



Book

The 8th Habit

From Effectiveness to Greatness

Stephen R. Covey

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The 7 Habits generate the 8th Habit:
Find your voice; help others find theirs. Bring mind, body, heart and soul to work.

Recommendation

A cynic toward sequels would note that Steven Covey took only a little more than 300 pages to explain his first seven habits, but 409 pages and an accompanying CD to expound on the eighth. Cynicism aside, however, this book - this 8th Habit - is worth every page. Give Covey credit. He could rest on his laurels and just write bland, non-threatening "how to lead" books and they would all be bestsellers. Covey eschews mediocrity, however, and tells it straight. Most employees experience considerable emotional pain working in their organizations, he says, because they are treated as objects, not full human beings. Covey adds his prestige to the notion that the knowledge worker is a new model for change in the unspoken, unwritten contract between employer and worker. He bases this fresh paradigm on respect for the complete person - mind, body, heart and soul - not just the part that works from nine to five. Covey's voice is powerful and unique. He is committed to helping others find their unique voices as well. *getAbstract* recommends this highly for anyone in the workplace.

In this summary, you will learn

- How to transform your life and your company by using the 8th Habit
- How it incorporates and expands upon the 7 Habits
- How the Knowledge Worker Era is replacing the Industrial Age
- How to develop your unique human voice and help others find theirs
- How to make empowerment work

Take-Aways

- The 8th Habit has two aspects: one, finding your own unique voice and two, helping others find theirs.
- The 8th Habit stems from the first 7 habits.
- Most management operates under a tragically flawed Industrial Age paradigm.
- Leave that framework behind, and welcome the paradigm of the Knowledge Worker.

- Everyone has a choice: you can pursue mediocrity or excellence. The good news is you can always change your mind, leave mediocrity behind and pursue excellence again.
- Your power of choice rests in four essential elements: mind, body, heart, soul.
- Extraordinarily accomplished people have four traits: vision, discipline, passion and moral conscience.
- To find your unique human voice, help someone else find theirs.
- The ultimate purpose of mastering the 8 habits is to serve others.
- It's not enough to have lofty ideals. The biggest failing of the average organization is usually its inability to execute.

Summary

“The 8th Habit...is about seeing and harnessing the power of a third dimension to the 7 Habits that meets the central challenge of the new Knowledge Worker Age. This 8th Habit is to find your voice and help others find theirs.”

“It is the voice of the human spirit - full of hope and intelligence, resilient by nature, boundless in its potential to serve the common good. This voice also encompasses the soul of organizations that will survive, thrive and have a profound impact on the future of the world.”

Modern Bloodletting

The problem with management is that it still works under the flawed Industrial Age paradigm.

Consider that physicians in the Middle Age practiced bloodletting. As barbaric as that may seem today, using leeches to draw blood from a sick person simply followed from the era's paradigm that if you were ill, bad material was in your blood, so the blood must come out. After the advent of germ theory the paradigm shifted, saving millions of lives.

A paradigm is powerful. The old Industrial Age paradigm held that people were an input, akin to raw materials such as steel and energy. People, therefore, were treated as things. They were not managed as whole individuals consisting of heart, mind, body and spirit, but rather as objects to be controlled and rarely trusted. While circumstances certainly have changed since the advent of the Industrial Age, the basic paradigm continues. Workers are objects, to be carefully scrutinized and managed in order to get them to perform effectively.

This approach is increasingly dysfunctional in the Information or Knowledge Worker Age. Under the old approach, employees experience a great deal of pain and frustration at every company, no matter how successful. Fortunately, today the workplace paradigm is shifting, as expressed by the 8th Habit.

The 8th Habit is not just 7 Habits plus one that got left behind. Instead, it calls for using a "third dimension" of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. The 8th Habit means "finding your voice and helping others find theirs." And, in this context, "voice" is the unique personal significance each human offers, and can bring to bear at work.

Making a Difference

A full colonel with more than 30 years of service commanded a military base. Instead of retiring, he decided to stay and push through a landmark cultural change inside his organization. He knew it would be a major battle. When asked why he didn't simply retire and avoid the mess altogether, the colonel explained that his father's last whispered words on his deathbed were, "Son, don't do life like I did. I didn't do right by you or your mother and never really made a difference."

The colonel explained that he was determined to implement cultural changes that would have a positive impact on his command long after he was gone. Everyone has the choice the colonel made: live with mediocrity or strive for greatness. The good news is that if you have chosen mediocrity, it's never too late to turn back. You can choose greatness instead.

“What happens when you manage people like things? They stop believing that leadership can become a choice.”

“The fundamental reality is, human beings are not things needing to be motivated and controlled; they are four dimensional - body, mind, heart and spirit.”

“The new Knowledge Worker Age is based on a new paradigm, one entirely different than the thing paradigm of the Industrial Age. Let’s call it the Whole-Person Paradigm.”

“Enduring trust in a relationship cannot be faked, and it is rarely produced by a dramatic, onetime effort.”

Discovering Your Voice

Finding your unique voice means fulfilling your innate potential. The greatest gift you received at birth was the ability to decide whether to develop your fullest capacities. You have a choice in the space or time between every action and every reaction. During that moment, reflect on what has happened and determine your response. The ability to understand your free power of choice opens the door to four vital intelligences or capabilities:

1. **Mind: IQ is mental intelligence** - Many people stop here when evaluating intelligence, but it is too restrictive.
2. **Body: PQ is physical intelligence** - This form of intelligence is often discounted, because it takes place without your conscious awareness. You do not have to think to breathe or to make your heart beat. Yet this intelligence responds continuously to the environment to maintain health, ward off infection and so forth.
3. **Heart: EQ is emotional intelligence** - You must be an aware, sensitive and empathetic person to communicate with others on a genuine level. A person with a strong EQ knows what to say and when to say it, how to feel and how to express those feelings. Substantial evidence indicates that over the long run EQ is a stronger determinant of success than IQ.
4. **Spirit or soul: SQ is spiritual intelligence** - This is the most central intelligence because it directs the activities of the other three. Our drive for meaning and purpose leads us to develop our SQ.

Highest Expressions

To find your voice, you must be in touch with the four elements of a whole person: mind, body, heart and spirit. The consistent pattern in the lives of great achievers is that, through struggle and effort, they elevated the four intelligences to their highest manifestations: "vision, discipline, passion and conscience." They used four powerful combinations:

1. **Mind = Vision** - When the mind is fully developed you gain vision, the ability to discern the highest potential in people, institutions, causes and enterprises. People who do not exercise the mind's ability to create, or who discourage it in others, suffer from a failure of vision. They are unable to see the wonderful possibilities within circumstances of great need. Without vision, they slip into victimization.
2. **Body = Discipline** - You need discipline to transform vision into reality. Discipline is the child born from the marriage of vision and commitment. You must have both.
3. **Heart = Passion** - Those who develop a wise heart will feel the passionate fire of conviction, the flame that sustains the discipline needed to achieve the vision. Passion flows from finding and using your unique voice to accomplish great things.
4. **Spirit = Conscience** - Developing your mental identity will lead you toward knowing the right fork in the road, toward an inward moral compass that will guide you.

Leadership Defined

Ultimately, leadership is the ability to help people understand their own true worth and potential, so they see it in themselves and live accordingly. The Industrial Age view of work failed to nurture trust, placed the boss at the center of all activity, took power away from people and misaligned the interests of the individual and the organization. The alternative path is practicing the 8th Habit, and the 7 Habits that preceded it. Begin with developing the four intelligences, finding your voice and expressing it.

To lead this journey, implement the 8th Habit in your interactions. Buckminster Fuller requested the epitaph, "Just A Trim-Tab." A trim-tab on a boat or plane is the small rudder that ultimately turns the whole machine. Successful organizations have many unheralded trim-tabbers who influence it by setting good examples. These individuals believe they really can make a difference.

"The compass is an excellent physical metaphor for principles, because it always points north. The key to maintaining high moral authority is to continually follow 'true north' principles."

To be a leader, prove yourself trustworthy. Most leadership failures probably can be traced back to failures of character. Every leader must exemplify core values such as keeping promises and demonstrating honesty and integrity.

Learning to Empower

Why should you empower others to find their voices? Well, consider the alternatives. You could try to lead them by controlling them. That rarely proves satisfactory. Or you could abdicate responsibility, and let them do whatever they want. That hardly seems wise, either.

The solution is to give others "directed autonomy." Work with them to establish their objectives and then give them the autonomy to achieve those goals. A win-win agreement is neither a legal contract nor a job description. It is a psychological and social contract written into people's hearts and minds. Such an agreement endows your colleagues with a shared commitment toward the organization's highest priorities. Win-win empowerment is especially valuable during evaluations. In a high-trust culture, people are far more likely to appraise themselves effectively, particularly if you provide them with good 360-degree feedback. Self-evaluation is usually the toughest.

"Spiritual intelligence also helps us discern true principles that are part of our conscience, which are symbolized by the compass."

The Sweet Spot

So now that you understand the 8th Habit, how do you practice it? Here are some ideas:

- **"Modeling"** - Prove yourself trustworthy through your actions, rather than imposing expectations on others. Listen to others and practice behaviors that ultimately will give you moral authority.
- **"Pathfinding"** - Create a sense of direction and order for your organization.
- **"Aligning"** - Help your organization be congruent with the spirit of trust and empowerment. Proper alignment results in institutional moral authority.
- **"Empowering"** - Accept the four elements of a person's nature - heart, mind, body, spirit - and embrace them. Have faith in people's ability to choose wisely for themselves. Empowerment produces cultural moral authority.

"Most people think of leadership as a position and therefore don't see themselves as leaders."

When you reach the stages of alignment and empowerment, you're talking about execution. In most companies, a great gap yawns between goals and execution.

As Peter Drucker said, "So much of what we call management consists of making it difficult for people to work."

Bridging with Empowerment

You must bridge six chasms to make empowerment more than just an empty word:

"Execution is the great unaddressed issue in most organizations today."

1. **The "clarity" gap** - The old Industrial Age approach was to announce a program to the workforce and expect them to understand it. Mission statements became mere PR initiatives; workers would wait to see what really happened. In the Knowledge Worker Age, new initiatives need identification, involvement and buy-in from workers.
2. **The "commitment" gap** - Rather than "sell" new ideas to the workforce, the 8th Habit respects the whole person. The organization based in the Knowledge Worker Age takes into account the welfare of each person's body, mind, heart and spirit.

"No matter how long we've walked life's pathway to mediocrity, we can always choose to switch paths. Always. It's never too late. We can find our voice."

3. **The "translation" gap** - Lofty goals must be translated into real-world activities. For the Knowledge Worker, this is done not by job descriptions, but by aligning goals and incentives to get the desired results.
4. **The "enabling" gap** - In Industrial Age thought, people were an expense and equipment was an investment. Today's better idea is to establish a scoreboard that matches desired results with capabilities. This ensures that workers can see how the firm's structures are aligned to enable them to accomplish essential objectives.
5. **The "synergy" gap** - To have synergy, managers must understand the Third Alternative. When two ideas conflict, managers can, through empathic listening and creative thinking, arrive at a third position that is agreeable to both parties. This is the Third Alternative, an 8th Habit form of communication that harmonizes various interests.
6. **The "accountability" gap** - The Industrial Age process was simple: carrot and stick. The new way involves mutual accountability and an open comparison of progress made toward the achievement of a goal. The scoreboard continually shows the score.

Serving Others

The ultimate path to harnessing all 8 Habits is to serve others. The real reason organizations are established is to serve human needs. The notion of service above self lends you the moral authority to be a great leader. The question isn't, "What's in it for me?" It is, "What's in me that I can give others?"

"Consider the words of Abraham Lincoln: 'The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present'.

As you begin the 8th Habit process of finding your own voice, know that your journey must end with helping others find theirs. Each person is precious, and there is truly no limit to what an organization can accomplish when leadership becomes a choice rather than a position. Choosing to serve becomes the most enlightened habit of all.

About the Author

Stephen R. Covey is co-founder and vice chairman of FranklinCovey Co., and founder and former CEO of the Covey Leadership Center. His book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, sold more than 15 million copies worldwide. He is the author of several other books and a teacher of "Principle-Centered Living" and "Principle-Centered Leadership."

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