

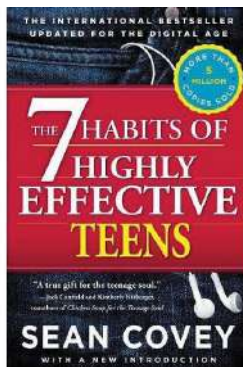


THE 7 HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEENS

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THE BOOK


The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens:
The Ultimate Teenage Success Guide

Sean Covey



INTRODUCTION

Being a teenager is tough. You are supposed to fit in, excel at school, make your parents proud, and so on, but something is not right. There's too much to do and not enough time. Your life feels out of your control, and your parents aren't actually helping. You feel stressed out or depressed. Sean Covey wrote *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teenagers* to help you deal with your life. You'll learn that all happy teenagers have a set of habits in common. They are not super smart or talented. Their secret weapon is just a set of habits – and you can build those habits too. If you want to change the world around you, begin with yourself. Build your self-confidence and character, then work on your relationships. To make it easier for you, we've picked the most useful ideas and action steps from this book, so you can start improving your life right away.



5 BEST QUOTES

“We are free to choose our paths, but we can't choose the consequences that come with them.”

“Education must be a lifelong pursuit. The person who doesn't read is not better off than the person who can't.”

“Since your destiny is yet to be determined, why not make it extraordinary and leave a lasting legacy? As you do this, remember, life is a mission, not a career. A career is a profession. A mission is a cause. A career asks, “What's in it for me?” A mission asks, “How can I make a difference?””

“It's hard, but sometimes it is better to have no friends for a time than to have the wrong friends. The wrong group can lead you down all kinds of paths you really don't want to be on and retracing your steps can be a long hard journey.”

“It takes faith to live by principles, especially when you see people close to you get ahead in life by lying, cheating, indulging, manipulating, and serving only themselves. What you don't see, however, is that breaking principles always catches up to them in the end.”



10 BIG IDEAS

1. WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU GET

We don't really know ourselves, other people, or about life in general. We only have our perceptions – aka paradigms – about the way things are. They are inaccurate or incomplete, but they still affect our reality. Negative paradigms create limitations, while positive ones can be helpful. Much of our troubles come from contorted paradigms, which we can actually fix. A negative self-paradigm, such as “I am dumb” will make you act dumb. To fix it, spend as much time as you can with someone who believes in you. Similarly, a negative paradigm of someone else will influence your relationship with that person. To make sure a false belief is not messing up with your relationships – don't judge people before you know all the facts.

2. ALL CHANGE BEGINS WITH YOU

Think for a second about your goals. What do you do to achieve them? What battles do you fight? The most critical battlefield in your life is within you. Before you even try to win a public victory, you need to gain a private one. If you feel you need to change anything around you – like your parents, your boyfriend, or a teacher – change yourself first. Change always occurs from the inside out. If you want to fix others, fix yourself. Look at the mirror and deal with your own character.

3. BE PROACTIVE, NOT REACTIVE (Habit 1)

People are either proactive or reactive. Proactive people take responsibility for their lives. The reactive blame circumstances or other people. Habit 1 says – be proactive, take responsibility for your happiness and unhappiness. It is all about the way you make choices. Reactive people listen to their impulses. If they're shaken, they explode. They whine and complain, blame others, and feel like victims. Proactive people think before they do anything. Their choices are based on values. There's no point in wasting your time and nerves on things you can't control. Focus on the things that you can – your choices, responses, attitudes, yourself. You can even turn setbacks into triumphs.

4. HAVE THE END IN MIND (Habit 2)

Habit 2 says, begin with the end in mind. Decide where you want to go and draw a map to get there. Decide on your values, set your goals, and you'll get a direction. You are at a critical crossroads in life, and a clear sense of direction is now more important than ever. You are free to choose your paths, but the consequences of those choices will affect you forever. If you just go with the flow, it may take you downhill. Also, if you don't decide what you're going to do with your life, someone else will do it for you.



10 BIG IDEAS

5. PUT FIRST THING FIRST (Habit 3)

There's not enough time to do all the things you've got to do. Good time-management skills are not enough. Put important things first in your life. Keep going where you want to be going, and don't let anything get you off course. Organise yourself. Decide what is important (activities that contribute to our goals) and what is urgent (things you have to do something about urgently). Now, draw a square with four quadrants. Q1 is urgent and important. Q2 is important but not urgent. Q3 is urgent, but not important. Q4 is neither urgent nor important. Where do you spend most of your time in? Say no to urgent stuff that is not important and cut down on time wasters. Discipline is the key. According to Albert E. Gray, the common ingredient of success is this: "All successful people have the habit of doing the things failures don't like to do. They don't like doing them either necessarily. But their disliking is subordinated to the strength of their purpose."

6. LIFE IS MADE OF — RELATIONSHIPS

What is it like to be in a relationship with you? What would your friends, siblings, parents, girlfriend/boyfriend, or teachers say about you? In life, it is all about relationships. Take care of them, but start with yourself. You are the most important ingredient in any relationship. Think about how much trust and confidence you have in each of your relationships. You can fix or break any relationship by the way you act in different situations. Keep promises, be kind and loyal, listen, and say sorry when you need to.

7. THINK WIN-WIN (Habit 4)

People usually have one of four attitudes toward life: win-lose, lose-win, lose-lose, or win-win. Win-lose is all about competition. It says - it's me or you. This attitude makes you focused on winning and being the best. The win-lose conditioning makes you do stuff like using people for your selfish purposes, spreading rumours, trying to get ahead at the expense of another, and being jealous. Lose-win is the attitude of the doormat. It's easier to give in and let anyone have their way with you than to be assertive and try to share your feelings with them. Lose-lose is what you get when two win-lose people get together. It says, if I lose, you'll lose too; you're going down with me. Revenge and war are also examples of the lose-lose attitude. Win-win attitude says, both of us can win. It is not me or you. You won't step on the other person, and you won't let them step on you. There's an abundance of success, so there's enough for anyone. Win-win thinking is the key to getting along well with other people.



10 BIG IDEAS

8. SEEK FIRST TO UNDERSTAND, THEN TO BE UNDERSTOOD (Habit 5)

First, listen. Then talk. See things from another's point of view before sharing your own. It is the key to communication because everyone has the need to be understood and valued for who they are.

Most people don't listen, or they have one of the five poor listening styles. They either space out, or pretend to listen, listen selectively, pay attention to words only, or are self-centred while listening. The last means that we listen from our own point of view. Because of that, our reply is not appropriate. We judge, advise, and probe others, and each is terrible for our relationships. Only genuine listening leads to real communication. Pay attention to words, body language, tone and feelings, and try to stand in that person's shoes. When people (even your parents) feel that you understand them, they will trust you, and they'll be more willing to listen to you.

9. SYNERGIZE (Habit 6)

When you work together with someone to create a solution that is better than anything any of you could do alone, that's synergy. It is a far better way than my way or your way; it is a higher way. It is like flying through life in a V formation, and not on your own. But synergy is not spontaneous. You need to learn it, and the first step is to celebrate differences in age, wealth, education, religious beliefs, language, skills, interests, dress, style, and of course race and gender. Each of us has different paradigms about ourselves and the world. Now, there are several ways to handle diversity. Some people shun it, others tolerate it, but the right way is to celebrate it. Diversity creates creative sparks, which, in turn, create opportunities.

10. SHARPEN YOUR SAW (Habit 7)

If you want to saw down a tree, it is better to take 15 minutes to sharpen the saw than to spend hours using a dull one. If you're going to deal with difficulties in your life, you have to keep your personal self sharp. Take care of your body (exercise, sleep, eat healthy food), brain (educate, read, write, learn new skills), heart (build relationships, laugh), and soul (pray, meditate, keep a journal). All four are equally important, so try to find the balance. Never stop hoping. Okay, your family life is horrible, and so are your grades, and the only person you have a good relationship with is your cat – so what? There are so many ways in which you can improve your life. Just keep hope alive, and then choose something to work on. Choose one or two habits and start practising it. You can also teach it to someone else. That way you'll internalise it and help someone at the same time.

**3 ACTION STEPS****1. MANAGE YOUR PERSONAL BANK ACCOUNT (PBA)**

Imagine a bank account that consists of how you feel about yourself. Let's call it a personal bank account (PBA). You can make deposits into it, and you can take withdrawals from it. If your PBA is poor at the moment, don't get depressed. You can't fix it right now, but you can start improving it by making small deposits. Keep promises to yourself. Do small acts of kindness. Be gentle with yourself. Be honest. Take care of yourself. Tap into your talents. If you do that regularly (and if you don't take withdrawals very often) you'll build a healthy and rich PBA.

2. GROW YOUR PROACTIVE MUSCLE

Are you proactive or reactive? Just listen to your language. Do you often say "that's just the way I am," "there's nothing I can do," "I'll try," "I can't," or "you ruined my day"? Reactive language takes power away from you and gives it to someone or something else. Proactive people say "I'll do it," "I can do better than that," "I choose to," "let's look at all our options," "there's got to be a way,". Think "can-do." Don't wait; take the initiative. You're human, not a dog. Don't react based on impulse. Turn the pause button on, and use your human tools: self-awareness, conscience, imagination, and willpower. Your self-awareness lets you see your thoughts and actions. Your conscience gives you the means to know right from wrong. Your imagination allows you to envision new possibilities. Your willpower gives you the power to choose how to respond.

3. PRACTICE WIN-WIN THINKING

It is not easy to be happy when your friend gets something, and you don't. It may also be hard to find solutions to problems so that both of you can win. But you can do it. If it is too hard for you, it means that you still haven't won the private victory, so you are insecure, you feel threatened by others, and so you are jealous. Start with yourself and stop competing and comparing. When you manage to change your thinking, notice the good feelings the win-win attitude brings on.

**1 KEY TAKEAWAY**

The key is within you. Public victories – in sports competitions, at school, work, or any other arena – are not real victories; they are merely the consequences of battles fought and won long before. Internal victory goes before the public one, so deal with yourself first. The only way to improve anything is to alter your decisions and attitudes. Commit to success, and you'll succeed. Commit to being a better friend, and your relationships will flourish. All change starts with you.