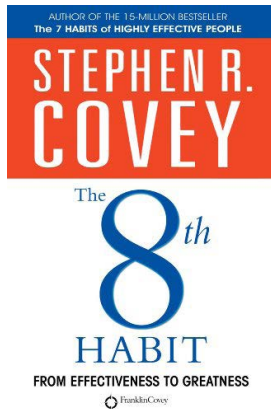


BOOK REVIEW



8th HABIT From Effectiveness to Greatness

By Stephen R. Covey

Book Review by:

Dr. H. Gayathri
Deputy Director, Professor - Marketing
Shri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara
Institute for Management Development (SDMIMD), Mysore

In the Chapter 1, Stephen Covey says that, the book 8th Habit is all about finding our inner voice & inspiring others to find theirs. This inner voice of human spirit is full of hope and intelligence, resilient by nature & boundless in its potential to fulfill the common goal. The inner voice is supposed to be unique personal significance. This voice is interconnected with talent, passion, need and conscience. When people work, they tap their talents which is expected to fuel their passion that meets the great need which is drawn by conscience. The author further says that, Pain is felt by everyone in all walks of life i.e., both at personal & professional level. Our inner voice will help us increase our effectiveness, growth & impact many folds. The best way to break the pain is first by understanding the actual cause of pain and then finding the appropriate solution through our inner voice.

In the Chapter 2, the author says that the problem with managers today is that they still believe and apply Industrial Age Control model to knowledge works and treat people as though they are things. This approach fails to tap the motivation, talent & genius of people leading to alienating them, creating low trust, unionized, litigious culture. When this happens, they stop believing in themselves. These organizations should understand that human beings are not things, but they are four dimensional i.e., body, mind, heart and spirit. The author points out that even if we neglect any one of the four parts i.e., body, mind, heart & spirit

- humans will turn into things. So, with things, people, control, manage & use carrot-and-stick approach in order to motivate them.

In the Chapter 3, the author says that we need to decide to choose between two roads of life - one is the broad, well-traveled road to mediocrity, the other is the road to greatness and meaning. Once we've found our inner voice which guides us to the life of greatness, it's important that we help others to find their inner voices w.r.t. the four parts of their nature i.e., physical, mental, emotional, & spiritual - to unleash latent human genius, creativity, passion, talent & motivation. Organizations that help their employees to express their full voice will achieve next-level of breakthrough in productivity, innovation & leadership in the marketplace & society.

In the Chapter 4, the author says, Human beings are born with "birth gifts" - talents, capacities, privileges, intelligences, opportunities - that which are opened only with people's own decision & effort. The three most important gifts are: First, our freedom and power to choose; Second, natural laws or principles, which are universal & inner change, and; Third, our four intelligences/capacities - physical/economic, emotional/social, mental & spiritual; The four intelligences/capacities reflect the four parts of human nature - i.e., body, heart, mind and spirit. The author says that, one theme that has the greatest impact is that people are free to choose. Power to choose is the

greatest gift of life. This power & freedom is a contrast to the mind-set of victimism and culture of blame so prevalent in our society today. By wisely exercising people's freedom to choose, they may change the circumstances by insulating themselves of being emotionally taken over by others weaknesses.

The author says, the second birth gift i.e., natural laws or principles means - people need to live by principles rather than managing life with today's culture of quick fix approach. The principles which are universal, timeless, and never change - are fairness, kindness, respect, honesty, integrity, service, contribution etc., He says these principles are inarguable as they are self-evident. The author explains the Third Birth-Gift i.e., the four intelligence/capacities of our nature. The Mental Intelligence (IQ) is the ability to analyze, reason, think abstractly, use language, visualize and comprehend. The Physical Intelligence (PQ) manages the body without the conscious effort - it runs its respiratory, circulatory, nervous & other vital organs by scanning the environment regularly, destroying diseased cells & fighting for survival.

The Emotional Intelligence (EQ) deals with one's self knowledge, self-awareness, social sensitivity, empathy & ability to communicate successfully with others. The fourth intelligence i.e., Spiritual Intelligence (SQ) is the key & most required of all the other intelligence because it is the source of guidance for the other three. SQ represents our drive for meaning & connection with the infinite. The power to discover our inner voice which is a gift with which we are born are latent and undeveloped seeds of greatness that are planted in us when we enter this world. We need to fully utilize the birth-gifts to understand our true potential which is infinite.

In the chapter 5, the author says that the highest manifestations of the four human intelligences are; for the mental, vision; for the physical, discipline; for the emotional, passion; for the spiritual, conscience. These manifestations represent the highest means of expressing our voice. Vision is not just getting things done or accomplishing some task or achieving something-it is

about discovering and expanding our view of others, affirming, believing & helping them discovers & realize the potential within them & finding their own inner voice. Discipline arises when vision joins with commitment. Happiness is also defined as the ability to subordinate what people want now for what they want eventually. This process of subordinating today's pleasure for greater longer-term good, is discipline. Passion is the fire, desire, the strength of conviction and the drive that sustains the discipline to achieve the vision. For people who have passion, the fire is from within and the motivation is also internal. Passion helps people to serve greater purposes in life. The author says that conscience is sacrifice - subordinating of one's self or one's ego to a higher purpose, cause or a principle. Conscience moves people from an independent to an interdependent state. Conscience transforms passion into compassion. It engenders sincere caring for others - a combination of sympathy and empathy.

In the Chapter 6, the author defines leadership as communicating to people their worth & potential so clearly that they come to see it in themselves. The four chronic problems of a person or an organization are; (1) Low trust that people face in the organizations. (2) Lack of shared vision and rules. (3) Lack of alignment or discipline built into the organization's structures, systems, processes & culture. (4) Lack of empowerment at the individual & team levels. The solution for the above problems are positive manifestations of body, heart, mind and spirit in an organization. Where there is low trust, organizations should focus on modeling trustworthiness to create trust. Where there is no common vision & rules, the organizations should focus on path finding to build common vision & values.

Where there is misalignment - focus on aligning goals, structures, systems & processes to encourage & nurture the empowerment of people & culture to serve the vision & values. Where there is dis-empowerment - to focus on empowering individuals & teams at the project or job level. These are referred as four roles of leadership - leadership not as a position, but leadership as a proactive intention to affirm the worth & potential of people around & influence to impact the organization.

In the chapter 7, the author says, that modeling is the spirit & center of any leadership effort. The “trim-tab” on a boat or plane is the smaller rudder that turns the bigger rudder that which turns the entire ship. He says that there are numerous potential trim-tabbers in every organizations, businesses, schools, etc., - who lead & influence irrespective of their position they hold. He further says that taking initiative is a form of self-empowerment. No formal leader, organization structure, job will empower people - but the individual themselves empower based on the issue or the problem or the challenge at hand. People should choose their level of initiative based on how far the task lies within or outside the circle of their influence. Working within the circle of Influence, the moral authority in developed and expanded which builds credibility leading to courageously taking initiatives. He says that, Leadership - is a choice, not a position.

In the Chapter 8, the author says that trustworthiness comes from character and competence. When people develop both i.e., strong character & competence it becomes a foundation for great & lasting achievement & trust. The three facets of personal character are integrity, maturity & Abundance mentality. Integrity is keeping promises made to self and others. A person develops maturity when he/she pays the price of integrity & winning the private victory over self, allowing the individual to simultaneously be courageous and kind. People with Abundance mentality see their competitors as some of their most valued and important teachers. He further says that modeling is living the 7 habits of highly effective people. The first three habits can be summarized as: Make & keep promises & the next four as renewing one's personal integrity & security & renewing the spirit & character of the complementary team.

In the Chapter 9, the author says, Communication with high trust-is easy, effortless & it's instantaneous. Trust is the glue of life. This glue holds organizations, cultures and relationships together. Enduring trust in a relationship cannot be faked, as it is not dramatic, onetime effort. There are ten key deposits which have a profound impact on the level of trust in any relationship. The three common denominator of the deposits are initiative, humility and sacrifice.

The **first deposit** is seeking first to understand. The deposit to another person should be understanding them from other's frame of reference. The **second deposit** is making & keeping promises. Trust is built & strengthened by keeping the promises people make. Keeping promises is hard, as it involves a painful sacrificial process. The **third deposit** is Honesty and Integrity. Personal integrity is central not only to all our relationships but also for the psychological health and for the power to be effective in the chosen life pursuit. The **fourth deposit** is kindnesses and courtesies. Small courtesies and kindness given consistently yield huge dividends.

The **fifth deposit** is thinking WIN-WIN or NO DEAL. The power of thinking Win-Win or no deal lies in the initial willingness to sacrifice, suspending our interests to understand what the other person wants most & why. This will lead to working together to find a new, creative solution that balances the interests of both the party's. The **sixth deposit** is clarifying Expectations. Clarifying expectations is really a combination of all other deposits discussed so far as it deals with mutual understanding & respect required to ensure effective communication. The **seventh deposit** is being loyal to those not present. This deposit is one of the highest tests of both character and the depth of bonding in a relationship. This deposit becomes very important, when everyone is bad-mouthing & piling on someone who is not present.

The **eighth deposit** is apologizing. To accept that the individual is wrong and to say sorry is a powerful form of apology. An individual should look into his heart and see where he has gone wrong and apologize humbly & sincerely without any self-justification. The **ninth deposit** is giving and receiving feedback. The best way to give feedback in a private circumstance is to describe feelings, concerns or our perceptions of what is happening rather than accusing, judging & labeling the person. This approach makes the other person to become more open to the information about his/her blind spot without being personally threatened. The **tenth deposit** is forgiving. The true forgiveness involves forgetting, letting it go, and moving on. As all humans make mistakes - people need to forgive and be

forgiven. People need to focus on their mistakes & ask for forgiveness rather than waiting for others to ask for forgiveness first.

In the 10th chapter, the author says that thinking Win-Win mind - set of searching for the Third Alternative - means mutual respect & mutual benefit. Most people believe that the other person must cooperate, but creative cooperation actually produces the Third Alternatives by synergizing. This is achieved by practicing empathy. Communication is without question the most important skill in life. The four modes of communication are reading, writing, speaking and listening. Listening represents 40 to 50 percent of our communication, and people are least trained in it. 90% of the communication problems are caused by differences in semantics or perceptions. When people listen to each other with true empathy, i.e., within the other's frame of reference, both semantic and perceptual problems dissolve. Then the spirit of mutual understanding will be very affirming, healing, leading to bonding between people to discuss the disagreements – in an agreeable way by solving them either through synergy or some form of compromise.

In the 11th chapter, the author says, Generally managers are rated high on work ethics (Modeling) but low on their ability to provide focus and clear direction (pathfinding). Modeling inspires trust, pathfinding creates order without demanding it. Once the decisions w.r.t. what matters most to the organization is agreed by the people - they share the criteria that will drive all decisions that follow. This clarified communication leads to focus & creates necessary order. It also creates stability & enables agility.

The author further says, that we need to involve people in the decision-making process by helping them understand and committing them to the goals. When people collectively work on vision & mission, everybody will have ownership in the path. Pathfinding is the toughest understanding of all because people deal with so many diverse personalities, agenda, perceptions of reality, trust levels and egos. If people cannot trust the person and or team initiating the pathfinding process, - there will be no identification, and involvement will

become dysfunctional. In conclusion, the mission statement & strategic plan are one thing, but the process of getting everyone on the same page in another thing of equal & great importance. The leadership work of modeling will truly manifest in the pathfinding role. Pathfinding is for a team, while modeling is for an individual.

In the 12th chapter the author says, modeling principle-centered living & leadership creates & inspires trust, where as pathfinding creates shared vision & order without demanding them. The question is, how do we execute values & strategy consistently without relying on the formal leader's continuing presence to keep everyone going in the right direction. The answer to it is, alignment – designing & executing systems and structure that reinforce the core values & highest strategic priorities of organization. Aligned organizations & institutions are truly principle-centered having institutionalized moral authority. It means institutional capacity to consistently produce quality, trusting relationships with various stakeholders, and continued focus on efficiency, speed, flexibility & market friendliness.

In the 13th chapter the author says that **the first Alternative** to empowering role of leadership is getting results by controlling people. **The second alternative** is to let them loose, meaning preach empowerment i.e., it means abdication and ignoring accountability. **The third alternative** is tougher and kinder, it directs autonomy through win-win agreements around cascading line-of-sight goals and accountability for results. Empowerment is a natural result of both personal & organizational trustworthiness, which enables people to identify & unleash human potential. Empowerment in the organization context means – employees doing work they love and doing it in such a way that it meets their deepest needs and also the essential needs of the organization. Then the voices blend.

When managers/leaders truly establish the conditions of empowerment, - control is not lost; it is simply transformed into self-control. Self-control comes when there is common understanding of end in mind, with agreed guidelines & supportive structures & systems.

Here people become accountable for results & they have freedom - within guidelines to achieve those results in a way that taps into their unique talents. It is referred as directed autonomy. When organizations encourage win-win agreements, it enables a higher level of flexibility, adaptation & creativity than the job descriptions, which focuses primarily on steps and methods. When organizations empower people, bosses cannot become big judge & evaluators. The so - called big boss should become the humble servant leader. The humble servant leader should ask the following questions to his employees: (a) How is it going? (Scoreboard, data) (b) What are you learning? (c) What are your goals? (d) How can I help you? (e) How am I doing as a helper? A simple question like - How am I doing as your helper? leads to open, respectful, mutual accountability. It is this spirit of servant leadership that builds the team and the trust fully blossoms. It's the trust that one person or team consciously choose to give to another. When one gives trust and other returns it.

In the 14th chapter, the author says that the 8th Habit gives people a mind-set and a skill-set to constantly look for the potential in people. It's the kind of leadership that communicates to people their worth and potential so clearly that they come to see it in themselves. The 8th Habit is the pathway to greatness, & greatness lies in finding our voice & inspiring others to find their. There are three kinds of greatness; personal greatness, leadership greatness & organizational greatness. Personal greatness is found when people discover the three birth gifts-choice, principles and the four human intelligences. Leadership greatness is achieved by people who, regardless of their

position, choose to inspire others to find their voice. This is achieved by living the 4 roles of leadership i.e., modeling, pathfinding, aligning and empowering. Organizational greatness is achieved as they tackle the final challenge of translating their leadership roles & work with the principles or drivers of execution i.e., clarity, commitment, translation, enabling, synergy & accountability. These drivers are universal, timeless, self-evident principles - for organizations.

The organizations that govern & discipline themselves by all the above three greatness truly hit the Sweet Spot. The sweet spot is the nexus where the personal greatness, leadership greatness & organizational greatness overlap. This is the point of greatest expression of power & potential. Sweet spot is another way of referring to the power that is released when people "Find their Voice" as an individual, team and organization.

In the 15th chapter the author says, to serve human needs, people need to first (1) Find their own voice & (2) Inspire others to find theirs. He says, people grow more personally when they are giving themselves to others. The author says that from his experience, the very top people of truly great organizations are servant-leaders. They are the humblest, the most reverent, most open, most teachable, the most respectful and the most caring. Individuals & organizations both private & public should learn that they are only sustainable when they serve human needs - services above self. This is the true DNA of success. "It is not about "What's in it for me", but about "What can I contribute?"