

"SEVEN HABITS"
FOR
CAMPUS MINISTERS

by
Jim Greene, Ph.D.

My intent in these pages is to make very practical for campus ministers the insight provided in Stephen R. Covey's exceptional book entitled *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, published in 1989 by Simon and Shuster. Your editor and I have agreed that I will attempt a three-part series which will summarize and reflect upon Covey's content in light of my understanding of the task and role of campus ministers.

As I begin, let me emphasize the fact that I am *not* a Covey "devotee" -- but I *do* find that his orientation speaks with authority to the charge which I believe campus ministers face in the next decade. Although I have most recently attempted to digest the book in order to help managers within the healthcare field function in a more effective and human way, I bring to that enterprise more than thirty-five years of campus ministry experience. I am asking the editor to include my present address with each article so that you who read will be able to argue with and teach me if you care to invest the effort. I still see myself as minister -- and my heart continues to be "with" campus ministry.

The Character Ethic

An unusual emphasis in this management book is one which we espouse, but often forget: who one is determines how s/he sees the world.

Early in his career, Covey studied all U. S. success literature published since 1776. During our first 150 years, he found, it focused on what he terms the Character Ethic and dealt with such values as industry, fidelity, integrity, humility and the Golden Rule. Since World War 1, the Personality Ethic has been in vogue: success is seen as a function of public image, attitudes, skills and behaviors.

Covey calls for restoration of the Character Ethic; we, too, espouse the character ethic, the "inside-out" theory that who one is determines how that person lives life! We will also agree, I guess, that who one is determines the "news" s/he communicates.

Phillips Brooks, speaking in 1877, insisted that preaching is the "bringing of truth through personality." Charles H. Kraft, in a little book published through the William Carey Library and entitled, *Communicating the Gospel God's Way*, ties us as campus ministers directly to this concept. Kraft, a linguist and anthropologist, whose book I have given away more often than any other, insists that Mark 16:15 can be responsibly translated, "Go into all the world to communicate the Good News to all peoples." Communication of Good [and bad -- but that is a different argument] News is central to our task; who we are *really does* determine, long-term, the news we actually communicate!

Paradigms and Habits

Covey demonstrates that this sort of thinking involves a PARADIGM ISSUE. Regardless of your thought about this buzzword, we *do* live out of paradigms -- the "maps" which we have in our heads about *realities* (the way things are) and *values* (the way things should be). Find the book and read his testimony about a personal "paradigm shift" which transformed how he saw people on a subway one quiet Sunday morning. (pages 30-31). "I *saw* things differently," he says. "...and because I *saw* differently, I *thought* differently, I *felt* differently, I *behaved* differently."

I am concerned about whether we as Christians see, think, feel and behave any differently from those who are not oriented to God's action in God's world, in Jesus Christ *and* in us as His learners. Sometimes our attitudes toward welfare reform, the system which provides us with better than average good jobs, or people who look and think differently from us seem to more closely resemble "public opinion" than the paradigm of Esther, Amos, Ruth or John. Sometimes our thought patterns are no different from others in academia who cannot live with the ambiguity of mystery. I am rereading a 1984 book by Michael H. Barnes, a Catholic writer, titled

In the Presence of Mystery. It is a good reminder for those of us who live with (out of?) the social science paradigm. This whole issue would be worth discussing honestly in a trusted circle some day.

One other mundane word, **HABIT**, is used by Covey in an unusual way. This is action/attitude which occurs at "the intersection of knowledge, skill and desire." Knowledge is the what to do and why. Skill focuses on the how to do. Desire is the want to do, one's motivation. All three are necessary if one is to ACT.

Knowledge of the principles of human interaction tells us, for example, that we need to listen if we are to convey respect and be involved in growth. Some who have that knowledge do not have the *skills*; many with whom I work in the hospital fit into this category. It is possible to know the principle, have the skill and *still* not want to listen -- because we want to *tell* a student our idea, be sure the Center meets *our* standard of cleanliness, or simply get home to rest or read or play. We campus ministers often make a bad assumption that we *will act out* what we know or have skills for; that is simply NOT TRUE. Habit development is essential.

The P/PC Balance

I do not like alphabet gimmicks -- but the concept here is one which we often ignore. The term, "P/PC Balance", is Covey's shorthand for the continuing necessary co-focus on production itself and on *production capability*. His analogy is the story about the goose that laid the golden eggs. Someone, you remember, got greedy and killed the goose to get a few more eggs quickly. We do that often in business, relationships -- and programming. We emphasize "production" and wear out the machine or the persons. The wise and mature individual will balance production with the *equally important* cultivation of the production capability!

The systems within which we work may have difficulty with this. That is a part of our circle of concern, what "comes in on" us. What we can have some control over, however, our *circle of influence*, is how we -- as mothers and fathers, spouses and children, coaches and teachers, supervisors and laborers -- deal with our relationships and whatever life "hands" us. The way we live our mundane days

becomes the way we really teach those who look up to us and, down deep, know how much we value ourselves and them...

An Overview

I will attempt to use words to convey the picture of Covey's "scheme" which appears on page 53 -- two triangles, one sitting on its base and the other on its tip, resting on a bar above the first. At the bottom, a bar at the base of the triangle representing one's growth, is labeled *Dependence*. Clustered above that state, forming the triangle, and supporting the next level of maturity are the first three habits: Be Proactive, Begin with the End in Mind, and Put First Things First. These together make up what he terms "Private Victory". Balanced on the point of the bottom triangle, constituting "Public Victory". These are Think/Win/Win, Seek First to Understand...Then to be Understood, and Synergize. The base of that triangle is a bar labeled *Interdependence*, the solid realization of maturity. Encircling the entire maturity pattern is the seventh Habit: Sharpen the Saw. Real maturity is Interdependence, chosen as a style by an independent person. It is impossible, Covey seems to insist, for a dependent individual to choose interdependence; that journey lies through independence and the "private victories".

Habit 1: Be Proactive

Our social mirror -- the current social paradigms and opinions of others -- tells us that we have little control of our lives. Many of those with whom I work now feel powerless and totally without a sense of control over their lives.

College students tend to think that they are powerless. One of our tasks is to help each one see-believe-act on the "I can do all things through Christ" word we parrot. This means that each Christian is called whatever happens, to be proactive.

Victor Frankl, a Jewish psychiatrist, made a life changing discovery in the horror, pain and indignity of a Nazi death-camp: *he had the power to decide how ANYTHING the Nazis did to him was going to affect him*. He discovered in that penultimate imprisonment that he

was free, that he could live as he chose. This is the core of Covey's FIRST HABIT in growth toward personal victory.

Choice: We as humans have the gifts of self-awareness, imagination, conscience and independent will. These lift us above other creatures and give us the necessity of choice.

We are Responsible

Frankl found that he could choose to develop what Covey insists is *the most basic habit*, proactivity. That means simply that EACH OF US IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HER/HIS OWN LIFE. We choose to empower things around us -- become reactive -- or to take control of our own lives -- live proactively. Is the *core* characteristic of a dependent adult that s/he neither believes nor acts on the fact that s/he is responsible? What percentage of "your" students are in this group?

What matters most in life, Covey insists, is neither the "experiential" (what happens to us) nor the "creative" (what we bring into existence), but the attitudinal (our response to what happens). We are always choosing, DAILY -- to take the initiative or to be acted upon. Practice of other habits will depend "on the development of your proactive muscles."

Each of Us Chooses

Taking the initiative is crucial. We who are Christians, it seems to me, have a unique privilege: to see ourselves as and act as co-creators with God in shaping our world. We have no control, of course, over many of the things that hurtle in upon us -- gifts and problems. We DO have control over our responses to those "facts" of life. Perhaps one of the most forgotten opportunities we as ministers have is the *chance to teach*, by life *and* verbalization, the truth of God's strength through us. I have watched a number of you who are campus ministers deal peacefully and quietly with major crises in your lives: that type of teaching will change students. I give thanks for you.

Responding to Reality: Proactivity is not "positive thinking" in the usual sense of that phrase. It involves facing the facts of reality -- and

choosing a positive response to whatever those facts include. Proactivity is not, "I have to..."but rather, "I would choose to..." not "If only..." but "I will..."

Peter Senge, in *The Fifth Discipline* provides an important reminder simply to do harder what we have been doing -- without understanding THE SYSTEM in which we are moving -- dooms us to failure, especially in the long run. I hope sometime that one or more of you will explore the power and the limitations of institutions in our lives. I am convinced that one of our greatest mistakes is the failure to teach and explore with students we love HOW THEY CAN LIVE MOST EFFECTIVELY in the middle of institutions -- perhaps the "principalities and powers" of our day. I that you cannot do everything, that you must make priority decisions about the emphases within your ministries. Think a bit, however, about both the power and the universality of institutions in the lives of each of us. Is this not a crucial learning area for all of us whose calling is to live abundantly as Christians?

By the way: proactive people have the power to and may choose to *subordinate feelings to values*. We now know intellectually that feelings often follow action -- but consistently fail to discipline ourselves to live by that reality, many times we lack the will to act in spite of our feelings.

Expanding the Circle of Influence

One of the major issues with which students must deal in the difference between a "circle of concern" and the much more important "circle of influence." [This is one of Covey's concepts which I skimmed over at first, but have come to value and use regularly.] Any realistic individual must acknowledge the facts of life, what is happening around him or her. That is one's circle of concern. Proactive people, however, while acknowledging those facts, focus their energy on what they can do something about: their circle of influence! Again, Senge is on target when he reminds us that wise -- in fact, real -- proactivity includes the ability to see oneself and one's own actions/attitudes as part of the whole picture, interacting within the system with other factors to create the very

problems which must be addressed! Just last week an educator and I looked together at his part in the system we were attempting to change. His guilt feelings diminished and we together are now working with the system as a whole, including him! A teaching opportunity: problem-solving. Next time "your" council must address any issue, suggest that they: 1) identify the circle of concern -- spell out clearly the whole picture within which they are working. 2) discipline themselves to ferret out the myriad ways in which they and the BSU are part of the problem, and then, 3) focus their energy on what they can actually do something about -- their circle of influence. ... and, please, let me know if this model "works" with students!

A Parenthesis

Let me urge you to find the book and learn from it in your personal setting. What I have found useful may not apply to you now -- and concepts which have proved to be valuable to me may not be of help to you at the moment. There are, in addition to -- and maybe more important than -- Covey's theoretical model a number of exceptionally practical ideas which can stand on their own.

"The Other End of the Stick"

One of the most difficult tasks of the campus minister, I think, is the painful job of allowing student to FAIL -- and then bear the consequences of that failure. We would probably not be in campus ministry if there were not a "rescuer" within us. The systems, in addition, in which we work press us toward "no failure." We live in and are a part of our "success" culture. Rescuing, however, never leads to growing -- and is that not our REAL responsibility: growing young Christians? Covey says simply, "When you pick up one end of the stick, you also by definition pick up the other end of the stick." Consequences are an integral part of every action. Proactive people live with that fact. One of the descriptions I have heard used concerning the hospital within which I now serve is "risk-adverse." Smart people are so worried about "the -- unknown --other end of the

stick" that they are not willing to pick it up at all! No growth or progress comes in that way; even walking is throwing oneself off-balance and then moving to rebalance the consequences!

The Beginning of Growth

Covey provides another insight: making and keeping commitments is at the heart of integrity -- and, I would add, of credibility. This is not new, but it is critical. One department head with whom I have developed a coaching relationship is plagued primarily by this problem -- and consequently has been losing credibility throughout the hospital! He wants to please people so badly that his standard answer to any request is "no problem", but he is too busy to produce -- and peers and administrators are discounting him! Does that sound familiar?

In many ways I hope that those whom I respect and from whom I learn as I do from many of you in campus ministry will NOT look like me. In ONE thing, however, I do hope you will join me: in the deep desire to live up to my commitments! Failure to discipline oneself in the making and keeping of her/his promises is often the cancer which eats away at our integrity and credibility....

It is the little things which, together, make each of us who we are. A learning/teaching opportunity: With student leaders and as an individual, think about some of the promises you have made recently -- to each other, to spouse, to employees or friends. Did you keep those promises? Remember: "the little things are the BIG things." Those, each ONE of those -- with no exceptions -- who choose growth begin by making and keeping commitments. In spite of "circumstances," in spite of rationalizations, in spite of convenience, in spite of.. Can you think of a better growing medium than "s/he is a person who keeps her/his word?"

Covey's challenge at this point in "7 habits.."is to: 1. Work only in your circle of influence, 2. Make small commitments and keep them, 3. Be a disciplined part of the solution, and 4. Work on you! Try it for thirty days.

Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind

Covey begins this section with an exercise. Take a chance; try it! Picture yourself going to a funeral: get out of the car, go into the funeral parlor, see your friends there. Look into the casket -- and come face-to-face with yourself! Sit down. Prepare to listen as four people talk about you: a family member, a friend, someone from work, and a person from your church or community organization. *What would you like for each of these to say about you?* WRITE DOWN THE SPEECHES YOU WOULD LIKE TO HEAR.

Toward Your Destination: The idea is to think carefully about the things in life which you define as supremely important. If that is clearly in focus, then you can develop the habit of looking at every behavior in light of those values. In this way, you START with a clear picture of the destination you desire.

A Critical Fact of Life

Each of us has a center. Down deep, WHAT DO YOU VALUE MOST? It is out of this core that your security, your sense of direction, your wisdom and your power arise. The principles or values grown out of your CENTER. That center might be spouse or family. I personally am convinced that possessions often slip into this core centrality. [Karl Menninger, in *Whatever Became of Sin*, suggests that affluence is at least a potential evil. May I suggest that the "Ministry of Money" Newsletter, growing out of the work of the Church of the Savior in D.C., is a rich and balanced resource in examination of this pivotal issue in our culture. That address is: 2 Professional Drive, Suite 220, Gaithersburg, MD 20879.] Pleasure, friends or enemies can become central. Yes, even enemies! I have recently dealt with several individuals in the hospital setting whose lives have slipped into orbit around their distrust and lack of ability to forgive those who really do with them ill.

Your Personal Mission Statement

The most effective way of beginning "with the end in mind" is to

think through and write out a personal mission statement. If your reaction is comparable to mine, you will think: "Oh, I know that! That is an unnecessary exercise." The fact is that anything you have not spelled out in focused words is ambiguous and spongy! Write it out, PLEASE!.

A Powerful Anchor in turbulent times: These are changing times. We in healthcare know about actual and potential change and ambiguity! I am finding that a clear personal mission statement allows one to live with change; it puts you in touch with the changeless *core* within you, *who* you are, *your reason for being*, and *what you value*. Those within the hospital who have disciplined themselves in this way readily testify that it is worth the time and effort.

Learning to See

Athletes have led in an important area of discipline: visualizing the outcome which you desire. Most of us are comfortable using the left brain -- the logical and verbal hemisphere. We do well with words, with specifics, with analysis, with sequential thinking. Our Western Protestant theological education has reinforced that. [On my desk, by the way, is an arresting book entitled, *The Illuminating Icon*, by Anthony Ugolnik. Given to me by one of the most respected friends, it deals with the Russian Orthodox world view and the icon as "imaging forth" the glory of God! A corrective I need.] The right brain, that imaging sector, is more difficult to engage sometimes. Yet, if Covey is correct, that disciplined developing ability to visualize the goal is very important in allowing you to move toward it!

My treatment of this habit is short; the habit is not important. An opportunity for learning: Visualize an area of your life, of one your many roles. What do you want it to be in three months? Or, encourage student leaders to visualize and verbalize on a flip chart what they want the BSU to be when school begins. Hold that picture and live in light of it! The parallel that comes to mind is of the "new" approach to meetings, where objectives, not an agenda, guide the entire session. Team process, by the way, is something which

management in the non-church world is learning with difficulty, but which is making a significant difference in outcomes because it usually begins with a clear picture of where you want to be in a specified period of time.

Habit 3: Put First Things First

Covey now has published an entire book on this topic. Let me treat it here, however, as one of the habits, the practice of self-management, choosing to live day-to-day in harmony with who you choose to be. Most of us have more problems with this than with any other issue related to discipline.

First Things: The LEADERSHIP question (private or public) is, "What are the first things?" When any one of us is able to focus on the end toward which we intend to begin moving, we are dealing with our priorities ... and that focus may be relatively easy.

The more difficult issue for most of us, including Jim Greene, is the MANAGEMENT question, "How do I put first things first in the daily, weekly grind?" -- or, more appropriately for me, " ...in the weekly job fascination?" Effective living focuses on organizing and executing around priorities. That is where many of us stumble.

As we work alongside students, they learn more from the way we organize our lives and live out our priorities than from what we say. It is fascinating and painful to see supervisors who insist to their employees here in the hospital that they should be taking care of themselves, for example -- but personally take no time for self-care. Is it any wonder that the employees are not able to live by the supervisor's pronouncements!

I am not advocating a rigid, stiff work or play style. I am raising for your consideration the possibility that many of us in campus ministry may be in it partially because we like to pay attention to whatever is feeling good at the moment or focus on whatever the student with us now wants. I am certain that a number of us get "bogged down" in the minutiae of administration or micro-planning. Sometimes the intrigue of the (new) method or the security of knowing all the details blinds us to the purpose of what we are attempting. [Let me pause here to suggest that it may be time well invested to explore the use of

the Myers Briggs Type Indicator -- or something comparable -- as you look at yourself and work with students. I know that some of you may see other approaches as more effective than MBTI; my purpose is not to "push" one instrument or theory. My point: it is worthwhile to make use of every ...no, at least some available...tools for better understanding of your personal preferences which are often keys to recognizing personal areas of "temptation" toward ineffective work or play.]

Time Management

We all have lived through various time management phases. "To do" lists were the beginning -- no priorities, just the temporary sense of accomplishment which comes from listing all the "stuff" and checking it off. I have even put a few items on the list which I had already done so that I could see the check mark by them as I started the day!

A "second generation" time management emphasis, says Covey, is on scheduling events and activities. This provides a little more control. Then -- as a third effort -- we "prioritize," set goals, and develop daily efficiency.

The Next Step

The issue is deeper: how do we take care of ourselves? How do we emphasize the important things in the press of "too-much-to-do?" How do we build relationships? How do we accomplish the results which are in keeping with who we want to become?

A Time Management Matrix: Covey proposes a Fourth Quadrant picture. It is THE BEST time management aid which I have found anywhere.

	Urgent	ACTIVITIES	Not Urgent
Important	I		II
		ACTIVITIES	
Not Important	III		IV

In the first column are the urgent things. These are NOW activities; they may be as important (Quadrant I) as attention to the death of a student or a "split" in your church community. They may be as unimportant (Quadrant III) as some telephone calls or meetings! Important activities appear on line one. These contribute to your basic mission. They have to do with high priority results.

Not urgent activities are found here in column two. These may be either important or not important. Think carefully about which of the activities you invest time in daily fall into which of the quadrants. A learning opportunity: divide a sheet of paper into the Four Quadrants, as noted above. Ineffective people spend their time -- where? Effective people take time from quadrants IV and III and invest that time -- Quadrant II.

Where You Spend Your Time

The goal is more Quadrant II time. Consider two facts on which I think we will agree and one that I am sure of:

1. Urgent important activities (Quadrant I) do demand a lot of time.
2. Too much time spent in Quadrant I is crisis management only, producing a feeling to importance, but leading to stress and burnout!
3. The planning, self-care and "production capability" work in Quadrant II will eventually make Quadrant I work less demanding.

The manager of our Emergency Room here has decided, as a result of her work which is dominated by Quadrant I activity, that she cannot afford not to take an hour each morning, from 8:00 until 9:00 AM, for personal reflection and planning. She is learning about the ultimate value of Quadrant II activity! Often the things which do not press in on us and do not demand our attention are THE MOST VALUABLE! I have watched a much-loved executive in another state fail to deal with the really important but not urgent issues which could "save" his outfit. I think that he enjoys the pressure and immediately successful feelings which accrue to Quadrant I busyness and has at some level decided that those feelings are more important than the effectiveness which can come only through attention to the less immediately satisfying Quadrant II work!

Saying No: To say "yes" to the planning, self-care, preparation and relationship-building in Quadrant II, it is essential that one say an emphatic "no" to something else. At least for a while, Quadrant I issues are not negotiable. Strategic discipline will mean that the first to "go," of course, will be the comfortable Quadrant III and IV stuff in which we hide. Time shifted to Quadrant II work will then eventually mean that the "fire fighting" of Quadrant I is less necessary. Personal devotional time is Quadrant II activity at its best and most effective. If you personally learned in a less-than-optimal way about "devotions," let me urge you to reconsider the investment of time with the Lord in light of this model.

One more note from Covey: Daily planning can mean that you neglect vision and short-change some of your many roles. Getting to where you really want to be -- as parent, as spouse, as learner, as enjoyer-of-life -- will be more possibly by THINKING: WEEKLY PLANNING. A Learning Opportunity: take an hour to think through your many roles and where you want to be in them a year from now. Look at your activities on a weekly or monthly basis in light of growth in all those roles. Plan your next month on a weekly basis in light of those goals...and let me know what happens.

This is the first in a series of articles in which I attempt to relate Covey's insight to work as a campus minister. These first three habits form the basis for private "victory" and serve as a vehicle in the growth from dependence toward independence. This is a necessary step toward maturity -- but not the entire leap! Climb well, enjoy; find a friend with whom to explore; laugh at your failures en route! God bless. -- Jim Greene [c/o Wishard Hospital, 1001 West Tenth Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202]