

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

Habit 1: Be Proactive

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Based on the book by the same name by Stephen Covey

Hypothetical

- Imagine you are assigned to a group; it seems like you are the only one in the group that's willing work to get a good grade.
- Everyone else seems content to get by on, at best, the bare minimum.
- It seems like they're going to bring down your grade.
- What do you do?

- Think, Pair, Share

Victor Frankl

- Frankl was raised to believe that whatever happens in your childhood ultimately shapes your character and personality.
 - I.e. you can't escape your childhood...it makes you who you are
 - Your limitations are pre-determined and there is nothing you can do.
- His outlook on life changed rapidly when he was imprisoned in a concentration camp during WWII by the Nazis.

Frankl and the Holocaust

- Except for his sister, his entire family perished at the hands of the Nazis
- Frankl himself was tortured and enslaved.
- *“One day, naked and alone in a small room, he began to become aware of what he later called ‘the last of human freedoms’ – the freedom his Nazi captors could not take away.”*
- They could control his entire environment, but *he* could decide how this would affect him.
 - He could not choose his situation, but he could choose his response to it.

Frankl's key decision

- Frankl realized that while he had little control, he had absolute control over the thing that mattered most – his response to the situation.
- He realized he could go into despair and die, or use this experience to become a stronger person.
 - He had the power to decide how this experience would affect him, and this power could not be taken away from him.
- Frankl began to project himself into future situations where he would use this experience to teach his students how to empower themselves to rise above their own circumstances.
 - He realized that he and only he had the power to gain or lose from any situation.

Frankl's Philosophy

- Frankl realized that there is a fundamental and universal principle affecting all who share the human condition:

“Between stimulus and response, man has the freedom to chose”

- This is what makes us human – in addition to self-awareness, we have imagination. We can create situations that may not exist.
 - We have a conscience – a deep inner awareness of right and wrong
 - We have independent will – we can act and make decisions.
- **Our basic nature is to act, not to be acted upon.**

Do you act, or are you acted upon?

- Reflect on your life's experiences for a moment?
- Are you more likely to claim that you don't have control, or are you more likely to take charge in a circumstance?
- When things go wrong, do you ask what you could have done differently, or do you ask why things went as they did?
- When life seems unfair, are you more or less motivated to persist?
- Do you allow yourself to be shackled by life, or do you work to break barriers?
- TPS

Language

- A serious problem with language is that it becomes self-fulfilling.
- People can become so reinforced by the way they talk that they sometimes can't help but see the world for the way it *isn't*...
 - That's just the way I am...
 - I don't have time...
 - I have to do this...
 - I hate it when other people make me this way...
 - If I don't have _____, I can't function...
- If we gave you a million dollars, could you change?
- If so, why would you choose to let other factors control your life?

Reactive Language

There's nothing I can do.

That's just the way I am.

He makes me so mad.

They won't allow that.

I have to do that.

I can't.

I must.

If only.

Proactive Language

Let's look at our alternatives.

I can choose a different approach.

I control my own feelings.

I can create an effective presentation.

I will choose an appropriate response.

I choose.

I prefer.

I will.

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Activity

- On your whiteboards, write down 5 reactive phrases
- Below each reactive phrase, re-write it to become proactive
- For example, you could write “I can’t function early in the morning” as your reactive phrase
- To make it proactive, you would re-write it to become “I will function early in the morning if I do the following”

Categorizing

- In life, all things that affect us can be put into one of three categories
- 1. No control
 - E.g. we can't control the weather, or the sun rising or setting, or nuclear war
- 2. Indirect control
 - E.g. we can't completely control other people's emotions, but we can help to influence them
- 3. Direct Control
 - E.g. we can choose our response to every situation

Resolving Problems

- Direct Control Problems are solved by working on our own habits.
 - These are private victories accomplished by personal reflection and personal growth.
- Indirect Control Problems are solved by changing the way we influence other people.
 - These are public victories, or what we typically think of as leadership (although leadership encompasses much more)

Resolving Problems

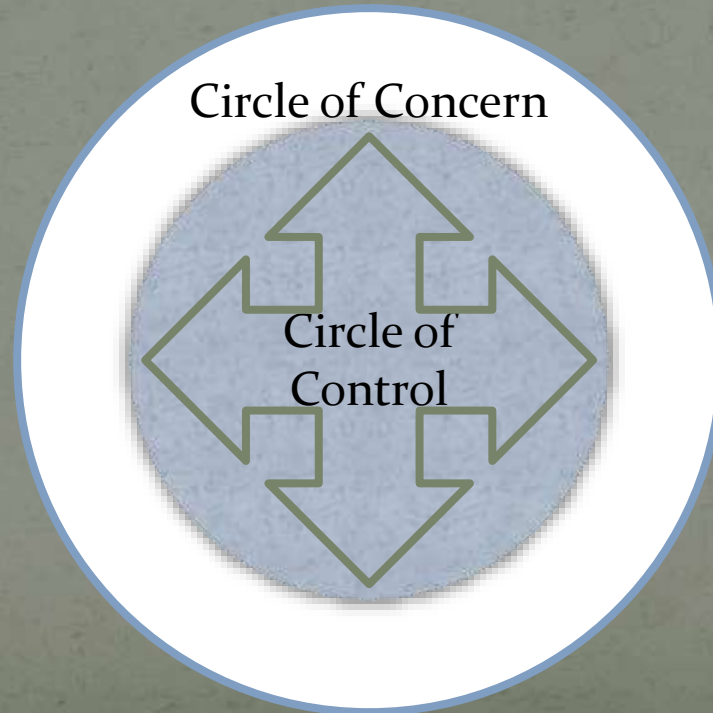
- No Control problems cannot be changed by ourselves.
- For these, we must learn to accept that there are some things that we cannot change.
- We must learn to peacefully accept this as a reality of life even if these realities are at times unpleasant.
 - *Give me the courage to change the things which can and ought to be changed, the serenity to accept the things that cannot be changed, and the wisdom to know the difference.*

Resolving Problems

- Regardless of if a problem is direct, indirect, or no control, we have the first step of every solution available to us now.
- Changing our habits, our methods of influence, and the way we see and perceive our problems are all within our capabilities.
- We cannot always choose our circumstances, but we can always choose our response to any circumstance no matter what it is.

Circles of Concern

- If the out circle represents all the things that affect our lives, the inner circle represents the things that affect our lives that we can affect or control
- Our goal should be to make our inner circle as large as possible.



Reactive personalities

- People who are reactive actively try to shrink their inner circle; they look for reasons why they don't have control:
 - *He just hates me and there is nothing I can do*
 - *Of course she got the scholarship; she's _____*
 - *Society just treats men and women differently*
 - *No one would ever take me seriously anyway*
 - *Life would be easy for me if I were rich too...*
 - *It must be nice to have a family with connections*
 - *How am I ever supposed to compete when I have to work twice as hard to accomplish the same thing?*



The 30 Day Test

- For 30 days, try this...expand your circle of influence
- Try and catch yourself using reactive language and change it into proactive language
- Turn “I can’t” into “I can if...”
- Be a model of what you want be yourself, not a critic of what you dislike about someone else
- Be the solution that you seek.
- Make small commitments and keep them.
- Look at the weaknesses of others (and yourself) with compassion, not accusation or anger.
- Stop thinking “the problem is out there”. The problem is that kind of thinking.

If that's too much...

- Tomorrow, try the 24 hour test...
- At this time tomorrow...
 - Repeat 5 things that you have heard others say that are reactive
 - Repeat 5 things that you have heard others say that are proactive
 - In which case was it easier to get to 5?
 - How did each make you feel once you were aware of it?
 - Which did you catch yourself using more?
 - We all revert to reactive language at times...it takes effort and conscious awareness to become proactive regularly.
- Always remember – we are designed to be proactive.