

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People

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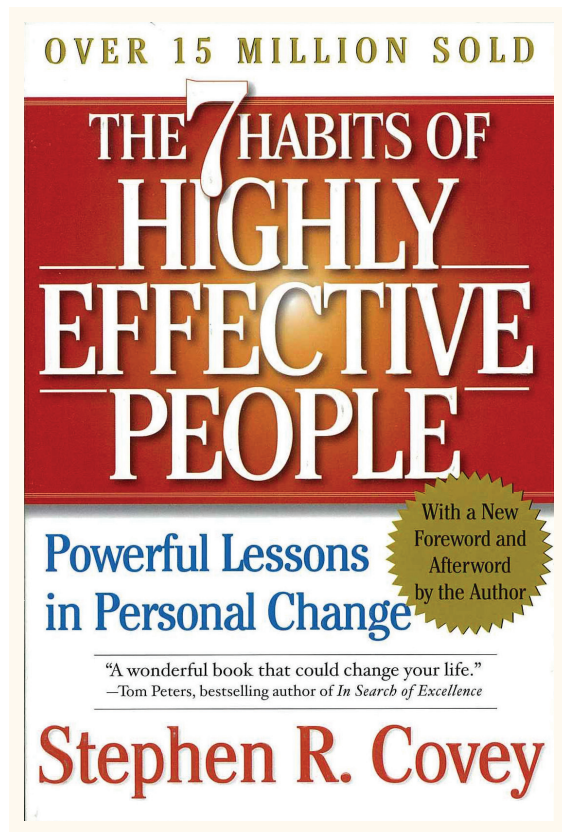
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العادات السبعة للأشخاص الفعّالين للغاية:

دروس قوية للتغيير الشخصي

ستيفان كوفي



FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1989, THIS BOOK HAS sold over 15 million copies. The reason for its success would seem to be because the book ignores trends and pop psychology for proven principles of fairness, integrity, honesty, and human dignity.

After a positive overview of the seven habits of highly effective people, the book is divided into four parts:

In Part One, *Paradigms and Principles*, the author discusses personality and character ethics, primary and secondary greatness. He also explains the power of a paradigm in which the seven habits of highly effective people embody many of the fundamental and primary principles of human effectiveness.

Part Two, *Private Victory*, discusses the first three of the seven habits. Habit 1 is *Be proactive*, principles of personal vision. This means that self-awareness enables us to stand apart and examine the way we see ourselves, our self-paradigm. Imagination, conscience and independence are other principles of this proactive model. Habit 2 is *Begin with the End in Mind*. Here principles of personal leadership are explained. Leaders may be very busy people, but in order to be both efficient and truly effective, their goals need to be foremost in their mind. This habit is based on the principle that all things are created twice. There is a mental or first creation, and a physical or second creation of all things. In order to write a personal mission statement, we must begin at the very centre of our circle of influence; that centre is comprised of our most basic paradigms, the lens through which we see the world. Habit 3 is *Put First Things First*. This is my favourite habit as it provides the principles of personal management. It teaches that the things which matter most must never be at the mercy of

things which matter least. The author provides a description of the time management matrix which divides activities into four types: 1. Urgent and Important; 2. Important and Not Urgent; 3. Urgent and Not Important, and 4. Not Urgent and Not Important, i.e. things which can be considered for delegation.

In Part Three, *Public Victory*, the author covers the next three habits, focusing on the paradigms of interdependence. Habit 4 is *Think Win/Win*. Here principles of interpersonal leadership are explained. 'Win/win' is a frame of mind and heart that constantly seeks mutual benefit in all human interactions. This principle sets the stage for life in a cooperative, not competitive arena. Habit 5 is entitled *Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood*. This habit covers the principles of empathetic communication. It introduces five important responses: listening, evaluating, probing, advising, and interpreting. Habit 6 is *Synergize*. This leads to the principles of creative cooperation where we communicate synergistically by opening our mind and heart to new possibilities, alternatives, and options.

The final part of the book is entitled *Renewal* and covers the seventh habit *Sharpen the Saw*. Here the four dimensions of balanced self-renewal are described, corresponding to the four elements of human nature: physical, spiritual, mental, and social/emotional.

The strengths of this popular book are that it is concise and informative with plenty of examples

and realistic stories to demonstrate the philosophy of the seven habits of highly effective people. It also contains tables, pictures and figures which help to illustrate ideas. The message is further underlined as the description of every habit starts with a proverb and ends with suggestions for applications. The book has, however, some weaknesses. Some sections of the text are difficult to understand, especially for 'English as a Second Language' readers. Also, surprisingly, the figures and tables are not labelled in the text.

Notwithstanding these minor weaknesses, I recommend this book to all faculty members, teachers, leaders, managers, especially to those strive for effectiveness and efficiency in leadership.

REVIEWER

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