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Michael Gray, CPA
1265 South Bascom Avenue,
Suite 106
San Jose, California 95128-
3533
(408) 918-3161
Fax (408) 998-2766
email: info@profitadvisors.com

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By Michael Gray, CPA

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Michael Gray, CPA
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San Jose, California 95128-3533
(408) 918-3161
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From Dependence to Interdependence

February 15, 1997

Our character is a composite of our habits. Changing habits is hard, but can be done by tremendous commitment.

A (good) habit can be defined as the intersection of knowledge, skill and desire. Change is a cycle of being and seeing (visualization).

Our objective is to move progressively on a maturity continuum from dependence to independence to interdependence. Although independence is the current paradigm of our society, we can accomplish much more by cooperation and specialization. However, we must achieve independence before we can choose interdependence.

Habits 1, 2 and 3 (Be Proactive, Begin With The End In Mind, Put First Things First) deal with self mastery. They are the "private victories" required for character growth. Private victories precede public victories.

Habits 4, 5 and 6 are the more personality-oriented "public victories" of Teamwork, Cooperation and Communication.

Habit 7 is the habit of Renewal, creating an upward spiral of growth.

Effectiveness lies in balancing our Production (P) with building Production Capacity (PC).

Organizationally, the PC principle is to *always treat your employees as you want them to treat your best customers*. We must understand that *the best contributions of our employees - their hearts and minds - are as volunteers, **because they want to.***

This process of growth will be evolutionary, but the net effect will be revolutionary.

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San Jose, California 95128-
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(408) 918-3161
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Personality vs. Character Ethics

January 22, 1997

There have been two dominant theories of achieving success in the literature of the past 200 years, the *personality ethic* and the *character ethic*. The personality ethic has been in the forefront since World War I. Previously, the character ethic was dominant.

According to the character ethic, it is most important to focus on integrating the principles of effective living into one's character. This may be a long-term process, but working on the character, including an effective view of the world, is getting at the root from which behavior flows and so is fundamental. The character ethic sees individual development as a long-term process bearing results according to the law of the harvest.

According to the personality ethic, there are skills and techniques one may learn and a public image, personality and attitudes one may develop that result in success. The problem is, eventually we may be discovered as insincere and shallow. These ideas may be helpful when they flow naturally from a good character and the right motives, but they are secondary.

A paradigm is a model, theory or explanation of something else. It is the "lens" of our preconceived notions through which we view the world. If our paradigm is not close to reality, our attitudes, behaviors and responses will not be effective or appropriate. We will be as lost as a person trying to function in Chicago with a map of New York. We can only accomplish quantum improvement in our lives if we accomplish a *paradigm shift* resulting in a more accurate and

effective view of the world. Some paradigm shifts may be fast (a blinding flash of the obvious), some are more slow (a change in character).

The Seven Habits is a principle-centered paradigm. Principles are guidelines for human conduct that are proven to have enduring, permanent value -- they are fundamental.

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1265 South Bascom Avenue,
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San Jose, California 95128-
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(408) 918-3161
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Be Proactive, Personal Vision

Habit 1

In our society, we have accepted 3 deterministic explanations of human limitations: genetic determinism, psychic determinism and environmental determinism.

On closer examination, we discover that *between stimulus and response, man has the freedom to choose*. We don't have to function on "auto pilot".

Proactivity means that, as human beings, we are responsible for our own lives. *Our behavior is a function of our decisions, not our conditions*. We can subordinate feelings to values. We have the initiative and the responsibility to make things happen.

Our most difficult experiences become the crucibles forging our character and developing our inner powers.

There are three central values in life: the experiential (that which happens to us), the creative (that which we bring into existence), and the attitudinal (our response to difficult circumstances). What matters most is how we *respond* to what we experience in life.

Taking the initiative means recognizing our responsibility to make things happen. Use your R (resourcefulness) and I(nitiative).

Proactivity is grounded in facing reality but also

understanding we have the power to choose a positive response to our circumstances.

Organizations of every kind can be proactive by combining the creativity and resourcefulness of proactive individuals to create a proactive culture within the organization.

We need to understand how we focus our time and energy to be effective. The things we are concerned about could be described as our "Circle of Concern". There are things we can really do something about, that can be described as our "Circle of Influence". When we focus our time and energy in our Circle of Concern, but outside our Circle of Influence, we are not being effective. *However, we find that being proactive helps us expand our Circle of Influence.* (Work on things you can do something about.)

Reactive people focus their efforts on the Circle of Concern, over things they can't control. Their negative energy causes their Circle of Influence to shrink.

Our problems fall in three areas: Direct Control (problems involving our own behavior), Indirect Control (problems involving other people's behavior), or No Control (problems we can do nothing about). Direct Control problems are solved through the private victories of Habits 1, 2 and 3. Indirect Control problems are solved through methods of influence, the public victories of Habits 4,5, and 6. No Control problems are best dealt with through attitude.

The Circle of Concern is filled with the "have" statements. The Circle of Influence is indicated by "be" statements. Anytime we think the problem is "out there," that thought is the problem.

While we are free to choose our actions, the consequences of our actions are governed by natural law. Sometimes we make choices with negative consequences, called *mistakes*. We can't recall or undo

past mistakes. *The proactive approach to a mistake is to acknowledge it instantly, correct and learn from it.* Success is the far side of failure.

At the heart of our Circle of Influence is our ability to make and keep commitments and promises. Our integrity in keeping commitments and the ability to make commitments are the clearest manifestations of proactivity.

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Begin With The End In Mind Personal Leadership

Habit 2

When we begin with the end in mind, we have a personal direction to guide our daily activities, without which we will accomplish little toward our own goals. Beginning with the end in mind is part of the process of personal leadership, taking control of our own lives.

All things are created twice. We create them first in our minds, and then we work to bring them into physical existence. By taking control of our own first creation, we can write or re-write our own scripts, thus taking some control and responsibility for the outcome. We write or re-write our scripts using our imagination and conscience.

There are three major aspects of our personal and business management. First is *leadership* - what do I/we want to accomplish? Second is *management* - how can I best accomplish it? Third is *productivity* - doing it. According to Peter Drucker and Warren Bennis, "Management is doing things right; Leadership is doing the right things."

A starting point in beginning with the end in mind is to develop a personal mission statement, philosophy or credo. It will help you focus on what you want to be (character), do (contributions and achievements) and on the values and principles upon which your being and doing are based. The personal mission statement gives us a changeless core from which we can deal with

external change.

Viktor Frankel developed a philosophy called "Logotherapy". Logotherapy helps an individual detect his unique meaning or mission in life by reexamining his personal vision and values to assure they are based on principles and reality.

We must reexamine the center of our life. Our center is the source of our security, guidance, wisdom and power. Making people or things outside ourselves important places ourselves at the mercy of mood swings, inconsistent behavior and uncontrollable changes of fortune. Being self-centered is too limiting - people develop poor mental health in isolation.

By centering our lives on correct principles, we create a stable, solid foundation for the development of our life support factors and embrace and encompass the truly important areas of our lives. Successful relationships, achievement and financial security will radiate from the principle center.

The principles we base our lives on should be deep, fundamental truths, classic truths, or generic common denominators. They will become tightly interwoven themes running with exactness, consistency, beauty and strength through the fabric of our lives.

In developing your personal mission statement, you can use your creative ability to imagine life milestones such as birthdays, anniversaries, retirement and funerals. What accomplishments would you like to celebrate? Visualize them in rich detail.

You can make your mission statement balanced and easier to work with by breaking it down into the specific role areas of your life and the goals you want to accomplish in each area.

If you find your actions aren't congruent with your mission statement, you can create affirmations to

improve. An affirmation should have five ingredients: it should be *personal, positive, present tense, visual* and *emotional*.

You can also use visualization techniques.

Affirmation and visualization are both self programming techniques that should be used in harmony with correct principles.

Mission statements can also be made for families, service groups and organizations of all kinds.

A family mission statement is an expression of its true foundation, its shared vision and values.

Organizational mission statements should be developed by everyone in the organization. If there is no involvement in the process, there will be no commitment to the statement. The reward system must compliment and strengthen the stated value systems.

An organization may have an all-encompassing mission statement, and each location, or even each team, may have their own. However, they should all dovetail with each other.

If the mission statements of your family and organization dovetail with your personal mission statement, and you use those statements to keep your end in mind, you will accomplish your goals more quickly and easily.

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Put First Things First - Principles of Personal Management

Habit 3

Habit 1 - I am the Programmer.

Habit 2 - Write the Program.

Habit 3 - Execute the Program.

Habit 3 is Personal Management, the exercise of independent will to create a life congruent with your values, goals and mission. The fourth human endowment, Independent Will, is the ability to make decisions and choices and act upon them. Integrity is our ability to make and keep commitments to ourselves. Management involves developing the specific application of the ideas. We should lead from the right brain (creatively) and manage from the left brain (analytically).

In order to subordinate your feelings, impulses and moods to your values, you must have a burning "**YES!**" inside, making it possible to say "No" to other things. The "Yes" is our purpose, passion, clear sense of direction and value.

Time management is an essential skill for personal management. The essence of time management is to organize and execute around priorities. Methods of time management have developed in these stages: 1) **notes and checklists** - recognizing multiple demands on our time; 2) **calendars and appointment books** - scheduling events and activities; 3) **prioritizing, clarifying values** - integrating our daily planning with

goal setting (The downside of this approach is increasing efficiency can reduce the spontaneity and relationships of life.); 4) **managing ourselves rather than managing time** - focusing in preserving and enhancing relationships and accomplishing results, thus maintaining the P/PC balance (production versus building production capacity).

A matrix can be made of the characteristics of activities, classifying them as urgent or not urgent, important or not important. List the activities screaming for action as "**Urgent.**" List the activities contributing to your mission, value or high-priority goals as "**Important.**"

Quadrant I activities are urgent and important - called problems or crises. Focusing on Quadrant I results in it getting bigger and bigger until it dominates you.

Quadrant III activities are urgent and not important, and often misclassified as Quadrant I.

Quadrant IV is the escape Quadrant - activities that are not urgent and not important.

Effective people stay out of Quadrants III and IV because they aren't important. They shrink Quadrant I down to size by spending more time in Quadrant II.

Quadrant II activities are important, but not urgent. Working on this Quadrant is the heart of personal time management. These are PC activities.

Quadrant II activities are high impact - activities that when done regularly would make a tremendous difference in your life. (Including implementing the Seven Habits.)

Initially, the time for Quadrant II activities must come from Quadrants III and IV. Quadrant I can't be ignored, but should eventually shrink with attention to Quadrant II.

1) *Prioritize* 2) *Organize Around Priorities* 3) *Discipline yourself*

Self discipline isn't enough. Without a principle center and a personal mission statement we don't have the necessary foundation to sustain our efforts.

Covey has developed a Quadrant II organizer meeting six criteria:

1. **Coherence** - integrates roles, goals, and priorities.
2. **Balance** - keeps various roles before you so they're not neglected.
3. **Quadrant II Focus** - Weekly - *the key is not to prioritize what's in your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.*
4. **A People Dimension** - think of *efficiency* when dealing with *things*, but *effectiveness* when dealing with people. The first person to consider in terms of effectiveness is yourself. Schedules are subordinated to people.
5. **Flexibility** - the organizer is your servant, not your master
6. **Portability**

There are four key activities in Quadrant II organizing, focusing on what you want to accomplish for the next 7 days: 1) **Identify Roles** 2) **Select Goals** - two or three items to accomplish for each role for the next week, including some of your longer term goals and personal mission statement 3) **Scheduling/Delegating** - including the freedom and flexibility to handle unanticipated events and the ability to be spontaneous

4) **Daily Adapting** - each day respond to unanticipated events, relationships and experiences in a meaningful way.

Here are five advantages of this organizer: 1) It's principle-centered - it enables you to see your time in the context of what's important and what's effective. 2) It's conscience directed - it enables you to organize your life around your deepest values. 3) It defines your unique mission, including values and long-term goals. 4) It helps you balance your life by identifying roles. 5) It gives greater perspective through weekly organizing.

The practical thread is a primary focus on relationships and a secondary focus on time, because *people are more important than things*.

The second critical skill for personal management is delegation. Effectively delegating to others is perhaps the single most powerful high-leverage activity there is. Delegation enables you to devote your energies to high level activities in addition to enabling personal growth for individuals and organizations. Using delegation enables the manager to leverage the results of their efforts as compared to functioning as a "producer."

There are two types of delegation: Gofer Delegation and Supervision of Efforts (Stewardship).

Using Gofer Delegation requires dictating not only what to do, but how to do it. The supervisor then must function as a "boss," micromanaging the progress of the "subordinate." The supervisor thus loses a lot of the leveraging benefits of delegation because of the demands on his time for follow up. An adversarial relationship may also develop between the supervisor and subordinate.

More effective managers use Stewardship Delegation, which focuses on results instead of methods. People are able to choose the method to achieve the results. It takes more time up front, but has greater benefits.

Stewardship Delegation depends on trust, but it takes time and patience. The people may need training and development to acquire the competence to rise to the level of that trust.

Stewardship Delegation requires a clear, up-front mutual understanding of and commitment to expectations in five areas:

1. **Desired Results** - Have the person see it, describe it, make a quality statement of what the results will look like and by when they will be accomplished.
2. **Guidelines** - Identify the parameters within which the individual should operate, and what potential "failure paths" might be. Keep the responsibility for results with the person delegated to.
3. **Resources** - Identify the resources available to accomplish the required results.
4. **Accountability** - Set standards of performance to be used in evaluating the results and specific times when reporting and evaluation will take place.
5. **Consequences** - Specify what will happen as a result of the evaluation, including psychic or financial rewards and penalties.

Using Stewardship Delegation, we are developing a goose (to produce golden eggs) based on internal commitment. We must avoid Gofer Delegation to get the golden egg or we kill the goose - the worker reverts to the gofer's credo: "Just tell me what to do and I'll do it."

This approach is a new paradigm of delegation. The

steward becomes his own boss governed by his own conscience, including the commitment to agreed-upon desired results. It also releases his creative energies toward doing whatever is necessary in harmony with correct principles to achieve those desired results.

Immature people can handle fewer results and need more guidelines and more accountability interviews. Mature people can handle more challenging desired results with fewer guidelines and accountability interviews.

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Paradigms of Interdependence

July 3, 1997

Victories in our personal development precede our public victories. Independence is the foundation of interdependence.

The most important ingredient we put into any relationship is not what we say or do, but who we are. If our words and actions come from superficial human relations techniques (the *Personality Ethic*) rather than from our inner core (the *Character Ethic*), others will sense that duplicity.

Interdependence opens worlds of possibilities for deep, meaningful associations, greater productivity, service, contribution and growth. It also exposes us to greater pain.

In order to receive the benefits of interdependence, we need to create and care for the relationships that are the source of the benefits.

The Emotional Bank Account is a metaphor describing relationships and the P/PC (Production versus building Production Capacity) balance for interdependence. It describes how trust is built on a relationship.

Positive behaviors are deposits building a reserve. Negative behaviors are withdrawals. A high reserve balance results in higher tolerance for our mistakes and more open communication.

There are **six major deposits** we can make to the emotional bank account:

1. *Understanding the individual.* An individual's values determine what actions will result in a deposit or a withdrawal for that individual. To build a relationship, you must learn what is important to the other person and make it as important to you as the other person is to you. Understand others deeply as individuals and then treat them in terms of that understanding.
2. *Attend to the little things,* which are the big things in relationships.
3. *Keep commitments.* Breaking a promise is a major withdrawal.
4. *Clarify expectations.* The cause of almost all relationship difficulties is rooted in ambiguous, conflicting expectations around roles and goals. Making an investment of time and effort up front saves time, effort and a major withdrawal later.
5. *Show personal integrity.* A lack of integrity can undermine almost any effort to create a high trust reserve. Honesty requires conforming our words to reality. Integrity requires conforming reality to our words, keeping promises and fulfilling expectations.

The key to the many is the one, especially the one that tests the patience and good humor of the many. How you treat the one reveals how you regard the many, because everyone is ultimately a one.

6. *Apologize sincerely when you make a withdrawal.* Sincere apologies are deposits, but repeated apologies are interpreted as insincere,

resulting in withdrawals.

The Laws of Love and the Laws of Life:

In giving unconditional love, we help others feel secure, safe and validated, which gives them the emotional security to do the same for others. Making conditions for our approval creates defensiveness and insecurity, breaking down the bonds of interdependence.

Dag Hammarskjold, past Secretary General of the United Nations, said, "It is more noble to give yourself completely to one individual, than to labor diligently for the salvation of the masses." It is at the one-on-one level that we live the primary laws of love and life.

Problems should be recognized as PC opportunities, a chance to build up emotional bank accounts. These are opportunities to deeply understand and help others, which applies to all personal relationships in the family, with workers and with customers.

The paradigm of the emotional bank account is the foundation of the habits of public victory required to avoid using personality techniques and to establish character ethics as the natural outgrowth of a secure, giving character.

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Suite 106
San Jose, California 95128-
3533
(408) 918-3161
Fax (408) 998-2766
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Think Win-Win

Habit 4

Win/Win is one of six total philosophies of human interaction.

1. **Win/Win** - People can seek mutual benefit in all human interactions. Principle-based behavior.
2. **Win/Lose** - The competitive paradigm: if I win, you lose. The leadership style is authoritarian. *In relationships, if both people aren't winning, both are losing.*
3. **Lose/Win** - The "Doormat" paradigm. The individual seeks strength from popularity based on acceptance. The leadership style is permissiveness. Living this paradigm can result in psychosomatic illness from repressed resentment.
4. **Lose/Lose** - When people become obsessed with making the other person lose, even at their own expense. This is the philosophy of adversarial conflict, war, or of highly dependent persons. (If nobody wins, being a loser isn't so bad.)
5. **Win** - Focusing solely on getting what one wants, regardless of the needs of others.
6. **Win/Win or No Deal** - If we can't find a mutually beneficial solution, we agree to disagree

agreeably - no deal. This approach is most realistic at the *beginning* of a business relationship or enterprise. In a continuing relationship, it's no longer an option.

The most appropriate model depends on the situation. When relationships are paramount, Win/Win is the only viable alternative. In a competitive situation where building a relationship isn't important, Win/Lose may be appropriate. There are five dimensions of the Win/Win model: Character, Relationships, Agreements, Supportive Systems and Processes.

1. **Character** is the foundation of Win/Win. There must be integrity in order to establish trust in the relationship and to define a win in terms of personal values. A key trait is the *abundance mentality* that there is plenty for everybody (v. the Scarcity Mentality). The abundance mentality flows from a deep inner sense of personal worth and security.
2. **Relationships** are the focus on Win/Win. Whatever the orientation of the person you are dealing with (Win/Lose, etc.), the relationship is the key to turning the situation around. When there is a relationship of trust and emotional bank account balances are high, there is a much greater probability of a successful, productive interaction. Negative energy focused on differences in personality or position is eliminated; positive, cooperative energy focused on understanding and resolving issues is built.
3. **Performance agreements** or partnership agreements give definition and direction to Win/Win. They shift the paradigm of production from vertical (Superior - Subordinate) to horizontal (Partnership/Team). The agreement should include elements to create a standard by which people can measure their own success.

1. **Defined results (not methods)** - what is to be done and when.
2. **Guidelines** - the parameters within which the results should be accomplished
3. **Resources** - human, financial, technical or organizational support available to accomplish the results.
4. **Accountability** - the standards of performance and time(s) of evaluation.
5. **Consequences** - what will happen as a result of the evaluation.

The agreement may be written by the employee to the manager to confirm the understanding.

Developing Win/Win performance agreements is the central activity of management, enabling employers to manage themselves within the framework of the agreement. Then the manager can initiate action and resolve obstacles so employees can do their jobs.

There are four kinds of consequences that management or parents can control - Financial, Psychic, Opportunity and Responsibility. In addition to personal consequences, the organizational consequences of behaviors should be identified.

4. The **Reward System** is a key element in the Win/Win model. Talking Win/Win but rewarding Win/Lose results in negating the Win/Win paradigm. If the outstanding performance of a few is rewarded, the other team members will be losers. Instead, develop individual achievable goals and team objectives to be rewarded.

Competition has its place against market competitors, last year's performance, or another location or individual where cooperation and interdependence aren't required, but cooperation in the workplace is as important to free enterprise as competition in the marketplace. The spirit of Win/Win cannot survive in an environment of competition or contests. All of the company's systems should be based on the principle of Win/Win. The Compensation system of the managers should be based on the productivity and development of their people. Reward both P (production) and PC (building production capacity).

5. The Win/Win **process** has four steps.

1. See the problem from the other point of view, in terms of the needs and concerns of the other party.
2. Identify the key issues and concerns (not positions) involved.
3. Determine what results would make a fully acceptable solution.
4. Identify new options to achieve those results.

You can only achieve Win/Win solutions with Win/Win procedures. Win/Win is not a personality technique. It's a total paradigm of human interaction.

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(408) 918-3161
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Seek First to Understand

Then to be Understood

We often prescribe before making a proper diagnosis when communicating. We should first take the time to deeply understand the problems presented to us.

The real key to influence is example - your actual conduct. Your private performance must square with your public performance.

Unless people trust you and believe you understand them, they will be too angry, defensive, guilty or afraid to be influenced. Skills of empathic listening must be built on a character that inspires openness and trust and high emotional bank accounts.

Empathic Listening

People tend to filter the information they receive through their own paradigms, reading their autobiography into other people's lives, or projecting their own home movies onto other people's behavior.

When another person is speaking, we usually "listen" at one of four levels: ignoring, pretending, selective listening, or attentive listening. We should be using the fifth, highest form of listening - empathic listening.

Active or reflective listening is skill-based and often insults the speaker.

Empathic listening is listening with intent to understand the other person's frame of reference and

feelings. You must listen with your ears, your eyes and your heart.

Empathic listening is a tremendous deposit into the emotional bank account. It's deeply therapeutic and healing because it gives a person "psychological air."

Next to physical survival, the greatest need of a human being is psychological survival - to be understood, to be affirmed, to be validated, and to be appreciated.

Empathic listening is risky. It takes a great deal of security to go into a deep listening experience because you open yourself up to being influenced. You become vulnerable. In order to have influence, you must be influenced.

Diagnose Before You Prescribe

It can be dangerous to prescribe without an accurate diagnosis.

An effective salesperson seeks to understand the needs, concerns and situation of the customer. An amateur sells products, the professional sells solutions.

This is a common denominator principle with its greatest power in interpersonal relationships.

Four Autobiographical Responses

Evaluate - Agree to disagree.

Probe - Ask questions from your own frame of reference.

Advise - Give counsel based on your own experience.

Interpret - Explain motives and behavior based on your own motives and behavior.

These behaviors are controlling and invasive. They may

also be logical, and the language of logic is different from the language of sentiment and emotion.

You will never be able to truly step inside another person and see the world as he sees it until you develop the pure desire, the strength of personal character, and the positive emotional bank account as well as the empathic listening skills to do so.

The skills involve four developmental stages:

1. The least effective is to *mimic content*, which is taught in active or reflective listening - repeating what the person said back to him or her.

2. To *rephrase the content* is more effective, but still limited to the verbal communication. It's putting the persons' meaning in your own words. This is a "logical" approach.

3. To *reflect feeling* involves the right brain, emotional level.

4. To *rephrase the content and reflect the feeling* includes both the second and third, attempting to understand both sides of his communication and give psychological air.

All the well-meaning advice in the world won't amount to a hill of beans if we're not addressing the real problem. And we'll never get to the real problem if we can't see the world from another point of view.

By seeking first to understand, we can turn a transactional opportunity into a transformational opportunity. We can get on the same side of the table looking at the problem instead of staying on opposite sides staring at each other.

Emotional statements require empathic, logical-emotional responses.

Children will open up to their parents if they feel their parents will love them unconditionally and will be faithful to them afterwards, never ridiculing them.

Sometimes talking isn't necessary to empathize; the words may get in the way.

Empathic listening takes time, but not as much time as backing up and correcting misunderstandings, including living with problems and the results of not giving the people you care about psychological air.

Understanding and Perception

By understanding the other person, we can learn their paradigms through which they view the world and their needs. Then we can try to resolve our differences to work together.

Then Seek to be Understood

Knowing how to be understood is as important as seeking to understand in reaching Win/Win solutions, and requires courage.

The Greek philosophy of Ethos, Pathos, and Logos gives the sequence for effective communication. Ethos is your personal credibility. Pathos is the empathic side. Logos is the reasoning side. Most people go straight to the logical side without first establishing their character and building the relationship.

Describe the alternative they favor better than they can themselves. Then explain the logic behind your request.

When you can present your own ideas clearly, specifically, visually and most importantly contextually - in the context of a deep understanding of their paradigms and concerns - you significantly increase the credibility of your ideas.

One on One

Habit 5 is powerful because it focuses on your circle of influence. It's an inside out approach. You are focusing on building your understanding. You become influenceable, which is the key to influencing others. As you appreciate people more, they will appreciate you more.

Opportunities to practice this habit proactively occur every day with your co-workers, customers, friends, and family.

When we really deeply understand each other, we open the door to creative solutions and third alternatives. Our differences are no longer stumbling blocks to communication and progress. Instead they become the stepping stones to synergy.

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(408) 918-3161
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Synergize

Principles of Creative Cooperation

Habit 6

The exercise of the other habits prepares us for synergy.

Synergy means the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The relationship which the parts have to each other is a part in and of itself - the most empowering, unifying and exciting part.

The essence of synergy is to value differences - to respect them, to build on strengths, and to compensate for weaknesses. The way to achieve synergy is through the creative process, which is terrifying, because you never know where the creative process will lead you.

Synergistic Communication

Synergistic communication is opening your mind and heart to new possibilities. It may seem like you are casting aside "beginning with the end in mind," but you are actually fulfilling it by clarifying your goals and discovering better ones.

Almost all creative endeavors are somewhat unpredictable, and unless people have a high tolerance for ambiguity and get their security from integrity and inner values, they find it unpleasant to be involved in highly creative enterprises.

By taking the time to really build a team, creating a high

emotional bank account, the group can become very closely knit. The respect among members can become so high that if there is a disagreement, there can be a genuine effort to understand.

High trust leads to high cooperation and communication. The progression of communication is defensive (win or lose/win), to respectful (compromise), to synergistic (win/win). Synergistic communication must be achieved to develop creative possibilities, including better solutions than original proposals. If synergy isn't achieved, even the effort will usually result in a better compromise.

Synergy in the Classroom

A synergistic class progresses from a safe environment to brainstorming. The spirit of evaluation is subordinated to the spirit of creativity, imagining and intellectual networking. Then the entire class is transformed with the excitement of a new direction. This is not a flight of fancy, but of substance.

Other times a class may approach synergy, but descends into chaos. Synergy requires the right chemistry and emotional maturity in the group to develop.

Synergy in Business

Excitement can replace respectful exchanges and ego battles. But a particular synergistic experience can seldom be recreated. Rather, new experiences should be sought.

By synergistically creating a mission statement, it becomes engraved in the hearts and minds of the participants.

Fishing for the Third Alternative

The "middle" way may not be compromise, but a third

alternative, like the apex of a triangle.

By mutually seeking to understand and be understood, the participants pool their desires. They work together on the same side to create a third alternative to meet everyone's needs.

Instead of a transaction, this is a transformation. Each participant gets what they really want, and they build their relationship in the process.

Negative Synergy

The usual win/lose approach results in expending negative synergy. It's like trying to drive down the road with one foot on the gas and the other on the brake. Instead of taking their foot off the brake, most people give it more gas. They apply more pressure to strengthen their position, creating more resistance. In contrast, a cooperative approach enables accomplishment.

The problem is that highly dependent people are trying to succeed in an interdependent reality. They may talk win/win technique, but they want to manipulate others. These insecure people need to mold others to their way of thinking.

The key to interpersonal synergy is intrapersonal synergy - synergy within ourselves helps us achieve synergy with others. The heart of intrapersonal synergy is the first three habits, which give the internal security sufficient to handle the risks of being open and therefore vulnerable. In addition, by learning to use the left brain, logic, with the right brain, emotion, we develop psychic synergy that is suited to reality, which is logical and emotional.

Valuing the Differences

The essence of synergy is to value the mental, emotional, and psychological differences between

people. The key to valuing these differences is to realize that all people see the world, not as it is, but as they are.

The person who is truly effective has the humility and reverence to recognize his own perceptual limitations and to appreciate the rich resources available through interaction with the hearts and minds of other human beings.

That two people can disagree and both be right is not logical, it's psychological. And it's very real. We see the same thing, but interpret it differently because of our conditioning. Unless we value the differences in our perceptions and understand that life is not always a dichotomous either/or, that there are almost always third alternatives, we will never be able to transcend the limits of our conditioning.

If two people have the same opinion, one is unnecessary. So when I become aware of the difference in our perceptions, I say "Good! Help me see what you see." By doing that, I not only increase my awareness, but I also affirm you. I give you psychological air. I create an environment for synergy.

Force Field Analysis

According to Kurt Lewin, a sociologist, the current level of performance or being is a state of equilibrium between the driving forces encouraging upward movement and restraining forces discouraging it.

Driving forces are positive, personable, and conscious. Restraining forces are negative, emotional, unconscious, and social/psychological. Both forces must be considered in dealing with change.

Increasing driving forces may bring temporary results. Eventually, restraining forces act like a spring to throw the level back down.

To produce synergy, the concepts of win/win, mutual

understanding and seeking synergy are used to work directly on the restraining forces. Involving people in the problem, so they understand it, makes it their problem. They tend to become an important part of the solution. As a result, shared goals are created, enabling the whole enterprise to move upward.

The legal process should be a last, not first, resort because it polarizes the parties, making synergy practically impossible.

All Nature is Synergistic

Ecology, the interrelationship of things, describes the synergism in nature. In the *relationship* creative powers are maximized. The Seven Habits are also interrelated and are most powerful when used together.

Synergy is the crowning achievement of the previous habits. It is effectiveness in an interdependent reality.

A lot of synergy is in your circle of influence. You can value both your own analytical and creative sides. You can sidestep negative energy and look for the good in others. You can courageously express your ideas in interdependent situations. You can value the differences in others when you see only two alternatives, yours and the "wrong" one. You can seek a synergistic third alternative.

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Principles of Balanced Self-Renewal

Habit Seven

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!"

Habit 7 is taking the time to sharpen the saw. By renewing the four dimensions of your nature - physical, spiritual, mental and social/emotional, you can work more quickly and effortlessly. To do this, we must be proactive. This is a Quadrant II (important, not urgent) activity that must be acted on. It's at the center of our Circle of Influence, so we must do it for ourselves.

The Physical Dimension.

The physical dimension involves caring for your physical body - eating the right foods, getting enough rest and relaxation, and exercising on a regular basis.

If we don't have a regular exercise program, eventually we will develop health problems. A good program builds your body's endurance, flexibility and strength. A new program should be started gradually, in harmony with the latest research findings.

The greatest benefit of taking care of yourself is development of your Habit 1 "muscles" of proactivity.

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 and tie you to timeless truths of humanity.

A doctor suggested that Covey try a four step prescription at three-hour intervals at his favorite place as a child. Listen carefully, try reaching back, examine your motives, and write your worries in the sand.

When we take time to draw on the leadership center of our lives, what life is ultimately all about, it spreads like an umbrella over everything else. This is why a personal mission statement is important.

The Mental Dimension.

It's important keep your mind sharp by reading, writing, organizing and planning. Read broadly and expose yourself to great minds.

Television is the great obstacle to mental renewal. Most of the programming is a waste of time.

Every day we should commit at least one hour to renewal in the first three dimensions: physical, mental, and spiritual. This practice is a "Daily Private Victory."

The Social/Emotional Dimension.

The physical, spiritual, and mental dimensions are closely related to Habits 1, 2 and 3: personal vision, leadership and management. The social/emotional dimension focuses on Habits 4, 5 and 6: the principles of personal leadership, empathetic communication and creative cooperation.

Our emotional life is primarily developed out of and manifested in our relationships with others. Renewing our social/emotional dimension requires focus and exercise in our interaction with others.

Success in Habits 4, 5 and 6 is not primarily a matter of intellect, but emotion; it's highly related to our sense of personal security. Intrinsic security comes from within, from accurate paradigms and correct principles deep in our own mind and heart. It comes from living a life of integrity, in which our daily habits reflect our deepest values.

There is also intrinsic security that comes as a result of effective interdependent living and from service, from helping other people in a meaningful way. Each day, we can serve another person by making deposits of unconditional love.

Scripting Others.

Most people are living in a reactive mode based on the social mirror. Their scripts are based on the opinions, prescriptions, and paradigms of the people surrounding them. As interdependent people, we recognize our role as part of that social mirror.

We can affirm the proactive nature of others by treating them as responsible people. We can help support them as principle-centered, value-based, interdependent, worthwhile individuals.

In the story of the mix up of the "bright" and "slow" students, the teachers of a group of "slow" children erroneously classified as "bright" said, "For some reason, our methods weren't working, so we had to change our methods." The IQ scores of the students dramatically improved. Apparent learning disability was really teacher inflexibility.

Goethe taught, "Treat a man as he is and he will remain as he is. Treat a man as he can and should be and he will become as he can and should be."

Balance in Renewal.

Self renewal must include balanced renewal in all four

dimensions--physical, spiritual, mental and social/emotional. Neglecting any one area negatively impacts the rest.

The same concept also applies to organizations. The process of continuous improvement is the hallmark of the Total Quality movement and a key to man's economic ascendancy.

Synergy in Renewal.

The things you do to sharpen the saw in any one dimension have a positive impact in the other dimensions, because they are so highly interrelated.

The Daily Private Victory, a minimum of one hour a day to renew the personal dimensions, is the key to the development of the Seven Habits and is completely within your circle of influence. It's also the foundation for the Daily Public Victory. It's the source of the intrinsic security you need to sharpen the saw in the social/emotional dimension.

The Upward Spiral.

Renewal is the principle and process that empowers us to move on an upward spiral of growth and change, of continuous improvement.

Education of the conscience is vital to the truly proactive, highly effective leader. Conscience is the endowment that senses our congruence or disparity with correct principles and lifts us towards them. Training and educating the conscience requires regular feasting on inspiring literature, thinking noble thoughts, and living in harmony with its small voice.

Dag Hammarskjold, past Secretary-General of the United Nations, said, "He who wants to keep his garden tidy doesn't reserve a plot for weeds." The law of the harvest governs, we will always reap what we sow--no more, no less.

Moving along the upward spiral requires us to learn, commit and do on increasingly higher planes.

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Inside Out Again

Conclusion

December 19, 1997

There is a gap between stimulus and response, and the key to both our growth and happiness is how we use that space. Do we respond to situations positively, proactively? Are we taking control of our own lives?

Meditating on this idea led Covey to start deep communication with his wife, including more and more discussion of their inner worlds. It was a time of inner discovery.

They developed two ground rules. First, "no probing," just empathize. Probing was too invasive. The second was when it hurt too much, quit for the day.

The most difficult and most fruitful part of this communication came when the vulnerability of each person was touched. They discovered a new sense of reverence for each other. They discovered that even seemingly truthful things often have roots in deep emotional experiences. To deal with the superficial trivia without seeing the deeper, more tender issues is to trample on the sacred ground of another's heart.

The ability to use wisely the gap between stimulus and response, to exercise the four unique endowments of our human nature, empowers us from the inside out. (The four endowments are self-awareness, imagination, conscience, and independent will. See the summary of Habit 1 - Be Proactive.)

By understanding the role of scripting, we understand the transcendent power in a strong intergenerational family. An effectively interdependent family of children, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins can be a powerful force in helping people have a sense of who they are, where they came from and what they stand for.

"There are only two lasting bequests we can give our children. One is roots, the other wings."

- Anonymous.

We should make a personal goal of becoming a "transition person," a person who changes the scripts transferred to the next generation from negative to positive by being proactive. This should be part of our personal mission statement. A tendency that has run through a family for generations can stop with one person.

Anwar Sadat, the former President of Egypt, was a powerful transition person for peace in the Middle East. Sadat said, "He who cannot change the very fabric of his thought will never be able to change reality, and will never, therefore, make any progress."

Real change comes from the inside out. Amiel said, "Only these truths... which have become ourselves... are really our life... So long as we are able to distinguish any space whatever between truth and us we remain outside it. To become divine is then the aim of life.... It is no longer outside us, now in a sense even in us, but we are it, and it is we."

To achieve unity with ourselves, our loved ones, our friends, and our working associates, is the highest, best, and most delicious fruit of the Seven Habits.

Building a character of total integrity and living the life of love and service that creates such unity isn't easy, but it's plausible. If we start with the daily private victory and work from the inside out, results will surely come.

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