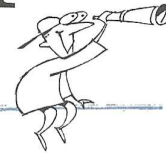


PART I

The Set-up



Get in the Habit

They Make You or Break You

Paradigms and Principles

What You See Is What You Get

Get in the **H**abit

THEY MAKE YOU OR BREAK YOU

Welcome! My name is Sean and I wrote this book. I don't know how you got it. Maybe your mom gave it to you to shape you up. Or maybe you bought it with your own money because the title caught your eye. Regardless of how it landed in your hands, I'm really glad it did. Now you just need to read it.

A lot of teens read books, but I wasn't one of them. (I did read several Cliffs Notes book summaries, however.) So if you're like me, you may be ready to shelve this book. But before you do that, hear me out. If you promise to read this book, I'll promise to make it an adventure. In fact, to keep it fun, I've stuffed it full of cartoons, clever ideas, great quotes, and incredible stories about real teens from all over the world ... along with a few other surprises. So will you give it a try?

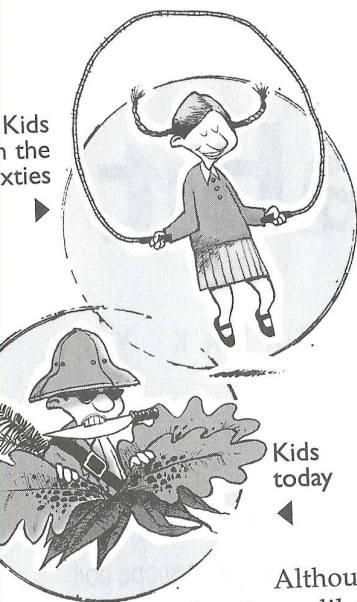
Okay? Okay!

Now, back to the book. This book is based on another book that my dad, Stephen R. Covey, wrote several years ago entitled *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Surprisingly, that book has

become one of the best-selling books of all time. He owes a lot of the credit for its success to me and my brothers and sisters,

We first make
our habits,
then our habits
make us.

ENGLISH POET

Kids
in the
ties

however. You see, we were his guinea pigs. He tried out all of his psycho experiments on us, and that's why my brothers and sisters have major emotional problems (just kidding, siblings). Luckily, I escaped uninjured.

So why did I write this book? I wrote it because life for teens is no longer a playground. It's a jungle out there. And if I've done my job right, this book can be like a compass to help you navigate through it. In addition, unlike my dad's book, which was written for old people (and can get really boring at times), this book was written especially for teens and is always interesting.

Although I'm a retired teenager, I remember what it was like to be one. I could have sworn I was riding an emotional roller coaster most of the time. Looking back, I'm actually amazed that I survived. Barely. I'll never forget the time in seventh grade when I first fell in love with a girl named Nicole. I told my friend Clar to tell her that I liked her (I was too scared to speak directly to girls so I used interpreters). Clar completed his mission and returned and reported.

"Hey, Sean, I told Nicole that you liked her."

"What'd she say!?" I giggled.

"She said, 'Ooohhh, Sean. He's fat!'"

Clar laughed. I was devastated. I felt like crawling into a hole and never coming out again. I vowed to hate girls for life. Luckily my hormones prevailed and I began liking girls again.

I suspect that some of the struggles that teens have shared with me are also familiar to you:

"There's too much to do and not enough time. I've got school, homework, job, friends, parties, and family on top of everything else. I'm totally stressed out. Help!"

"How can I feel good about myself when I don't match up? Everywhere I look I am reminded that someone else is smarter, or prettier, or more popular. I can't help but think, 'If I only had her hair, her clothes, her personality, her boyfriend, then I'd be happy.'"

"I feel as if my life is out of control."

"My family is a disaster. If I could only get my parents off my back I might be able to live my life. It seems they're constantly nagging, and I can't ever seem to satisfy them."

"I know I'm not living the way I should. I'm into everything—drugs, drinking, sex, you name it. But when I'm with my friends, I give in and just do what everyone else is doing."

"I've started another diet. I think it's my fifth one this year. I really do want to change, but I just don't have the discipline to stick with it. Each time I start a new diet I have hope. But it's usually only a short time before I blow it. And then I feel awful."

"I'm not doing too well in school right now. If I don't get my grades up I'll never get into college."

"I'm moody and get depressed often and I don't know what to do about it."

These problems are real, and you can't turn off real life. So I won't try. Instead, I'll give you a set of tools to help you deal with real life. What are they? The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens or, said another way, the seven characteristics that happy and successful teens the world over have in common.

By now, you're probably wondering what these habits are so I might as well end the suspense. Here they are, followed by a brief explanation:

Habit 1: Be Proactive

Take responsibility for your life.

Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind

Define your mission and goals in life.

Habit 3: Put First Things First

Prioritize, and do the most important things first.

Habit 4: Think Win-Win

Have an everyone-can-win attitude.

Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood

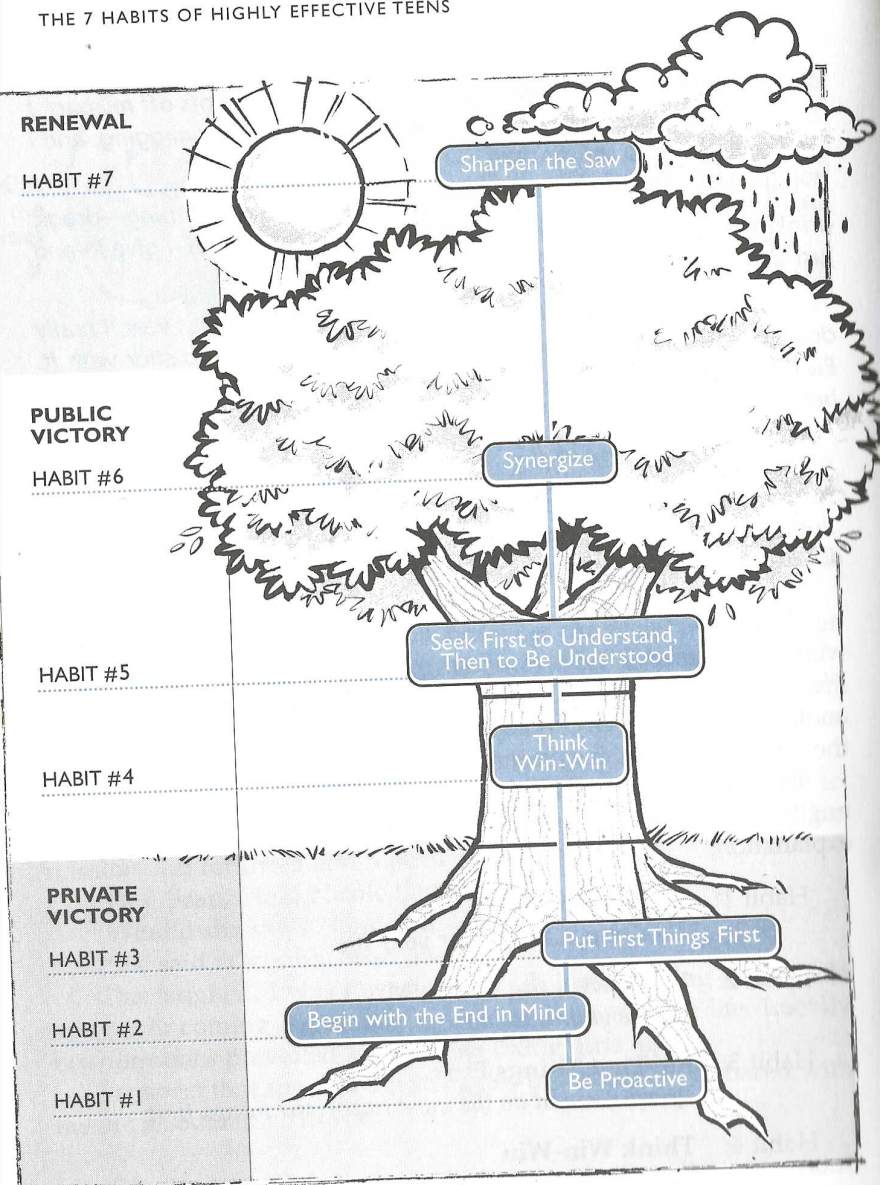
Listen to people sincerely.

Habit 6: Synergize

Work together to achieve more.

Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw

Renew yourself regularly.



As the above diagram shows, the habits build upon each other. Habits 1, 2, and 3 deal with self-mastery. We call it the "private victory." Habits 4, 5, and 6 deal with relationships and teamwork. We call it the "public victory." You've got to get your personal act together before you can be a good team player. That's why the private victory comes before the public victory. The last habit, Habit 7, is the habit of renewal. It feeds all of the other six habits.

The habits seem rather simple, don't they? But just wait till you see how powerful they can be! One great way to understand what the 7 Habits are is to understand what they are not. So here are the opposites, or:

The 7 Habits of Highly Defective Teens

Habit 1: React

Blame all of your problems on your parents, your stupid teachers or professors, your lousy neighborhood, your boy- or girlfriend, the government, or something or somebody else. Be a victim. Take no responsibility for your life. Act like an animal. If you're hungry, eat. If someone yells at you, yell back. If you feel like doing something you know is wrong, just do it.

Habit 2: Begin with No End in Mind

Don't have a plan. Avoid goals at all costs. And never think about tomorrow. Why worry about the consequences of your actions? Live for the moment. Sleep around, get wasted, and party on, for tomorrow we die.

Habit 3: Put First Things Last

Whatever is most important in your life, don't do it until you have spent sufficient time watching reruns, talking endlessly on the phone, surfing the Net, and lounging around. Always put off your homework until tomorrow. Make sure that things that don't matter always come before things that do.

Habit 4: Think Win-Lose

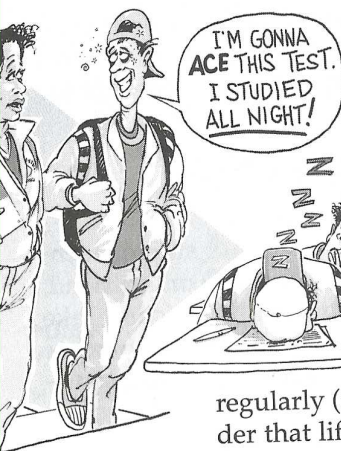
See life as a vicious competition. Your classmate is out to get you, so you'd better get him or her first. Don't let anyone else succeed at anything because, remember, if they win, you lose. If it looks like you're going to lose, however, make sure you drag that sucker down with you.

Habit 5: Seek First to Talk, Then Pretend to Listen

You were born with a mouth, so use it. Make sure you talk a lot. Always express your side of the story first. Once you're sure everyone understands your views, then pretend to listen by nodding and saying "uh-huh." Or, if you really want their opinion, give it to them.

Habit 6: Don't Cooperate

Let's face it, other people are weird because they're different from you. So why try to get along with them? Teamwork is for the dogs. Since you always have the best ideas, you are better off doing everything by yourself. Be your own island.

**Habit 7: Wear Yourself Out**

Be so busy with life that you never take time to renew or improve yourself. Never study. Don't learn anything new. Avoid exercise like the plague. And, for heaven's sake, stay away from good books, nature, or anything else that may inspire you.

As you can see, the habits listed above are recipes for disaster. Yet many of us indulge in them ... regularly (me included). And, given this, it's no wonder that life can really stink at times.

• WHAT EXACTLY ARE HABITS?

Habits are things we do repeatedly. But most of the time we are hardly aware that we have them. They're on autopilot.

Some habits are good, such as:

- Exercising regularly
- Planning ahead
- Showing respect for others

Some are bad, like:

- Thinking negatively
- Feeling inferior
- Blaming others

And some don't really matter, including:

- Taking showers at night
- Eating yogurt with a fork
- Reading magazines from back to front

Depending on what they are, our habits will either make us or break us. We become what we repeatedly do. As writer Samuel Smiles put it:

*Sow a thought, and you reap an act;
Sow an act, and you reap a habit;
Sow a habit, and you reap a character;
Sow a character, and you reap a destiny.*

Luckily, you are stronger than your habits. Therefore, you can change them. For example, try folding your arms. Now try folding them in the opposite way. How does this feel? Pretty strange, doesn't it? But if you folded them in the opposite way for thirty days in a

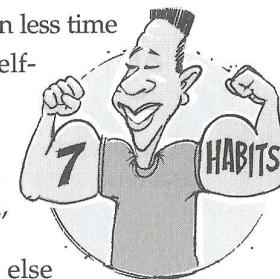
row, it wouldn't feel so strange. You wouldn't even have to think about it. You'd get in the habit.

At any time you can look yourself in the mirror and say, "Hey, I don't like that about myself," and you can exchange a bad habit for a better one. It's not always easy, but it's always possible.

Not every idea in this book will work for you. But you don't have to be perfect to see results, either. Just living some of the habits some of the time can help you experience changes in your life you never thought possible.

The 7 Habits can help you:

- Get control of your life
- Improve your relationships with your friends
- Make smarter decisions
- Get along with your parents
- Overcome addiction
- Define your values and what matters most to you
- Get more done in less time
- Increase your self-confidence
- Be happy
- Find balance between school, work, friends, and everything else



One final point. It's your book, so use it. Get out a pencil, pen, or highlighter and mark it up. Don't be afraid to underline, highlight, or circle your favorite ideas. Take notes in the margins. Scribble. Reread the stories that inspire you. Memorize the quotes that give you hope. Try doing the "baby steps" at the end of each chapter, which were designed to help you start living the habits immediately. You'll get a lot more out of the book if you do.

You may also want to call or visit some of the hotlines and Web sites I have listed at the back of the book for additional help or information.

If you're the kind of reader who likes to skip around looking for cartoons and other interesting tidbits, that's just fine. But at some point you ought to read the book from start to finish, because the 7 Habits are sequential. They all build on each other. Habit 1 comes before Habit 2 (and so on) for a reason.

So what do you say? Make my day and read this book!

★ ★ ★ COMING ATTRACTIONS

Up next, we'll take a look at ten of the dumbest statements ever made. You don't want to miss them. So read on!