

Habit 7 – Sharpen the Saw

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Based on the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People

The Habits – A Review

- 1. Be proactive – you can choose to benefit from every situation
- 2. Begin with the end in mind – know where you want to go, and live a daily life that takes you there
- 3. Put first things first – avoid activities that are not urgent and not important; remember that importance is more important than urgent
- 4. Think Win/Win (or No Deal) – seek solutions in which everyone is better off as a result
- 5. Seek first to understand – to write a prescription, you must understand the problem; ask, then speak
- 6. Synergize – create new realities as a result of collaboration and communication
- 7. Sharpen the Saw – seek daily renewal to prevent ‘burn-out’

Sharpen the Saw!

- Suppose you came upon someone in the woods working to saw down a tree.
 - They are exhausted from working for hours.
- You suggest they take a break to sharpen the saw.
 - They might reply, " I didn't have time to sharpen the saw, I'm busy sawing!"
- What's wrong with their reply? Discuss:



Sharpen the Saw

- Sharpening the Saw means that you are taking time to relieve stress and seek personal growth and improvement
 - “If you’re not green and growing, you’re ripe and rotting!”
- Failing to take the time to refresh yourself means that you are not improving, are not becoming more effective, and are heading towards burnout



The 4 Dimensions

- There are 4 aspects of your life that should receive daily or weekly improvement
 - 1. Physical – your physical health and well-being
 - 2. Spiritual – your sense of inner peace and direction
 - 3. Mental – your cognitive development and ability
 - 4. Social – your emotional bank accounts.



The Physical Dimension

- The physical dimension consists of –
 - Eating right
 - Getting enough sleep
 - Reducing Stress
 - Physical Activity
- You should exercise at least 3-6 hours per week, or a minimum of 30 minutes per day (on average)
 - Those who think they don't have time are not considering the eventual impact of an unhealthy lifestyle.
 - Exercise prevents burnout and helps you to maximize your physical productivity.



Exercise

- Exercise is very much an important but not urgent activity (Quadrant II).
 - It can revolve around other components of your schedule, but it has to happen!
- Exercise will also work to reduce stress, improve appearance and confidence, and enhance mental performance (the body feeds the mind).



Exercise

- Exercise has three main components –
 - Endurance – your body's ability to maintain aerobic activity for extended periods of time
 - Strength – muscle resistance exercises (pushups, weight lifting, situps, etc.)
 - Flexibility – your full range of motion of your muscles
- A physically fit person must be able to push themselves in all three categories
 - All three categories must be emphasized in a personal fitness program.



The Spiritual Dimension

- The spiritual dimension is your center, your commitment to your value system.
 - It draws upon the sources that inspire and uplift you.
- It may be religion, but it can also be nature, personal meditation, or reflection exercises
 - It is what gives you greater meaning as a person, whatever that meaning may be.



Personal Mission Statements

- Part of the Spiritual Dimension is the personal mission statement
 - A personal mission statement should cause you to reflect on your motives, analyze your shortcomings, and clarify the things in your life that are absolutely not negotiable
- Public victories cannot occur if there is internal personal conflict.



The Mental Dimension

- Most mental development occurs while you are in school.
 - At the end of schooling, many people stop studying and learning, allowing their mental abilities to atrophy and dwindle over time.
- A responsible, proactive person seeks to grow mentally each week.
 - Read, debate, write, listen, and observe as often as you can.



The Mental Dimension

- “Wars are won in the general’s tent”
 - Character cannot be made without a concerted effort towards a steady, long process of personal growth and development
- The consideration and understanding of new and sometimes oppositional ideas is crucial to your personal growth and development as a person.
 - The most ignorant among us assumed long ago that they knew more than they needed to know
 - The most educated and able among us long ago decided they could never know enough
 - It is up to you to choose which will describe you 10 years from now



Mental Growth

- The world is full of different and changing ideas
 - Your place in the world will be largely determined by your ability to understand all sides of an argument.
- You must seek to understand all that you can if you ever expect any one else to seek to understand you.
 - Those who understand others will themselves be better understood and in turn will have more influence, more control, and more impact.



The Social Dimension

- You will develop many emotional bank accounts in your life.
 - You must take time to develop each account, ensuring that no account ever becomes overdrawn, and at worst only becomes forgotten for a short time.
- Writing letters, personal phone calls, small gifts and favors, and an active commitment to maintaining your personal relationships should be a part of your weekly routine.
 - It should be scheduled into each week.

A graphic featuring the words "THANK YOU" in a bold, blue, 3D font. The letters are stacked, with "THANK" on top and "YOU" below it. The text is set against a black rectangular background that is slightly tilted.

The Social Dimension

- The ultimate emotional bank account is between ourselves and the rest of the world.
 - If you cannot find reason to commit yourself to a cause greater than yourself for no other reason than it is simply the right thing to do, you should be concerned.
 - “We should all be ashamed to die until we have won some victory for humanity” - Horace Mann.
- If we are emotionally insecure, or socially self-centered, we will be unable to commit ourselves to the well being of others and will be unable to see wisdom, power, guidance, and value beyond the things that are immediately and personally beneficial.



The Obligation of Opportunity

- We must realize that all our opportunities came from the selfless contributions of our family, our friends, and the members of our communities.
- There is no gene for success, and even among those who seem predisposed to succeed in life, nothing can ever be accomplished without the support and guidance of those around us.
- The opportunities created for us by others come with an obligation to create those same opportunities for others.
- In the years to come, will you overlook this responsibility and only focus on your own personal gain? Or will you accept this privilege of helping others achieve success just as you have been supported?
- Remember that there will be a time when you will be called upon to create opportunities for others, because among the many reasons, you yourself were so richly rewarded.



The Upward Spiral

- The more proactive you are (Habit 1), the more effectively you can exercise personal leadership (Habit 2) and personal management (Habit 3).
- The more effectively you can manage your life (Habit 3), the more time you will have for self-renewal (Habit 7).
- The more you renew and improve yourself physically, spiritually, mentally, and emotionally, the more you can understand the views of others (Habit 5) and identify ways in which their success can also be your success (Habit 4).
- The more you can seek interdependent success, the more you will be able to benefit from life, enabling you to become more proactive (Habit 1) and seek change that will at its best change the world (Habit 4) and at very least make you a more effective person (The 7 Habits).

