

The Eight Habits of Highly Effective People

My salute to the passing of Stephen Covey on July 16, 2012.

Adapted by Dan Conroy from: www.StephenCovey.com and www.RobertFinkelstein.wordpress.com

I see eight unique human endowments or capabilities associated with Stephen Covey's two books: *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* and *The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness*.



One way to look at these two books is to identify the unique human capability or endowment associated with each habit. There are three primary and three secondary unique human endowments. Animals do not possess any of them. They are on a continuum—from low to high levels. The seventh and eighth human endowments evolve from the application and mastery of the primary and secondary human endowments.

The **Primary Human Endowments** move you from dependence, to independence, and on to self-mastery:

- 1) **self-awareness** or **self-knowledge**
- 2) **imagination** and **conscience**
- 3) **volition** or **will power**

The **Secondary Human Endowments** help you work effectively with others, to develop interdependence:

- 4) an **abundance mentality**
- 5) **courage** and **consideration**
- 6) **creativity**

The seventh endowment is **self-renewal**. It is rejuvenation—recharging your own internal battery.

The eighth endowment is **promoting leadership**. It complements the first seven endowments. You have found your voice, you are inspiring others to find theirs. It moves you from effectiveness to greatness.

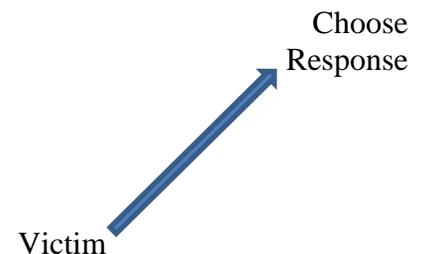
Primary Human Endowments: These enable you to use the secondary endowments more effectively.

Associated with **Habit 1**:

Be Proactive is the endowment of **self-knowledge** or **self-awareness**, an ability to choose your response. It becomes your response-ability.

At the low end of the continuum are the ineffective people who transfer responsibility by blaming others, their environment, or anything—anybody "out there" so that they do not have to take responsibility for their results. They spend a considerable amount of time and energy blaming and criticizing those around them. They refuse to take responsibility for their actions—it is always someone else's fault. They are victims of the circumstances they have created.

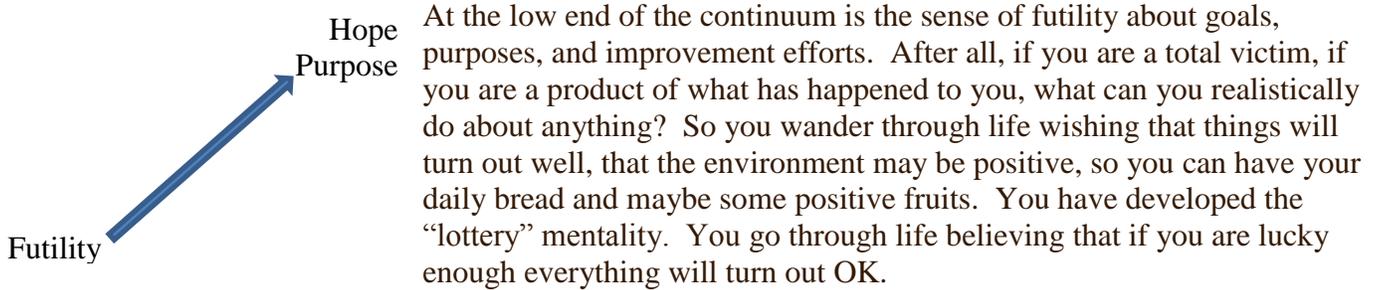
At the upper end of the continuum, toward increasing effectiveness, is self-awareness or self-knowledge: "I know my tendencies; I know the scripts or programs that are in me; but I am not those scripts. I can rewrite my scripts." You are aware that you are the creative force of their life. You are not the victim of conditions or conditioning. You can choose your response to any situation, to any person.



So on the continuum; you go from being a victim to having a self-determining creative power through self-awareness so you can choose your response to any condition or conditioning. You know that you cannot control what happens, but you can control your reaction to that event. You are not a victim, at the mercy of anyone or anything that comes your way.

Associated with **Habit 2:**

Begin With the End In Mind is the endowment of **imagination** and **conscience**. If you are the programmer, you write the program. You decide what you are going to do with the time, talent, and tools you have to work with: "Within my small circle of influence, I am going to decide."



At the other end is a sense of hope and purpose: "I have created the future in my mind. I can see it, and I can imagine what it will be like." These are the people who have the capability to imagine a new course of action and pursue it conscientiously.

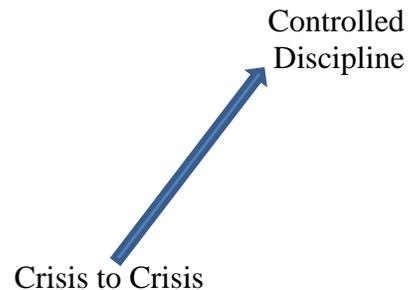
Associated with **Habit 3:**

Put First Things First is the endowment of **volition** or **willpower**.

At the low end of the continuum is the ineffective, flaky life; of floating and coasting, avoiding responsibility and taking the easy way out, exercising little initiative or willpower. Your life is very volatile.

You are constantly putting out fires as you move from crisis to crisis. You are dominated every day by these two negatives: can't and won't. You are constantly in a state of self-doubt; "shoulda, woulda, coulda" all over yourself.

At the top end is a highly disciplined life that focuses heavily on the highly important but not necessarily urgent activities of life. It is a life of leverage and influence, of controlled discipline.



You are focused on the important but not necessarily urgent matters of your life and have developed the will power to realize them. You are in control, in the driver's seat, of your life. You have a map of your destination and are enjoying the journey, and the inevitable detours along the way, as you move consistently in the direction of your destination.

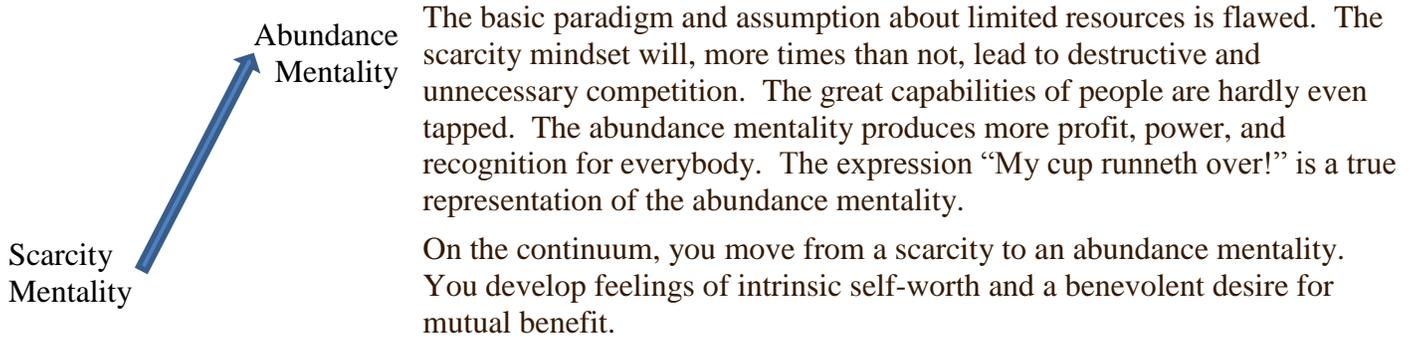
Secondary Human Endowments: These take the primary endowments to the next level.

Associated with **Habit 4:**

Think Win-Win is the endowment of an **abundance mentality**—the creation of an abundance mindset. Why? Your security comes from principles. Everything is seen through principles. When your wife makes a mistake, you are not accusing her of anything, or blaming her for the results. Why? Your security does not come from your wife living up to your expectations. Your security comes from within yourself—your fundamental principles.

You are principle-centered. As you become increasingly principle-centered, you love to share—indeed, you flourish—when you pass on this principle, you pass on recognition and power to everyone around you who is a part of the team. Why? The recognition and power is not a limited pie with only so many pieces to go around. It is an ever-enlarging pie. There is enough for everyone that wants a piece of it. When it seems

that the pie has run out—almost, as if by magic, more appears. It is like a water tap that seems to float in the sky—never running out of water.



Associated with **Habit 5**:

Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood is the endowment of **courage** balanced with **consideration**. Does it take courage and consideration to not be understood first? Think about it. Think about the obstacles and challenges you face daily. Don't they go something like this?

"You need to first understand my point of view. I hear where you are coming from. So let me tell you my story first, and then you can say what you want." And the other person says, "Okay, I'll try to understand, I will hear you out first." But the whole time the person is sitting there "listening" to you they are not active listeners; they are passive and selective listeners. They are just pretending to listen. They are so busy preparing, in their mind, their reply to what they think you have said, they only tune in long enough to hear a word here and there. They look attentive and absorbed in your point of view, but, they are not.

What happens when you show your home movies or relate some chapter of your autobiography? When you ask your audience to "let me tell you my experience"? Invariably, the other person tunes out unless they feel you first understand where they are coming from.

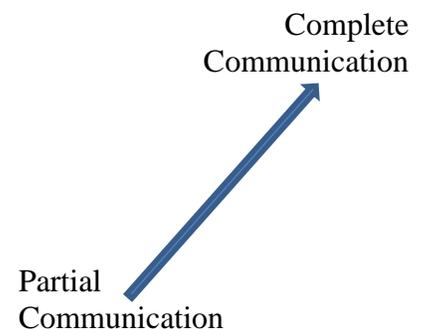
But what happens when you truly listen to another person? The whole relationship is transformed: "Someone started listening to me and they seemed to savor my words. They did not agree or disagree, they just were listening and I felt as if they truly understood how I saw the world. In that process, I found myself listening to myself. I started to feel a worth in myself. I started to feel I had a valuable contribution to make to society."

The root cause of almost all people problems is this basic communication problem—people do not listen with empathy. They listen from within their autobiography. They lack the skill and attitude of empathy. They need approval; they lack courage. The ability to listen first requires restraint, respect, and reverence. The ability to make yourself understood requires the courage to understand the other person first and the consideration to wait for the person to understand you, after you have understood them.

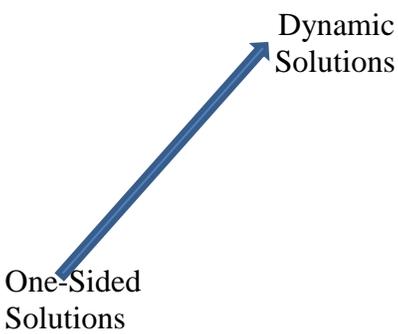
On the continuum, you go from fight and flight instincts to mature two-way communication where empathy dominates, and courage is balanced with consideration. You move from a partial one-sided communication to complete two-way communication. Everyone gets the message loud and clear!

Associated with **Habit 6**:

Synergize is the endowment of **creativity**, the creation of something. How? By yourself? No way, when two or more respectful minds communicate, they produce solutions that are far better than what either originally proposed.



They combine the strengths of people through positive teamwork, achieving goals no one person could have done on their own. They get the best performance out of a group of people by encouraging meaningful contribution, and modeling inspirational and supportive leadership.



Most negotiation is positional bargaining and the results, at best, are a compromise. Think about it. When a union negotiates, it takes the position on all issues established by their membership. When a company negotiates it takes the position of its shareholders on all issues. The resulting agreement is a compromise between the parties—a give and take.

When you get into synergistic communication, the individual positions take a secondary role. The focus becomes an understanding of basic underlying needs and interests, finding solutions to satisfy everyone.

You get people thinking. You get into the spirit of teamwork; you start to build a very powerful bond, an emotional bank account, where people are willing to subordinate their immediate wants for long-term relationships. With courage and consideration you end up communicating openly with each other and invariably create win-win solutions that neither side could have anticipated or created on their own.

On the continuum, you go from defensive communication, to compromise transactions, to synergistic and creative alternatives and transformations. You move from limited one-sided solutions to dynamic inspirational solutions.

Associated with **Habit 7:**

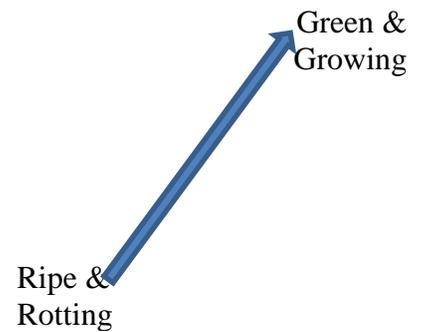
Sharpen the Saw is the unique endowment of continuous improvement or **self-renewal** to overcome entropy. If you do not constantly improve and renew yourself, you will fall into entropy, closed systems, and styles.

It is the endowment that is needed to help you to continuously move you through the primary and secondary human endowments and keep you continuously growing from dependence to independence as you work more and more effectively with others.

It is this endowment that will continuously reassess the primary and secondary human endowment areas and ensure there is constant and continuous growth over time.

I have, for over forty years, been using the CANI (Constant And Neverending Improvement) system, developed by a Texas sales trainer, Zig Ziglar to keep, as Zig would say, “Green and Growing”. Zig says that you need CANI to give yourself regular major surgery—an attitudectomy—a check-up from the neck-up—to get rid of the stinkin’ thinkin’. If you don’t do that, Zig says, you will soon be “Ripe and Rotting”.

At one end of the continuum is entropy (everything breaks down), and the other end is continuous improvement, innovation, and refinement. On the continuum, you go from a condition of entropy to a condition of continuous renewal, improvement, innovation, and refinement. Or, as Zig Ziglar would say, you move from the condition of “Ripe and Rotting” to one of “Green & Growing”.

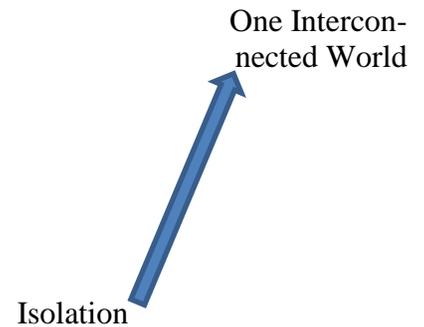


Associated with **Habit 8:**

Find Your Voice; Inspire Others to Find Theirs is the unique endowment of **promoting leadership** that will enable you to move you from effectiveness to greatness. As information and knowledge continue to expand at accelerating rates, it becomes more and more crucial to develop leaders that can make sense of

ever increasing volumes of meaningful and relevant information and communicate with others how to do the same. In addition, populations are aging. The largest segment of the world population—the baby boomers—are retiring and leaving the work force. We need to replace them with leaders that have the technological savvy to handle this plethora of data. But, the knowledge and use of technology is not enough. We need leaders that have the ability to use technology **and** work with people. The information age requires that not only do we need to know how to work a computer; but, we also need leaders who can efficiently and effectively communicate this ability to a wide range of people—one-on-one or in networks—with different personalities. Technology is a wonderful tool, but it is still only that, a tool.

One-on-one interpersonal communication skills are a must in this, the age of specialization. As people acquire a depth of knowledge they become more and more reliant of others to understand and apply the information they do not have any expertise in.



As John Donne (1572-1631) said in his Meditation XVII, 1624: " . . . No man is an island, entire of itself . . . " Human beings do not thrive when isolated from others—people are not isolated from one another, mankind is interconnected. To move from effectiveness to greatness you need to find your voice and inspire others to find theirs.

At one end of the continuum is isolation, and at the other end is a world community that thrives on the input of everyone within that society. As technology gets into the hands of the masses world-wide I believe that we will see increasing evidence of the power of the voice of one individual. Can you imagine what would have happened in 1989 China had the Tiananmen Square protesters (the picture of a young man standing in front of a tank is permanently etched in my mind) had today's technology then? Ask the people in North Africa if they can individually make a difference in their nation and in their society. The day is not far away when governments will have to start paying more attention to the individuals in their nations. The people in Egypt and Algeria have tasted the power. They know they have the ability to get huge groups of people out in protest.

My hope in combining these two books: *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* and *The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness* into one, the way I have in this paper, will give everyone a different perspective to this information, benefit the lives of many other people, and encourage everyone to make this system a part of their everyday lives.

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