

A REFLECTION GUIDE

Living *the 7 Habits.*

Timeless Principles. Intentional Living.



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"Seek first to understand rather than to be understood."

— STEPHEN R. COVEY

HABIT 1 • BE PROACTIVE

Be Proactive.

What is mine to do?

"I am not a product of my circumstances. I am a product of my decisions."

— Stephen R. Covey

Life gives us plenty we did not choose. Other people's behavior. Their opinions. Decisions made by organizations. The economy. The weather. The past. Unexpected losses and disappointments. The email we wish had never arrived.

We don't control all of it. But we are not powerless within it.

One of Covey's most important ideas is what he called response-ability — our ability to choose our response. Proactivity doesn't mean pretending circumstances don't matter. It means recognizing that even when we cannot control what is happening around us, we can become more intentional about what happens next.

YOUR TURN

Think about something currently taking up more of your mental or emotional energy than you'd like. What is outside your control? What can you influence? What is one thing that is yours to do? Then put your energy there.

HABIT 2 • BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND

Begin With the End in Mind.

What am I actually building?

"All things are created twice: first mentally, then physically."

— Stephen R. Covey

It's easy to move through a season of life reacting — to the calendar, to other people's expectations, to whatever feels most urgent that day — without ever stepping back to ask where any of it is actually leading.

Beginning with the end in mind isn't about rigid five-year plans. It's about letting your values, not just your circumstances, decide what you build. A career, a family, a body of work, a way of showing up for people — all of it starts as a mental picture long before it becomes real.

The question worth sitting with isn't just "what am I doing today," but "what am I doing today in service of?"

YOUR TURN

Imagine your life five years from now, shaped by what actually matters most to you. What does an ordinary Tuesday look like in that picture? Name one decision in front of you right now that would move you closer to it.

HABIT 3 • PUT FIRST THINGS FIRST

Put First Things First.

Am I managing my time, or my priorities?

“The key is not to prioritize what's on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.”

— Stephen R. Covey

Most of what fills a day is urgent without being important — the notification, the request, the fire that isn't really yours to put out. Meanwhile, the things that matter most — rest, relationships, deep work, health — rarely announce themselves as emergencies. They wait quietly until they're neglected long enough to become one.

Putting first things first means protecting time for what matters before the urgent things fill every open hour. It is a discipline, not a feeling — it has to be scheduled, not just intended.

YOUR TURN

Look at your calendar for this week. What's something important but not urgent that keeps getting pushed aside? Block time for it today — before the week fills in around it.

HABIT 4 • THINK WIN-WIN

Think Win-Win.

Can this be good for both of us?

“Win-win is a belief in the third alternative. It's not your way or my way; it's a better way.”

— Stephen R. Covey

So much of the tension in our relationships — at work, at home, in negotiation of every kind — comes from an unspoken assumption that one person's gain requires another's loss. That mindset turns every disagreement into a contest.

Thinking win-win doesn't mean splitting the difference or avoiding hard conversations. It means staying at the table long enough to find a solution that actually serves both sides — which is usually a better outcome than either person walked in with.

YOUR TURN

Think of a current disagreement or negotiation in your life. What would a solution look like that truly worked for both sides — not a compromise, but something better than either of you started with?

HABIT 5 • SEEK FIRST TO UNDERSTAND, THEN TO BE UNDERSTOOD

Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood.

Am I listening to respond, or to understand?

“Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.”

— Stephen R. Covey

In most conversations, especially difficult ones, we're quietly building our response while the other person is still talking. We hear enough to react, not enough to actually understand.

Seeking first to understand asks something harder: to set the rebuttal aside and stay curious, even when we're certain we already know what the other person means. Real understanding almost always changes the conversation — and it has to come first, not as a courtesy before we say our piece, but as the actual goal.

YOUR TURN

In your next difficult conversation, try asking questions only — no advice, no rebuttal — for the first five minutes. Notice what you learn that you would have otherwise missed.

HABIT 6 • SYNERGIZE

Synergize.

What becomes possible when we combine strengths?

“Synergy is better than my way or your way. It's our way.”

— Stephen R. Covey

Synergy is what happens when differences are treated as an asset instead of a problem to manage. Two people with different strengths, different vantage points, even different values can often build something neither could have built alone — but only if the differences are actually welcomed into the room.

This is harder than it sounds. Our instinct is often to surround ourselves with people who think like we do, because it's more comfortable. But comfort and creativity rarely grow in the same soil.

YOUR TURN

Think of someone whose perspective differs sharply from yours — a colleague, a family member, a friend. What might the two of you build or solve together that neither of you could reach alone?

HABIT 7 • SHARPEN THE SAW

Sharpen the Saw.

Am I taking care of the instrument I use for everything else?

“Sometimes when you're too busy sawing to take time to sharpen the saw, that's exactly when it's most needed.”

— Stephen R. Covey

The first six habits all ask something of you — attention, intention, effort. The seventh is the one that makes the other six sustainable: renewal, across every part of who you are. Physical. Mental. Social and emotional. Spiritual.

It is tempting to treat renewal as the first thing to cut when life gets full, but an unsharpened saw doesn't cut faster because you're in a hurry — it just takes more out of you to do the same work.

YOUR TURN

Pick one dimension — body, mind, heart, or spirit — that's been quietly neglected. What's one small renewing practice you could start this week, even in ten minutes a day?

A CLOSING WORD

Small Shifts, Practiced Daily.

None of these seven habits are meant to be mastered in a week, or even a year. They are practices — things you return to, imperfectly, again and again. Pick one that spoke to you most, and let it be the only one you focus on this month.

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