to the more fundamental, highly important things. We say “yes” and “no” to things daily, usually many times a day. Wisdom allows us to make those judgements most effectively.

If you were to fault yourself in one of the three areas, which would it be: (1) the inability to prioritize; (2) the inability or desire to organize around those priorities; (3) the lack of discipline to execute around them?

Most people blame their lack of discipline. But that is not correct. The basic problem is that their priorities have not become deeply planted in their hearts and minds. They haven’t internalized habit 2. Without a principle centre and a personal mission statement, they don’t have the foundation to sustain their efforts.

The way you spend your time is a result of the way you see your time and way you see your priorities. It’s almost impossible to say “no” to the popularity of QII or to the pleasure of escape to QIV if you don’t have a burning “yes” inside. Only when you have self awareness to examine your program and the imagination and conscience to create a new principle centred one, will you have power to say “no” with a genuine smile, to the unimportant?

The Quadrant II Tool:

It helps manage our lives effectively-from the centre of sound principles, from a knowledge of our personal mission, with a focus on important as well as urgent. It also maintains balance between increasing our production and increasing our production capability.

A Quadrant II organizer will need to meet six important criteria.

Coherence: It suggests that there is harmony, unity and integrity between your vision and mission, your roles and goals, your priorities and plans, and your desires and discipline. In your planner, there should be a place for your personal mission statement so that you can constantly refer to it. There also needs to be a place for your roles and for both short and long term goals.

Balance: Your tool should help you to keep balance in your life, to identify your various roles and keep them right in front of you, so that you don't neglect important areas such as your health, family, professional preparation, or personal development.

Many people seem to think that success in one area can compensate for failure in other areas of life. True effectiveness requires balance.

Quadrant II Focus: You need a tool that encourages you, motivates you, actually helps you spend the time you need in QII. In my opinion, the best way to do this is to organize life on a weekly basis. You can still adapt and prioritize on a daily basis. It provides much greater balance and context than daily planning.

The key is not to prioritize what's on schedule, but schedule your priorities.

A People's Dimension: You need to be effective in dealing with people.

Flexibility: Your planning tool should be tailored to your style, needs, and particular ways.

Portability: You should be able to carry it with you most of the time. This allows you to review it anywhere and consider new opportunities keeping in view your plans.

Becoming A Quadrant II Self-Manager:

It involves four key activities.

Identifying Roles: The first task is to write down your key roles. You might not have given serious thoughts to it. You can write down what comes to your mind. This includes all levels, personal, official, family, friends, and society. These are the areas in which you invest time and energy on a regular basis. You don't have to do that for the whole life, do it just for a week.

Selecting Goals: The next step is to think of two or three important results you feel you should accomplish in each role during next seven days. These would be recorded as goals.

At least some of the goals should reflect QII activities. Ideally, these short-term goals would be tied to the longer-term goals you have identified.

Scheduling: Now looking a week ahead with your goals in mind, schedule time to achieve them. For example, if you want to produce the first draft of your personal mission statement, you may set aside a two-hour block of time on Sunday to work on it. It is often the ideal time to plan your personally uplifting activities, including weekly activities, and reflection.

If your goal is to be physically fit through exercise, you may set aside an hour 3-4 times a week.

Having identified roles and goals, you can translate each goal to a specific day of the week, either as a priority item or, even better, as a specific appointment. You may review annual/monthly calendar and decide about rescheduling/cancelling some appointments, if required.

By keeping sufficient unscheduled time during the week, you get freedom, and flexibility to handle unanticipated events, to shift appointments if needed, enjoy relationships, and deeply enjoy spontaneous experiences.

Daily Adapting: With QII weekly organizing, daily planning becomes more a function of daily adapting.

Taking a few minutes every morning to review your schedule can put you in touch with the value based decisions, and unanticipated factors that may have come up.

Long Term Organizing: Mission Statement—Roles---Goals

Weekly organizing: Roles--- Goals--- Plans--- Schedule or delegate

Living It: As you go through your week, there will undoubtedly be times when your integrity will be tested by the lure of QIII/QIV activities. Your principal centre, self awareness and conscience will guide you in this battle.

You may not always know what is truly important. Sometimes, you may have to subordinate your schedule to a higher value. You can do with a sense of peace.

Remember, frustration is a function of our expectations, and our expectations are often a reflection of social mirror rather than our own values and priorities.

Delegation: We accomplish all that we do through delegation-either to time or to other people. If we delegate time, we think efficiency. If we delegate to others, we think effectiveness. You may yourself be able to do many things better than others, but from overall productivity point of view, it is ineffective. Delegation means growth to the individual and the organization.

The QII Paradigm:

We see through the lens of importance than urgency.

Every one of the seven habits is in QII. Every one deals with fundamentally important things that, if done on a regular basis, would make a tremendous positive difference in our lives.

PART III: PUBLIC VICTORY

Paradigms of Interdependence:

Effective interdependence can only be built on a foundation of true independence. You can't be successful with other people if you are not successful with yourself.

You can't talk your way out of problems you have behaved yourself into. You can't have fruits without the roots.

Interdependence is a choice only independent people can make.

The most important ingredient we put into any relationship is not what we do, but what we are.

The Emotional Bank Account:

If I make deposits into an emotional bank account through courtesy, kindness, honesty, and keeping commitments to you, I build up a reserve. Your trust toward me is higher, and I can call upon that trust many times if I need to. I can even make mistakes and that trust/reserve will compensate for it.

But if I have a habit of showing discourtesy, disrespect, cutting you off, overreacting, ignoring you, becoming arbitrary, betraying your trust, threatening you, eventually my emotional bank account is overdrawn. The trust level gets very low. Then what flexibility do I have?

Our most constant relationships like marriage, require our most constant deposits. With continuing expectations, old deposits evaporate.

Six Major Deposits:

1. Understanding the individual. Most important and key to other deposits.
2. Attending to the little things: The little kindness and courtesies are so important.
3. Keeping commitments. Keep promises you can keep. Explain when you want to break a promise.
4. Clarifying expectations: Essential for communication and trust. Requires courage. Make these clear in the beginning.
5. Showing personal integrity: Integrity includes but goes beyond honesty. Be loyal to those who are absent.
6. Apologising sincerely when you make a withdrawal:

Habit 4: Think win/Win

Principles of Interpersonal Leadership

Six Paradigms of Human Interaction:

Win/Win, Lose/Lose, Win/Lose, Win, Lose/Win, Win/Win or No Deal

Win/Win:

Seeks mutual benefit in all interactions. Life is cooperative and not competitive. There is plenty for everybody. It's a third alternative, a higher way.

Which option is best? It depends on the situation and reality. Most of the situations win/win is the best alternative.

Win/Win or No Deal takes pressure off. Agree to disagree agreeably.

Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then Be Understood

Principles of Empathic Communication

Reading, writing, speaking, and listening are four forms of communication. Communication is the most important skill in life.

We spend lot of time to learn the first three, but hardly any for listening.

For effective interaction, we need to understand each other. Your conduct flows out of your character. It is continuously radiating, communicating with others based on which trust/mistrust gets developed.

For counselling others, we need to understand other person, his unique situation, and feelings.

Empathic Listening: Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply. They are either speaking or preparing to speak. They are filtering everything through their own paradigms. They are constantly projecting their own home movies onto other people's behaviour.

Empathic listening gets inside another person's frame of reference. Understand their paradigm, how they feel. Empathy is not sympathy. Sympathy is a form of agreement, a form of judgement. In the former, you try to understand the other person emotionally and intellectually.

Experts estimate that only 10% of our communication is represented by the words we say, 30% by our sounds, and 60% by our body language. In empathic listening, you listen not just with ears, but with eyes and heart as well. You look for feeling and meaning. It provides accurate data.

Satisfied needs do not motivate. Next to physical survival, the greatest need of human being is psychological survival-to be understood, to be affirmed, to be validated, to be appreciated.

Habit 6: Synergize

The exercise of all other habits prepares us for the habit of synergy.

Synergy is seen everywhere in nature. Two pieces of wood together can hold weight of much more than that held by the individual pieces. The whole is greater than the sum of parts.

Synergistic Communication:

Through this communication, you open your mind and heart to new possibilities, new alternatives, and new options. You begin with the belief that everyone involved will gain from this exercise.

Because of our training of lack of trust, we have defensive and protective communications, and not even a moderate degree of synergy in our family and other interactions.

PART FOUR: RENEWAL

Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw

Sometimes when I consider what tremendous consequences come from little things... I am tempted to think... there are no little things. Bruce Barton

Habit 7 makes all other habits possible.

Four Dimensions of Renewal:

Habit seven is personal PC. It's preserving and enhancing the greatest asset you have-you. It's renewing the four dimensions of your nature-physical, spiritual, mental, and social/emotional.

Renewal is a QII activity. Personal P/PC must be pressed upon until it becomes second nature, until it becomes a kind of a healthy addiction.

It is the single most powerful investment we can ever make in life-investment in ourselves. In the only instrument we have with which to deal with life and to contribute.

The Physical Dimension:

It involves caring effectively for our physical body-right food, sufficient rest and relaxation, and exercising on a regular basis.

Exercise is a high leverage QII activity which we ignore because it is not urgent. This results in health problems and crises.

Most of us think we don't have enough time for exercise. Just 3-6 hrs per week can tremendously impact on the other 162-165 hrs of the week.

A good exercise program is one which you can do in your own home and that will build your body in three areas: endurance, flexibility, and strength.

Endurance: Aerobic exercise, cardiovascular efficiency

You are considered minimally fit if you can increase your heart rate at least 100 beats/minute and keep it at that level for 30 minutes.

Flexibility: From stretching. Warm up before and cooling down/stretching after aerobic exercise.

Strength: Comes from muscle resistance exercises-push-ups, pull-ups, sit-ups, weights

Almost all benefit from the exercise comes at the very end. While building strength, muscle fibre ruptures and the nerve fibre registers pain. Then nature overcompensates and within 48 hrs, the fibre becomes stronger.

The same principle works with emotional fibres as well, such as patience.

Be wise in developing exercise program. It's best to start slowly. You won't like it first. You may even hate it. Do it anyway. It is not a quick fix, it is a QII activity which will bring phenomenal long term results.

Probably the greatest benefit of exercise is the development of Habit 1 muscle of proactivity. Your self esteem, self confidence, and integrity will be profoundly affected.

The spiritual Dimension:

It provides leadership to your life. It's highly related to Habit 2. It is your core, your commitment to the value system.

I find renewal in daily prayerful meditation on scriptures. Great literature or great music can provide similar benefits. Some find in communicating with nature.

Famous author Arthur Gordon shares an intimate story "The turn of The Tide". At a point in his life, he felt stale and flat, without enthusiasm. Writing became difficult. Things were going worse every day. Finally, he asked Doctor's advice. When the Doctor found that he was physically fine, asked him to follow some instructions for the next day.

He was to go to a place where he was happiest as a child. He was not to talk to anyone, or to read or write or listen to radio. He was also asked open a prescription note at 9, 12, 15 and 18 hrs.

He went to beach in the morning. At 9 he opened the 1st prescription, which read “Listen carefully”. He was furious. How could one listen for 3 hrs? But he followed instructions, and started hearing the usual sounds 1st (sea, birds), then he started hearing other sounds which weren’t apparent 1st. He began feeling peaceful.

At noon, he opened the second prescription which said “Try reaching back”. Initially he was confused. After thinking, he knew that it means reaching back to the past, the many little moments of joy. He tried to remember in detail, and felt warmth inside.

At 15 hrs, he opened the 3rd prescription which read, Examine your motives”. At first he was defensive and justified his desire for success, recognition, security. Then he realized that these were result of his stagnation. In a flash he realized that if motives are wrong, nothing can be right. Whatever be your profession, if you are serving others, you do the job well. When you are concerned only with helping yourself, you do it less well-a law as inexorable as gravity.

At 18 hrs, he opened the final prescription which said “Write your worries on sand”. He understood immediately what it meant.

A Zen master who had great serenity and peace around him was asked “How do you maintain that serenity and peace?”He replied, “I never leave my place of mediation.” He carried the peace of those moments with him in his mind and heart.

Religious leader David O. McKay taught, “The greatest battles of life are fought out daily in the silent chambers of the soul.” If you win the battles there, you will feel a sense of peace.

The Mental Dimension:

It is extremely valuable to train the mind to stand apart and examine its own program.

Reading good literature, keeping a journal of thoughts, experiences, insights, and learning promotes mental clarity, exactness, and context.

Organizing and planning also are very important. Wars are won in the general’s tent.

Philips Brooks wrote: Some day, in the years to come, you will be wrestling with the great temptation, or trembling under the great sorrow of your life. But the real struggle is here, now.... Now it is being decided whether, in the day of your supreme sorrow or temptation, you shall miserably fail or gloriously conquer. Character cannot be made except by a steady, long continued process.

The Social/Emotional Dimension:

Renewing this dimension can be done in normal everyday interactions with other people. But it definitely requires exercise.

With practice of Habit 4, we can say “I can see that we are approaching this situation differently. Why we don’t we agree to communicate until we can find solution we both feel good about. Would you be willing to do that? Most people will say “yes” to that.

Success in Habits 4-6 is not primarily a matter of intellect; it's primarily a matter of emotion, and to our sense of security.

I believe that a life of integrity is the most fundamental source of personal worth. Self esteem is not a matter of mind set, of attitude-that you can psyche yourself into peace of mind.

There is security in knowing that Win/Win solutions do exist.

There is also intrinsic security that comes from service, from helping others in a meaningful way.

Dr. Hans Selye, in his research on stress, basically says that a long, healthy and happy life is the result of making contributions, of having meaningful projects that are personally exciting and contribute to and bless the lives of others.

In the words of G.B. Shaw,

This is true joy in life-that being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one. That being a force of nature, instead of feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community and as long as I live it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die. For the harder I work the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no brief candle to me. It's a sort of splendid torch which I have got to hold up for the moment and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it to future generations.

N. Eldon Tanner: Service is the rent we pay for living on earth.

Scripting Others:

We can help script them as principle-centred, value-based, independent, worthwhile individuals. With abundance mentality, giving positive reflection to others in no way diminishes us.

You listen to them and empathize with them. You don't absolve them of responsibility; you encourage them to be proactive.

At one school, because of computer error, in the academic report after a test, the brighter group was labelled as "dumb", and the dumb group as "bright". The mistake was detected 5 months later. Without informing the students, a Re-Test was done. The administration was surprised to see the results. The real "bright" group had gone down significantly in IQ tests, whereas the real "dumb" group had gone up significantly in the same test.

Goethe taught, "Treat a man as he is and he will remain as he is. Treat a man as he can and should be and he will become as he can and should be."

Balance in Renewal:

Renewal in all four dimensions is important: the physical, the spiritual, the mental, and the social/emotional.

Synergy in Renewal:

Balance renewal is optimally synergistic. Improvement in one has positive impact on others because they are so highly interrelated. Physical health affects mental health; the spiritual strength affects social/emotional strength.

As you become involved in continuing education, you increase your knowledge base and you increase your options. Your economic security does not lie in your job; it lies in your own power to produce-to think, to learn, to create, to adapt. That's true financial independence. It's not having wealth; it's having the power to produce wealth. It's intrinsic.

A daily Private Victory- a minimum of one hour a day in renewal of all the dimensions is key to the development of 7 habits

The Upward Spiral:

Renewal is the principle- and the process- that empowers us to move on an upward spiral of growth and change, of continuous improvement.

Madame de Stael: The voice of conscience is so delicate that it is easy to stifle it: but it is also so clear that it is impossible to mistake it.

The law of the harvest governs; we will always reap what we sow- no more, no less. The law of justice is immutable.

Moving along the upward spiral requires us to learn, commit, and do on increasingly higher planes.

Inside-Out Again:

The lord works from the inside out. The world works from the outside in. The world would take people out of slums. Christ takes the slums out of people, and then they take themselves out of slums. The world would mould by changing their environment. Christ changes men, who then change the environment. The world would shape human behaviour, but Christ can change human nature.