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# Overview: The 7 Habits

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People > Overview: The 7 Habits




 **LESSON**

 **MATERIALS**

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## Welcome to the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People Course!

-  Push Play above to start listening, or go to the **Materials** tab (above) to download this lesson to your device (right-click or long-press, then select *Download*)
-  Scroll down for the text-based version of this lesson to read + follow along while you listen.
-  In our next lesson, you'll receive your **7 Habits Workbook**, which you'll be able to print out or download.

Now, let's dive into today's lesson, during which I'll give you an introduction to the course and an overview of the 7 Habits...

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## Intro + overview

To say that living the 7 Habits has transformed my life would be an understatement.

At the age of 19, I was overweight, unhealthy, and barely making it by in school. I was constantly tired, had no goals, and was barely scraping by financially. I constantly blamed others when things didn't go my way, and took no responsibility whatsoever for my circumstances.

In short: I was on a one-way flight to nowhere.

And then, one night, around 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning, *everything* changed...

While I was walking (stumbling) back to my apartment after a college fraternity party, I noticed a book lying facedown on the sidewalk. I stopped and kicked it face-up so I could see the cover of the book.

It was a dirty old copy of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.

I looked at the cover. The subtitle of the book caught my attention: **“POWERFUL LESSONS IN PERSONAL CHANGE”**

My initial impulse was to toss the book and get back home... But I couldn't let go of that subtitle.

“Powerful lessons in personal change.”

*What does that even mean?* I thought to myself.

Powerful lessons in personal change... I wanted to change. I *needed* to change. I *had* to change. And I needed to know how to make it happen.

So I held on to the book and continued making my way back home.

A full month later, I was picking up a pile of clothes from the corner of my room when I found my copy of *The 7 Habits* buried under a mountain of dirty laundry. And *that's* when I finally began reading.

The more I read, the more I began to realize that, if I wasn't happy with the way my life was turning out, I could actually *do something* about it...

And eventually, slowly, I began to envision a new life for myself. One in which I was no longer out of shape and constantly feeling tired. One in which I was no longer failing my classes and looking at an empty bank account. One in which I was no longer aimless and purposeless.

About one year later, I lost the weight and transformed myself physically. And for the first time in my adult life, I could look in the mirror and feel good about myself.

Then I learned how to organize my life, set goals, and take action.

By my mid-twenties, I began to shape my life's purpose.

And by age thirty, I had become a millionaire.

Now, at the age of 37, I'm living the kind of life no one would've imagined was anywhere near the realm of possibility for me if they were to encounter the 19-year-old version of me from way back when.

Why am I sharing this with you?

Because I want you to know that no matter where you are in life, no matter how many times you've failed, and no matter how bleak you believe your future looks — CHANGE IS POSSIBLE. If you're alive, you're capable.

In this course, you'll learn how to use the same “powerful lessons in personal change” I've put to use in my own life, to make the changes you want to make in your own life. Not because you'll take the same path I took. But because *The 7 Habits* are built upon a foundation of principles that are both timeless and enduring. In fact, the bigger the changes you seek to make, the more helpful the principles you're about to learn will be.

### Here's what you'll learn about in this course:

- ✨ How to cultivate a truly successful life, by focusing on building a strong foundation based upon living by principle, priority, and unshakeable character
- ✨ The keys to building mutually beneficial personal and professional relationships
- ✨ How to become a more influential + inspiring communicator
- ✨ Practical strategies for creating the life you desire
- ✨ How to see the paradigms in your life as maps; and how to shift them in order to make vast improvements
- ✨ How to unlearn your most destructive and stifling habits
- ✨ How to master *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* in order to live a more fulfilling and productive life
- And much, much more...

**The first three habits** are what Covey calls **personal victory** habits: 1) being proactive, 2) starting with the end in mind, and 3) putting the most important things in life first.

**Habits four, five, and six** are known as **public victory** habits – which delve into how to be successful in our interactions with others. These habits focus on working towards win-win situations, seeking to understand others before trying to make them understand you, and learning to be cooperatively creative.

**Finally, the seventh habit deals** with taking good care of your body, mind, and spirit, so that you are fully capable of putting habits one through six into action and reaping their wonderful benefits in your life.

Throughout the lessons in this course, we'll get into some practical tips and actionable insights on how to make each of the seven habits part of your daily life, as well as how to put them to use to achieve a higher-level of success—both personally and professionally.

But for now, here's a quick overview of each habit:

### **Habit ①**

## **Be Proactive**

*(The power of choice)*

Being proactive is about more than taking initiative. It's about accepting responsibility for our own behavior (past, present, and future) and making choices based on principles and values rather than on moods or circumstances. Proactive people are agents of Change and choose NOT to be victims, NOT to be reactive, and NOT to blame others. Instead, they choose to take responsibility and become the creative force in their own lives, which is the most fundamental decision anyone ever makes. They do this by developing and using four unique human gifts—self-awareness, conscience, imagination, and independent will—and by taking an inside-Out approach to creating change.

**Habit ②**

## Begin with the End in Mind

*(Measure twice, cut once)*

All things are created twice—first mentally, second physically. Individuals, families, teams, and organizations shape their own future by creating a mental vision and purpose for any project. They don't just live day to day without a clear purpose in mind. They mentally identify and commit themselves to the principles, values, relationships, and purposes that matter most to them. A mission statement is the highest form of mental creation for an individual, a family, or an organization. It is the primary decision because it governs all other decisions. Creating a culture behind a shared mission, vision, and values is the essence of leadership.

**Habit ③**

## Put First Things First

*(Organize + execute around priorities)*

Putting first things first is the second or physical creation. It's about organizing and executing around the mental creation (your purpose, vision, values, and most important priorities). Second things do not come first. First things do not come second. Individuals and organizations focus on what matters most, urgent or not. The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.

**Habit ④**

## Think Win-Win

*(Don't think "Me," think "We")*

Thinking win-win is a frame of mind and heart that seeks mutual benefit and is based on mutual respect in all interactions. It's about thinking in terms of *abundance*—an ever-expanding “pie,” a cornucopia of opportunity, wealth, and resources—rather than of *scarcity* and adversarial competition. It's not thinking selfishly (win-lose) or like a martyr (lose-win). In our work and family life, we want to think interdependently—in terms of “we,” not “me.” Thinking win-win encourages conflict resolution and helps us seek mutually beneficial solutions. It's sharing information, power, recognition, and rewards.

### Habit ⑤

## Seek First to Understand

*(...Then to be understood)*

When we listen with the intent to understand others, rather than with the intent to reply, we begin true communication and relationship building. When others feel understood first, they feel affirmed and valued, defenses are lowered, and opportunities to speak openly and to be understood come much more naturally and easily. Seeking to understand takes kindness; seeking to be understood takes courage. Effectiveness lies in balancing the two.

### Habit ⑥

## Synergy

*(When 1+1 = 3 or more)*

Synergy is about producing a third alternative—not my way, not your way, but a third way that is better than either of us would come up with individually. It's the fruit of mutual respect—of understanding and even celebrating one another's differences in solving problems, seizing opportunities. Synergistic teams and

families thrive on individual strengths so that the whole becomes greater than the sum of the parts. Such relationships and teams renounce defensive adversarialism ( $1 + 1 = \frac{1}{2}$ ). They don't settle on compromise ( $1 + 1 = 1\frac{1}{2}$ ) or merely cooperation ( $1 + 1 = 2$ ). They go for **creative cooperation** (when  $1 + 1 = 3$  or more).

## Habit ⑦

# Sharpen the Saw

*(Do something daily to renew and recharge)*

Sharpening the saw is about constantly renewing yourself physically, mentally, emotionally/socially, and spiritually. These are your four core human needs, and sharpening your saw is about doing something on a daily basis to maintain or enhance yourself across all four dimensions. This is the Habit that increases our capacity to live all other habits of effectiveness. And you can apply it in organizations, teams, and families as well. Within an organization, Habit 7 promotes vision, renewal, continuous improvement, safeguards against burnout and entropy, and puts the organization on a new upward growth path. For a family, it increases effectiveness through regular personal and family activities such as establishing traditions that nurture the spirit of family renewal.

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## Up Next

Over the next eleven lessons, we'll break each of these down, and I'll show you how to apply them within your own life to help you become the best version of yourself in the areas of your life that matter most to you—personally and professionally.



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