

# THE 7 HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE

## BOOK DIGEST

### PARADIGMS AND PRINCIPLES

#### THE 7 HABITS—AN OVERVIEW

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

##### Habits defined

Habits are powerful **drivers**: consistent, often unconscious, they express our **character** and produce our **effectiveness**—or lack thereof. They have a great gravity pull and this is why they can be tricky to unroot. However, once we learn how to break off from it we reach whole new levels of freedom. The goal is to **tailor** our habits so that it is impossible not to do what truly serves us and others.

Stephen Covey describes habits as the **intersection** between **knowledge** (the what), **skills** (the how) and **desire** (the will). We need to remember that who we are determines what we see, that what we see determines who we are, and that the seeing/being change is an upward process, which determines our spiritual growth.

##### The Maturity Continuum

The 7 habits of this book are meant to work in **harmony** with the **laws of growth** and to, in his words: *“provide an incremental, sequential, highly integrated approach to the development of personal and interpersonal effectiveness. They move us progressively on a Maturity Continuum from dependence to interdependence.”*

Indeed this is the cycle of a human life: being a completely **dependent** child, then learning how to be an **independent** young adult—physically, mentally, emotionally and financially— and finally understanding our **interdependent** all of Nature is.

*“On the maturity continuum, dependence is the paradigm of you—you take care of me, you come through for me; you didn’t come through; I blame you for the results. Independence is the paradigm of I—I can do it; I am responsible; I am self-reliant; I can choose. Interdependence is the paradigm of we—we can do it; we can cooperate; we can combine our talents and abilities and create something greater together.”*

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**Independence** is a big **step** forward, but it is **not** the **end game**—no matter how much our social paradigms and the self-improvement leaders praise it.

*“(…) much of our current emphasis on independence is a reaction to dependence  
—not having others control us, define us, use us, and manipulate us”*

We still have little understanding of interdependence and how paramount it is for human beings.

*“Independent thinking alone is not suited to interdependent reality.”*

Independence frees us from being controlled by circumstances or other people, a worthy goal.

However, SC points out that:

*“Independent people who do not have the maturity to think and act interdependently may be good individual producers, but they won’t be good leaders or team players. They’re not coming from the paradigm of interdependence necessary to succeed in marriage, family or organizational reality.”*

*“If I am physically interdependent.*

*I am self-reliant and capable.*

*but I also realize that you and I working together, can accomplish far more than than,  
even at my best, I could accomplish alone.*

*If I am emotionally interdependent.*

*I derive a great sense of worth within myself.*

*but I also recognize the need for love, for giving, and for receiving love from others.*

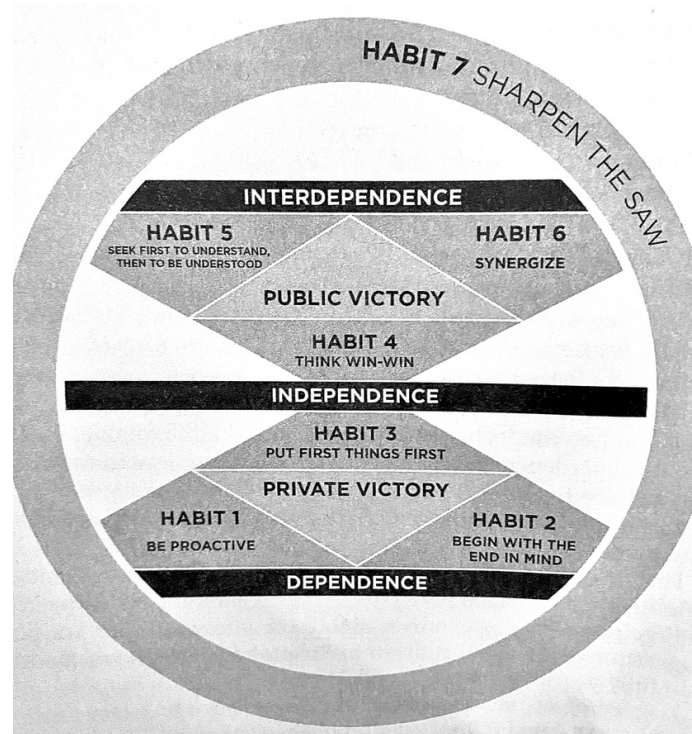
*If I am intellectually interdependent.*

*I realize that I need the best thinking of other people to join with my own.”*

**Interdependence** allows us to **share ourselves** deeply with others and **receive** just as much in return. And we can only choose interdependence once we’ve learned independence. This is why the author will focus on self-mastery (our private victories and the essence of character growth) through the first three habits and then lead us towards interdependence in the next three (public victories) with a focus on teamwork, cooperation and communication.

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### Effectiveness defined

The 7 habits are based on a paradigm of effectiveness, what the author calls the “**P/PC balance**” principle. He takes us back for illustration to the **tale of the golden goose** where a greedy goose owner decided to sacrifice the goose who was giving him daily golden eggs, thinking that all the eggs were already inside of her! In doing so, he gained nothing, the goose was empty and lost his source of wealth. We do that to ourselves when we forget to protect the asset, be it the machine we use... or ourselves. **True effectiveness** is a function of both **what is produced** and **what produces** it. We need to find the balance between the two.

### Three kinds of assets:

Three kinds of assets must be taken into account and acknowledged individually and as interconnected partners: **Physical**, **financial** and **human** assets.

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### Organizational PC

“PC work is treating employees as volunteers. (...), because that’s what they are. They volunteer the best part [of what they bring to the job]—their hearts and minds [on top of their hands and back].”

The P/PC balance is a **hallmark** of effectiveness, whether we choose to acknowledge and protect it or whether we choose to sidestep it at our own expense.

### How to use this book

Stephen Covey shares with us **two paradigm shifts** to help us benefit from this book as much as possible.

- First, let’s see it as a **companion** and not as a book, as a guide through a **process** and not just material to be read once and put aside.
- Second, we should shift from seeing ourselves as a learner to considering we’re a **teacher**. Let’s all find one person we’re willing to teach what we just learned to in the next 48 hours of reading it.

### What you can expect

“In the last analysis, as Marilyn Ferguson observed, “No one can persuade another to change. Each of us guard a gate of change that can only be opened from the inside. We cannot open the gate of another, either by argument or by emotional appeal.”

The **first three habits** will greatly increase our **self-confidence**, by connecting us to our values and sense of identity, control, integrity and inner-directedness, which will in turn fill us with exhilaration and peace. Caring a lot less about what others think of us we’ll be able to care a lot more about them and what they say.

The **next three habits** will provide us with the desire and resources to **repair** our struggling relationships and to **develop** even further our **relationships** that are going well.

The **seventh habit**, once truly internalized, will **renew** the first six and allow us to find true **independence** and reach effective **interdependence**.

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"Whatever your present situation,

I assure you that you are not your habits.

You can replace old patterns  
of self-defeating behavior with new patterns,

new habits of effectiveness,

happiness,

and trust-based relationships."

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**BOOK CLUB DISCUSSIONS**

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**You're invited**

**Tuesday, October 24th**  
from 7pm-8pm  
*Virtual Zoom Meeting*

**OR**

**Friday, October 26th**  
from 12pm-1pm  
*Virtual Zoom Meeting*