

7 Habits of Effective People

Working in schools can be stressful!

These articles are intended to help the great people who work in schools.

Key points

Be Proactive

Begin with the end in mind

Put first things first

Think Win / Win

Seek first to understand, then to be understood

Synergise

Sharpen the Saw

The main thing is to keep the main thing, the main thing.

Stephen Covey

Best selling author Dr Stephen Covey, in his best-selling book, *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, provides staff in schools with habits worth developing.

Covey advised that, *“Real greatness was the result of the slow development of character over time; it is our daily habits of thinking and acting that are the ground on which that greatness is built.”*

Here is a brief overview of Covey's famous 7 Habits:

Habit 1: Be Proactive: Proactive people use their resourcefulness and initiative to find solutions rather than just reporting problems and waiting for other people to solve them. Once we decide to be proactive, exactly where we decide to focus our efforts becomes important.

Habit 2: Begin With The End in Mind: Develop a personal mission statement or philosophy or creed. Focus on what you want to be (character) and do (contributions and achievements) while staying true to your values and principles.

Habit 3: Put First Things First: Put into action, daily, the things that will have you accomplish the outcome of Habit 2. Having the long-term picture in mind, we can plan our days and weeks for maximum effectiveness and enjoyment. We consciously and consistently spend our time with people who matter, doing things that genuinely matter.

Habit 4: Think Win/Win: Seek agreements and relationships that have benefit for both parties. Outcomes are not achieved at the expense of the success of another person. The pursuit of this habit should never compromise our own principles.

Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood: According to Covey, “Next to physical survival, the greatest need of a human being is psychological survival - to be understood, to be affirmed, to be validated, to be appreciated. When you listen with empathy to another person, you give that person psychological air. And after that vital need is met, you can then focus on influencing and problem solving.”

Habit 6: Synergise: Through genuine communication, find ways to leverage individual differences where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Through mutual trust and understanding we can achieve a better solution in conjunction with another person, than could have been found individually.

Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw: We need to balance the physical, spiritual, mental and social dimensions of life. It's important to take time out to regularly renew ourselves in each of these areas.

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Steve Francis is an expert in work-life satisfaction and is the author of three books, *'Time Management For Teachers'*, *'A Gr8 Life...Live it now!'* and *'First Semester Can Make or Break You!'*. He was a Principal for 20 years. Steve lives in Brisbane with his wife and two school aged children.

