

[← Previous Lesson](#)[Next Lesson >](#)

# Habit 2. Begin with the End in Mind

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People > Habit 2. Begin with the End in Mind

 LESSON

 MATERIALS

00:00

00:00

Welcome to **Lesson 5!** Press Play to start this lesson. Scroll down or open your workbook to follow along.

Habit ②

## Begin With the End in Mind

“Begin today with the image, picture, or paradigm of the end of your life as your frame of reference or the criterion by which everything else is examined. Each part of your life – today’s behavior, tomorrow’s behavior, next week’s behavior, next month’s behavior – can be examined in the context of the whole, of what really matters most to you.” – Stephen Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*

To “Begin with the End in Mind” is to understand that all things are created twice —first mentally, second physically.

Highly effective people, families, and organizations don’t shape a successful future for themselves by living day-to-day without a clear purpose in mind...

They do it by creating a mental **vision** for every meaningful goal or project they tackle.

They mentally identify and commit themselves to the principles, values, relationships, and purposes that matter most to them.

Beginning with the End in Mind is about letting **how you want to be remembered** guide your **thoughts and actions**.

**So, how do you want to be remembered?**

If you’re not sure, you will be soon, because I’m about to share an eye-opening exercise that can be a game-changer for you if you approach it wholeheartedly.

Ready for it?

Here we go...

**Picture yourself at your funeral.**

- What would you like to be remembered for by all of the people in attendance?
- What would you hope to hear each person say about you?

We often get so busy with life, work, and pursuing goals, that we tend to forget about the values and people that matter most to us.

We forget about who we really want to be and how we want to affect the people in our lives.

Beginning with the end in mind gives us a different perspective—one that helps us keep our *true values* front and center.

Next, let's talk about clarifying those values...

**It's counterproductive to set and manage goals before clarifying your values.**

Having said that, practice beginning each day by thinking about your values.

That way, when things get tough, the decisions you make are more likely to be based on those values rather than emotions or judgments.

Once you're clear about *your values*, you can start thinking about *your mission*...

**Develop a personal mission statement that expresses who you want to be and what you want to do.**

This statement, if based on your values, can become a ***decision-making tool*** for you.

For example, my mission is to inspire as many people as possible to improve their lives + achieve their goals... If I'm presented with an opportunity that doesn't allow me to contribute to my mission, I simply don't do it.

Once you've clarified your values and developed your mission, you want to start thinking about how you'll live out your life in alignment with your values and mission...

**Determine what you want the center of your life to be.**

Many people place their spouses, children, money, religion, enemies, or themselves at the center of their lives and wind up unproductive and unhappy.

This is because they're not starting with *principles*.

A principle-centered life is one that allows you to achieve self-awareness and knowledge and is not tainted by the attitudes and behaviors of others.

Identifying what matters most to you and then managing yourself in such a way that supports those values is what "beginning with the end in mind" is all about... Embracing this habit is the key to unlocking the fulfilling, joyful, productive life you know you deserve.

When your life is centered on strong principles, you'll feel secure in knowing those principles are *unchanging*, no matter what circumstances you encounter.

This sense of security allows you to *embrace*—rather than *fear*—change.

Centering on principles also provides guidance...

- It allows you to look at your life more as a whole, rather than a series of situations to be dealt with. This can help you be proactive and make healthier decisions based on your principles rather than emotions.
- It allows you to look at the world in a different, wiser, way. You'll begin to wonder what you can do for others instead of worrying only about getting

ahead yourself.

- It allows you to make decisions that maximize your happiness and fulfillment. Because when you know *what* you stand for (values) and *why* (mission), you can filter out the noise and focus on what matters most to you. This is the power of being a principled person—someone who doesn't compromise their values for anything.

**Each of us has a paradigm that affects all of our behaviors and thoughts.**

If you choose to shift to a principle-centered paradigm, you'll see your life and the world very differently.

This will help you keep your values and vision for your life at the forefront of everything you do.

## Actionable insights

Complete this exercise in your **course workbook**.

① Ask yourself, “*What do I want people to say about me at my funeral?*”

Now write down your answer. Seriously.

By writing out your eulogy, you're simultaneously creating a personal mission statement—your blueprint for how you'd like to live your life. For example, if you want to be known as a thought-leader with a killer golf-game, and a generous family man that takes his friends to Fiji—then BE those things.

② **Create your mission statement.**

Perhaps the best way to Begin with the End in Mind is to create your very own mission statement (your philosophy on life, or your Why). Here are two examples of mission statements from my own life to help you as you create your own:

Example mission statement for **organizations**. Here's our mission statement at one of my companies, FlashBooks:

*"We help busy people get more knowledge in less time."*

Example mission statement for **individuals**. My own mission statement is:

*"To inspire + educate people everywhere to achieve their goals + improve their lives."*

### ③ A few quick tips for drafting your mission statement.

- ⦿ **Think about the roles you play in your own life**, and what goals you have for each role. It's likely that you'll have several personal roles, at least one professional role, and possibly even some important community roles.
- ⦿ **Write about who you want to be** about in each role, and what values would best guide you to be the best version of yourself in each of these roles.
- ⦿ **You can choose to have different mission statements** for different roles of your life. Or, you can choose to live by one simple mission statement. If you choose to live by one, make sure it's broad enough such that you can apply it to all of your roles in life. If not, it's best to create multiple mission statements.
- ⦿ **Get started now.** I'm a huge believer in the notion of NEVER leaving a new idea or goal untouched. What I mean by that is this: oftentimes, we learn

something new, get all pumped up about putting it into motion, but then neglect to take ACTION. Don't neglect to create your mission statement. The key to getting it done is to get out of your head and get started. Don't overthink it—it's not set in stone, and you can always enhance it later.

---

**Ready for the full 7 Habits experience? [Go here to enroll today →](#)**

---

[< Previous Lesson](#)

[Back to Course](#)

[Next Lesson >](#)