

## Seven Habits of a Leadership Lifestyle

### *Habit 1 Be Proactive*

If the only vision we have of ourselves comes from the social mirror—from the current social paradigm and from the opinions, perceptions, and paradigms of the people around us—our view of ourselves is like the reflection in the crazy mirror room at the carnival.

"You're never on time."

"Why can't you ever keep things in order?"

"You must be an artist!"

"You eat like a horse!"

"I can't believe you won!"

"This is so simple. Why can't you understand?"

These visions are disjointed and out of proportion. They are often more projections than reflections, projecting the concerns and character weaknesses of people giving the input rather than accurately reflecting what we are.

The reflection of the current social paradigm tells us we are largely determined by conditioning and conditions. There are actually three social maps—three theories of determinism widely accepted, independently or in combination, to explain the nature of man.

- **Genetic determinism**, basically says, your parents did it to you.
- **Psychic determinism** basically says your parents did it to you in your upbringing.
- **Environmental determinism** basically says your boss is doing it to you, or your spouse, or that bratty teenager, or your economic situation, or national policies. Something in your environment is responsible.

How accurately and functionally do these deterministic maps describe the territory? How clearly do these mirrors reflect the true nature of man? Do they become self-fulfilling prophecies? Are they based on principles we can validate within ourselves.

Let me share with you the story of Victor Frankl. Frankl was a determinist raised in the tradition of Freudian psychology, which postulates that whatever happens to you as a child shapes your character and personality and basically governs your whole life. The limits and parameters of your life are set, and basically, you can't do much about it.

Frankl was also a psychiatrist and a Jew. He was imprisoned in the death camps of Nazi Germany, where he experienced things that were so repugnant to our sense of decency that we shudder to even repeat them.

His parents, his brother, and his wife died in the camps or were sent to the gas ovens. Except for his sister, his entire family perished. Frankl himself suffered torture and innumerable indignities, never knowing from one moment to the next if his path would lead to the ovens or it he would be among the "saved" who would remove the bodies or shovel out the ashes of those so fated.

One day, naked and alone in a small room, he began to become aware of what he later called "the last of the human freedoms"—the freedom his Nazi captors could not take away. They could control his entire environment, they could do what they wanted to his body, but Viktor Frankl himself was a self-aware being who could look as an observer at his very involvement. His basic identity was intact. *He could decide within himself how all of this was going to affect him.* Between what happened to him, or the stimulus, and his response to it, was his freedom or power to choose that response.

In the midst of his experiences, Frankl would project himself into different circumstances, such as lecturing to his students after his release from the death camps. He would describe himself in the classroom, in his mind's eye, and give his students the lessons he was learning during this very torture.

Through a series of such disciplines—mental, emotional, and moral, principally using memory and imagination—he exercised his small, embryonic freedom until it grew larger and

larger, until he had more freedom than his Nazi captors. They had more liberty, more options to choose from in their environment; but he had more freedom, more internal power to exercise his options. He became an inspiration to those around him, even to some of the guards. He helped others find meaning in their suffering and dignity in their prison existence.

In the midst of the most degrading circumstances imaginable, Frankl used the human endowment of self-awareness to discover a fundamental principle about the nature of man: Between stimulus and response, man has the freedom to choose!

In discovering this basic principle of nature of man, Frankl described an accurate self-map from which he began to develop the first and most basic habit of a highly effective person in any environment, the habit of proactivity.

It means that as human beings, we are responsible for our own lives. Our behavior is a function of our decisions, not our conditions. We can subordinate feelings to values. We have the initiative and the responsibility to make things happen.

Look at the word responsibility—"response-ability"—the ability to choose your response. Highly proactive people recognize that responsibility. They do not blame circumstances, conditions, or conditioning for their behavior. Their behavior is a product of their own conscious choice, based on values, rather than a product of their conditions, based on feeling.

It's 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 can cause sorrow. But our character, our basic identity, does not have to be hurt at all. In fact, our most difficult experiences become the crucibles that forge our character and develop the internal powers, the freedom to handle difficult circumstances in the future and to inspire others to do so as well.

Frankl is one of many who have been able to develop the personal freedom in difficult circumstances to lift and inspire other. The autobiographical accounts of Vietnam prisoners of war provide additional persuasive testimony of the transforming power of such personal freedom and the effect of the responsible use of that freedom on the prison culture and on the prisoners, both then and now.

Viktor Frankl suggests that there are three central values in life—the experiential, or that which happens to us; the creative, or that which we bring into existence; and the attitudinal, or our response in difficult circumstances such as terminal illness.

My own experience with people confirms the point Frankl makes—that the highest of the three values is attitudinal, in the paradigm or reframing sense. In other words, what matters most is how we respond to what we experience in life.

Difficult circumstances often create paradigm shifts, whole new frames of reference by which people see the world and themselves and others in it, and what life is asking of them. Their larger perspective reflects the attitudinal values that life and inspire us all.

## *Habit #2 Begin With The End In Mind*

In your mind's eye, see yourself going to the funeral of a loved one. Picture yourself driving to the funeral parlor or chapel parking the car, and getting out. As you walk inside the building you notice the flowers, the soft organ music. You see the faces of friends and family you pass along the way. You feel the shared sorrow of losing, the joy of having known, that radiates from the hearts of the people here.

As you walk down the front of the room and look inside the casket, you suddenly come face to face with yourself. This is your funeral, three years from today. All these people have come to honor you, to express feelings of love and appreciation for your life.

Now think deeply. What would you like each of these speakers to say about you and your life? What kind of husband, wife, father, mother would you like their words to reflect? What kind of Christian? What kind of minister? What kind of friend?

## What it Means to "Begin With The End In Mind"

Although Habit 2 applies to many different circumstances and levels of life, the most fundamental application of "begin with the end in mind" is to 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.

To begin with the end in mind means to start with a clear understanding of your destination. It means to know where you're going so that you better understand where you are now and so that the steps you take are always in the right direction.

It is easy to get caught up in the activity trap, in the busy-ness of life, to work harder and harder in climbing the ladder of success only to discover it's leaning against the wrong wall. It is possible to be busy without being effective.

Begin with the end in mind is based on the principle that all things are created twice. There's the mental or first creation, and a physical or second creation to all things.

It's a principle that all things are created twice, but not all first creations are by conscious design. In our personal lives, if we do not develop our own self-awareness and become responsible for first creations, we empower the other people and circumstances outside our Circle of Influence to shape much of our lives by default.

Habit 2 is based on principles of personal leadership, which means that leadership is the first creation. Leadership is not management. Management is the second creation, which we'll discuss in the chapter on Habit 3. But leadership has to come first. management is a bottom line focus: How can I best accomplish certain things? Leadership deals with the top line: What are the things I want to accomplish?

## Becoming Your Own First Creator

Proactivity is based on the unique human endowment of self-awareness. The two additional unique human endowments that enable us to expand our proactivity and to exercise personal leadership in our lives are *imagination* and *conscience*.

Through imagination, we can visualize the uncreated worlds of potential that lie within us. Through conscience, we can come in contact with universal laws or principles with our own singular talents and avenues of contribution, and with the personal guidelines within which we can most effectively develop them. Combined with self-awareness, these two endowments empower us to write our own script.

Because I am self-aware, because I have imagination and conscience, I can examine my deepest values. I can realize that the script I'm living is not in harmony with those values, that my life is not the product of my own proactive design, but the result of the first creation I have deferred to circumstances and other people. And I can change. I can live out my imagination instead of my memory.

To begin with the end in mind means to approach my life with my values and directions clear. It means to be responsible for my own first creation, to rescript myself so that the paradigms from which my behavior and attitude flow are congruent with my deepest values and in harmony with correct principles.

The most effective way I know to begin with the end in mind is to develop a personal 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.

Succeed at home first.

Seek and merit divine help.

Never compromise with honesty.

Remember the people involved.

Hear both sides before judging.

Obtain counsel of others.

Defend those who are absent.  
Be sincere yet decisive.  
Develop one new proficiency a year.  
Plan tomorrow's work today.  
Hustle while you wait.  
Maintain a positive attitude.  
Keep a sense of humor.  
Be orderly in person and in work.  
Do not fear mistakes—fear only the absence of creative, constructive, and corrective responses to those mistakes.  
Listen twice as much as you speak.

My mission is to live with integrity and to make a difference in the lives of others.

To fulfill this mission

I have charity: I seek out and love the one—each one—regardless of his situation.

I sacrifice: I devote my time, talents, and resources to my mission.

I inspire: I teach by example that we are all children of a living Heavenly Father and that every Goliath can be overcome.

I am impactful: What I do makes a difference in the lives of others.

The roles that take priority in achieving my mission:

Husband—my partner is the most important person in my life. Together we contribute the fruits of harmony, industry, charity, and thrift.

Father: I help my children experience progressively greater joy in their lives.

Son: I am frequently "there" for support and love.

Christian: God can count on me to keep my covenants and to serve his other children.

Neighbor: The love of Christ is visible through my actions toward others.

Change Agent: I am a catalyst for developing high performance in the church.

Scholar— I learn important new things every day.

## **Identifying Your Center**

What is the center of your own life? Sometimes it isn't easy to see. Some centers limit our effectiveness one enhances it. More often than not, a person's center is some combination of centers. Most people are very much a function of a variety of influences that play upon their lives.

As a person fluctuates from one center to another, the resulting relativism is like a roller coaster through life. One moment you're high, the next moment you're low, making efforts to compensate for one weakness by borrowing strength from another weakness. There is no consistent sense of direction, no persistent wisdom, no steady power supply or sense of personal intrinsic worth and identity.

## **Principle Centered (Biblical)**

By centering our lives on correct principles, we create a solid foundation for development of life.

Our security comes from knowing that, unlike other centers based on people or things which are subject to frequent and immediate change, correct principles do not change. We can depend on them.

The wisdom and guidance that accompany principle-centered living come from correct

maps, from the way things really are have been, and will be. Correct maps enable us to clearly see where we want to go and how to get there. We can make our decisions using the correct data that will make their implementations possible and meaningful.

The personal power that comes from Principle-centered living is the power of a self-aware, knowledgeable, proactive individual, unrestricted by the attitudes, behaviors, and actions of others or by many of the circumstances and environmental influences that limit other people.

By centering our lives on timeless, unchanging Biblical principles we create a fundamental paradigm of effective living. It is the center that puts all other centers in perspective.

### *Habit #3 Put First Things First*

Question 1: What one thing could you do (you aren't doing now) that if you did on a regular basis, would make a tremendous positive difference in your personal life?

Question 2: What one thing in your business or professional life would bring similar results?

We will come back to these later. First lets put the personal fruit, the practical fulfillment of Habits 1 and 2.

Habit three is the second creation, the physical creation. It's the fulfillment, the actualization, the natural emergence of Habits 1 and 2. It's the exercise of independent will toward becoming principle-centered. It's the day-in, day-out, moment-by-moment doing it.

### **The Power of Independent Will**

In addition to self-awareness, imagination and conscience, it is the fourth human endowment—independent will—that really makes effective self-management possible. It is the ability to make decisions and choices and to act in accordance with them. It is the ability to act rather than to be acted upon, to proactively carry out the program we have developed through the other three endowments.

### **Four Generations of Time Management**

In Habit 3 we are dealing with many of the questions addressed in the field of life and time management. As a long time student of this fascinating field, I am personally persuaded that the essence of the best thinking in the area of time management can be captured in a single phrase: *Organize and execute around priorities*. That phrase represents the evolution of three generations of time management theory, and how to best do it is the focus of a wide variety of approaches and materials.

Time management is really a misnomer. The challenge is not to manage time, but to manage ourselves. Satisfaction is a function of expectation as well as realization. And expectation (and satisfaction) lie in our Circle of Influence.

Two factors that define an activity are urgent and important. Urgent means it requires immediate attention. Urgent things act on us. A ringing phone for example. Urgent matters are usually visible.

Importance, on the other hand, has to do with results. If something is important, it contributes to your mission, your values, your high priority goals.

We react to urgent matters. Important matters are not that urgent and require more initiative, more proactivity. We must act to seize opportunity, to make things happen. If we don't practice habit 2, if we don't have a clear idea of what is important, of the results we desire in our lives, we are easily diverted into responding to the urgent.

## **Time Management Matrix**

### **What It Takes to Say "No"**

The only place to get time for Quadrant II in the beginning is from Quadrants III and IV. You can't ignore the urgent and important activities of Quadrant I, although it will shrink in size as you spend more time with prevention and preparation of Quadrant II.

A Quadrant II focus is a paradigm that grows out of a principle center. If you are centered on your spouse, your money, your friends, etc. you will keep getting thrown back into Quadrants I and III, reacting to the outside forces your life is centered on.

In the words of the architectural maxim, form follows function. Likewise, management follows leadership. The way you spend your time is a result of the way you see your time and the way you really see your priorities.

#### *Habit #4 Think Win/Win*

Whether you are the president of a company or the janitor, the moment you step from independence into interdependence in any capacity, you step into a leadership role. You are in a position of influencing other people. And the habit of effective interpersonal leadership is Think Win/Win.

### **Six Paradigms of Human Interaction**

Win/Win is not a technique; it's a total philosophy of human interaction. In fact, it is one of six paradigms of interaction. The alternative paradigms are Win/Lose, Lose/Win, Lose/Lose, Win/Lose, Win, and Win/Win or No Deal.

#### *Win/Win*

Win/Win is a frame of mind and heart that constantly seeks mutual benefit in all human interactions. Win/Win means that agreements or solutions are mutually beneficial, mutually satisfying. With a Win/Win solution, all parties feel good about the decision and feel committed to the action plan. Win/Win sees life as a cooperative, not a competitive arena.

Win/Win is a belief in the Third Alternative. It's not your way or my way; it's a *better* way, a higher way.

#### *Win/Lose*

Most people have been deeply scripted in the Win/Lose mentality since birth. First and most important of the powerful forces at work is the family. When one child is compared with another—when patience, understanding or love is given or withdrawn on the basis of such comparisons—people are into Win/Lose thinking. Whenever love is given on a conditional basis, when someone has to earn love, what's being communicated to them is that they are not intrinsically valuable or lovable. Value does not lie inside them, it lies outside. It's in comparison with somebody else or against some expectation.

#### *Lose/Win*

Some people are programmed the other way—Lose/Win.

I love, you win.

Go ahead. Have your way with me.

Step on me again. Everyone does.

I'm a loser. I've always been a loser.

Lose/Win is worse than Win/Lose because it has no standards—no demands, no expectations, no vision. People who think Lose/Win are usually quick to please or appease. They seek strength from popularity or acceptance. They have little courage to express their own feelings and convictions and are easily intimidated by the ego strength of others.

### *Lose/Lose*

When two Win/Lose people get together—that is, when two determined, stubborn, ego-invested individuals interact—the result will be Lose/Lose. Both will lose. Both will become vindictive and want to "get back" or "get even."

### *Win*

Another common alternative is simply to think Win. People with the Win mentality don't necessarily want someone else to lose. That's irrelevant. What matters is that they get what they want.

When there is not sense of contest or competition, Win is probably the most common approach in everyday negotiation. A person with the Win mentality thinks in terms of securing his own ends—and leaving it to others to secure theirs.

### **Which Option Is Best**

The best choice, then, depends on reality. The challenge is to read that reality accurately and not to translate Win/Lose or other scripting into every situation.

Most situations, in fact, are part of an interdependent reality, and then Win/Win is really the only viable alternative of the five.

### *Win/Win or No Deal*

if these individuals had not come up with a solution—one that was agreeable to both—they could have gone for an even higher expression of Win/Win—Win/Win or No Deal.

No Deal basically means that if we can't find a solution that would benefit us both, we agree to disagree agreeably—No Deal.

With a No Deal option, you can honestly say, "I only want to go for Win/Win. I want to win, and I want you to win. I wouldn't want to get my way and have you not feel good about it, because downstream it would eventually surface and create a withdrawal. On the other hand, I don't think you would feel good if you got your way and I gave it. So let's work for a Win/Win.

Anything less than Win/Win in an interdependent reality is a poor second best that will have impact in the long-term relationship. The cost of the impact needs to be carefully considered. If you can't reach a true Win/Win, you're very often better off to go for No Deal.

### *Character*

Character is the foundation of Win/Win, and everything else build on that foundation. There are three character traits essential to the Win/Win paradigm.

*Integrity.* We've already defined integrity as the value we place on ourselves.

*Maturity.* Maturity is the balance between courage and consideration. If a person can express his feelings and convictions with courage balanced with consideration for feelings and convictions of another person, he is mature, particularly if the issue is very important to both parties..

### *Abundance Mentality*

The third character trait essential to Win/Win is the Abundance Mentality, the paradigm that

there is plenty out there for everybody.

## **Systems**

Win/Win can only survive in an organization when the systems support it. If you talk Win/Win but reward Win/Lose, you've got a losing program on your hands.

You will get what you reward.

### *Habit #5 Seek First To Understand, Then to Be Understood*

We have such a tendency to rush in, to fix things up with good advice. But we often fail to take the time to diagnose, to really, deeply understand the problem first.

If I were to summarize in one sentence the single most important principle I have learned in the field of interpersonal relations, it would be this: Seek first to understand, then to be understood. This principle is the key to effective interpersonal communication.

## **Empathic Listening**

Seek first to understand involves a very deep shift in paradigm. We typically seek first to be understood. Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply. They're either speaking or preparing to speak. They're filtering everything through their own paradigms, reading their autobiography into the other people's lives.

"Oh, I know exactly how you feel!" "I went through the very same thing. Let me tell you about my experience."

When I say empathic listening, I mean listening with intent to understand. I mean seeking first to understand, to really understand.

Empathic (from empathy) listening gets inside another person's frame of reference. You look out through it, you see the world the way they see the world, you understand their paradigm, you understand how they feel.

Empathy is not sympathy. Sympathy is a form of agreement, a form of judgment. And is sometimes more appropriate emotion and response. But people often feed on sympathy. It makes them dependent. The essence of empathic listening is not that you agree with someone; it's that you fully, deeply, understand that person, emotionally as well as intellectually.

Empathic listening is so powerful because it give you accurate data to work with. Instead of projecting your own autobiography and assuming thoughts, feelings, motives and interpretation, you're dealing with the reality inside another person's head and heart. You're listening to understand. You're focused on receiving the deep communication of another human soul.

In addition, empathic listening is the key to making deposits in Emotional Bank Accounts, because nothing you do is a deposit unless the other person perceives it as such. Empathic listening is, in and of itself, a tremendous deposit in the Emotional Bank Account.

## **Diagnose Before You Prescribe**

Although it's risky and hard, seek first to understand, or diagnose before you prescribe, is a correct principle manifest in many areas of life. It's the mark of all true professionals. It's critical for the optometrist, it's critical for the physician. You wouldn't have any confidence in a doctor's prescription unless you had confidence in the diagnosis.

Empathic listening takes time, but it doesn't take anywhere near as much time as it takes to back up and correct misunderstandings when you're already miles down the road, to redo, to live with unexpressed and unsolved problems, to deal with the results of not giving people a hearing.

A discerning empathic listener can read what's happening down deep fast, and can show such acceptance, such understanding, that other people feel safe to open up layer after layer until



they get to that soft inner core where the problems really lies.

People want to be understood. And whatever investment of time it takes to do that will bring much greater returns of time as you work from an accurate understanding of the problems and issues and from the high Emotional Bank Account that results when a person feels deeply understood.

### **Then Seek To Be Understood**

Knowing how to be understood is the other half of Habit #5, and is equally critical in reaching Win/Win solutions. It is important in an interdependent situations for us to be understood.

When you can present your own ideas clearly, specifically, visually, and most important, contextually—in the context of a deep understanding of their paradigms and concerns—you significantly increase the credibility of your ideas.

Habit 5 lifts you to greater accuracy, greater integrity, in your presentations. And people know that. They know you're presenting the ideas which you genuinely believe, taking all known facts and perceptions into consideration, that will benefit everyone.

### *Habit #6 Synergize*

When Sir Winston Churchill was called to head up the war effort for Great Britain, he remarked that all his life had prepared him for this hour. In similar sense, the exercise of all of the other habits prepares us for the habit of synergy.

Synergy is the essence of principle centered leadership. All the habits we have covered prepare us to create synergy.

What is synergy? Simply defined, it means that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. It means that the relationship which the parts have to each other is apart in and of itself. It is not only a part, but the most catalytic, the most empowering, the most unifying, and the most exciting part.

Synergy is everywhere in nature. If you plant two plants close together, the roots commingle and improve the quality of the soil so that both plants will grow better than if they were separated. If you put two pieces of wood together, they will hold much more than the total of the weight held by each separately. the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

The challenge is to apply the principles of creative cooperation, which we learn form nature, in our social interactions. The essence of synergy is to value differences—respect them, to build on strength, to compensate for weakness.

### *Habit #7 Renewal*

Suppose you were to come upon someone in the woods working feverishly to saw down a tree.

"What are you doing?" you ask.

"Can't you see?" comes the impatient reply. "I'm sawing down this tree."

"You look exhausted!" you exclaim. "How long have you been at it?"

"Over five hours," he returns, "and I'm beat! This is hard work."

"Well, why don't you take a break for a few minutes and sharpen the saw?" you inquire.

"I'm sure it would go a lot faster."

"I don't have time to sharpen the saw," the man says empathetically. "I'm too busy sawing!"

"

Habit 7 is taking time to sharpen the saw. It surrounds the other habits on the Seven Habits paradigm because it is the habit that makes all the others possible.

Habit 7 is preserving and enhancing the greatest asset you have—you. It's renewing the four dimensions of your nature—physical, spiritual, mental, and social/emotional.

"Sharpen the saw" basically means expressing all four motivations. It means exercising all four dimensions of our nature, regularly and consistently in wise and balanced ways. To do this we must be proactive. Taking time to sharpen the saw is a definite Quadrant II activity.

This is a powerful investment in life—and investment in ourselves, in the only instrument we have with which to deal with life and to contribute. We are the instruments of our own performance, and to be effective, we need to recognize the importance of taking time regularly to sharpen the saw in all four ways.

## **Physical**

The physical dimension involves caring effectively for our physical body—eating the right kinds of foods, getting sufficient rest and relaxation, and exercising on a regular basis.

Exercise is one of those Quadrant II, high-leverage activities that most of us don't do consistently because it isn't urgent. And because we don't do it, sooner or later we find ourselves in Quadrant I, dealing with the health problem and crises that come as a natural result of our neglect.

## **The Spiritual Dimension**

Renewing the spiritual dimension provides leadership to your life. It's highly related to habit 2.

The spiritual dimension is your core, your center, your commitment to your value system. It's a very private area of life and a supremely important one. It draws upon the sources that inspire and uplift you and tie you to the timeless truths of all humanity.

I find renewal in daily prayerful meditation on the scriptures because they represent my value system. As I read and mediate, I feel renewed, strengthened, centered and recommitted to serve.

Spiritual renewal takes an investment of time. The great reformer Martin Luther is quoted as saying, "I have so much to do today, I'll need to spend another hour on my knees." To him, prayer was not a mechanical duty but rather a source of power in releasing and multiplying his energies.

## **The Mental Dimension**

Most of our mental development and study discipline comes through formal education. But as soon as we leave the external discipline of school, many of us let our minds atrophy. We don't do any more serious reading, we don't explore new subjects in any real depth outside our action fields. Reading good literature is so important.

## **The Social/Emotional Dimension**

The social and emotional dimensions of our lives are tied together because our emotional life is primarily, but not exclusively developed out of and manifested in our relationships with other.

Dr. Hans Selye, in his monumental 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.