

Recap of The Leadership Kick-Off and The 7 Habits

Habit 1 – Be Proactive: Dodge Ball

Proactive means “tending to initiate change rather than reacting to events.” To clarify, consider a thermometer and a thermostat. While a thermometer simply reacts according to fluctuations in temperature, a thermostat initiates changes to counter those fluctuations and control the temperature. The thermostat is proactive; it doesn’t allow the temperature to determine its setting –it determines the temperature.

To further this idea, consider the similarities between proactive people and situations typically evident during a dodge ball game:

Like in the dodge ball game, when...	proactive people...
a player is called “out” but remains a positive, good sport,	are not easily offended and bounce back when something bad happens.
deciding when, where, and how to successfully throw the ball,	think about solutions and options before they act.
players must work with what they’re given and take the initiative to get things done themselves,	focus on things they can do something about, don’t worry about things they can’t control, always find a way to make it happen, take initiative to make it happen, and act.
players abide by the rules and do the right thing,	take responsibility for their choices.

So, **be proactive** (“the choice is yours!”) and always remember: “If it’s to be, it’s up to me.”

Habit 2 – Begin with the End in Mind: Picture Translation

Consider the following scenario: Two artists are asked to draw the same picture with an announcer describing the image to be drawn. There are two catches: 1) the artists aren’t allowed to erase anything and 2) they can’t start over.

The announcer starts to translate the image to the first artist but doesn’t look at the big picture; she first says to draw a circle, then a donut, a bar bell, and a wagon. Finally she says to draw a truck and the picture is finished. Now that she knows what the picture is, the announcer asks the second artist to draw the truck no problem.

So why didn’t the announcer just ask the first artist to draw a truck in the first place? Well, she didn’t **begin with the end in mind**. Rather than telling the first artist what the big picture was, she wasted his time, effort, and energy to fix what resulted



from her misguidance and lack of preparation.

This concept is quite similar to real-life situations and reinforces the fact that decisions always matter. Meeting your **goals** and fulfilling your **vision** takes planning and organization –not blindly charging in; after all, just like the artists’ case, you can’t erase or start over once you’ve made a decision. Meeting your goals also involves letting others know what your vision is so that they too can see the big picture. Think things through, vocalize your vision, and you’ll be well on your way to achieving your goals!

Habit 3 – Put First Things First: The Big-Candy Experiment

Imagine you have a bag of Whoopers and a jumbo box of Nerds –your two favorite candies. Imagine you also have the perfect little candy jar to put your favorite candy combo in. After realizing that aimlessly dumping the candies into the jar causes the candies to overflow, you test out various positions and learn that putting the bigger, more space-consuming Whoopers on the bottom of the jar and pouring the smaller, more maneuverable Nerds on top of the Whoopers enables everything to fit. The Nerds fill the cracks made by the Whoopers, the jar doesn’t overflow, and everything’s honky-dory.

Now let’s view this situation in a different light: The Nerds “represent all the little everyday things that suck up your time” (like “chores, busy work, phone calls, and interruptions”) and the Whoopers “represent your most important things.” By prioritizing and putting your most important things (or Whoopers) first, you’re able to accomplish your priorities and still have time (or space) to complete your less important tasks (or Nerds).

Moral of the story: **put first things first!** All it took to succeed and get all of the candies to fit in the jar was a little strategizing. The same goes for the priorities in your life. It’s simple: work before play. You’ll be able to take “control of your life,” maintain an efficient balance between work and play, and achieve greater success by having your priorities in line.

Habit 4 – Think Win-Win: Musical Paper Bags

Musical Paper Bags? What in the world’s that? Well, it’s the same as Musical Chairs but with a few alterations: 1) it’s played with paper bags, 2) everyone must have both feet on a paper bag by the time the music stops and time is called, and 3) if one player loses, everyone loses. After all, we’re all on the same team here.

Once each round is complete, one or two bags are removed from play and the bag-to-player ratio decreases. Therefore, as the game progresses, everyone must work harder and put forth more effort to ensure that each player has a bag to stand on. Otherwise everyone will lose.

The object of this game is clearly to make sure that no one loses to prevent the team from failing as a whole. The key to meeting this goal? Each and every player must **think win-win**; everyone should strive to promote the best possible outcome for everybody. Losing normally isn't an enjoyable experience, so seek a positive result that pleases every person involved, even if it's only a little bit. Having a win-win frame of mind shows that you're committed to helping others succeed while seeking to help yourself as well, willing to share recognition since everyone comes out on top, and really great friend material as a result of your thoughtfulness and consideration.

Habit 5 – Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood: Mine Field

Let's say, for some odd reason, you find yourself stuck in the middle of a mine field after misplacing your glasses. Now that you're as blind as a bat, you have no choice but to remain perfectly still in fear of stepping on a mine. A little while later, much to your relief, a helpful man comes along and starts to verbally guide you across the field from a safe distance. There's only one problem: he doesn't speak the same language as you. However, after some trial and error, you begin to understand his directions, trust in the man's careful guidance, and are safely directed across the field.

Just as in this scenario, for instance when...	...there are times in real life when...
you must understand the man's directions in a different language and follow them,	you must understand someone before you're able to act and be willing to trust in another's guidance.
you were blinded without your glasses and couldn't make it across the field without help,	less experienced band members will have to face things that they've never seen or heard of before and may need help comprehending them. This is where your influence is essential.
the man must cautiously guide you through the mine field and be an accountable leader,	leaders must be responsible and remember that everything they say and do reflects their integrity as a role model.

"The deepest need of the human heart is to be understood." Actually taking the time to genuinely listen to someone not only proves that you respect and care about your audience; it helps them open up and trust you more –and trust is an essential part of any relationship. Patience, understanding, and communication are also invaluable life skills that will allow you to work through differences and enable you and others to achieve more. **Seek first to understand, then to be understood** –others will undoubtedly appreciate your thoughtfulness.

Habit 6 – Synergize: Musical Paper Bags

Now that we know how to play Musical Paper Bags, how does it relate to whatever synergy is? Well, "*synergy* is achieved when two or more people work

together to create a better solution than either could alone. It's not your way or my way but a better way, a higher way." In a nutshell, "synergy is celebrating differences, teamwork, open-mindedness, and finding new, better ways" to achieve something even greater than before. "Synergy is not tolerating differences, working independently, thinking you're always right, or compromise."

In order to succeed in Musical Paper Bags, the players must **synergize** and collaborate to come up with a solution that will further their game: tear the bags apart and share. This enables everyone to win so that everyone ends up successful.

Habit 7 – Sharpen the Saw: Duck, Duck, Goose

Take a moment to consider a saw that's used to cut lumber. The more it's used, the more it gets worn down. After a while, the saw becomes very dull and no longer functions properly. In order to counter this, the saw must be sharpened to restore its edge –literally.

Your body, mind, heart, and soul work in a very similar way: as the tasks of everyday life and obligations start to wear you down, you get tired and take a breather to rejuvenate yourself. It's only natural. However, beware –it isn't quite as easy as it sounds.

For one, work should always be accomplished before play. After all, how can you rest easy knowing that there's something else you should be doing? Secondly, you should strive to maintain a healthy balance of work and play in your life. Everyone has their own set of physical and mental capacities, so be sure to know yours.

Lastly, know that, in addition to your health being important to you, it's also important to many others since you're in a leadership position. Countless people are counting and relying on you to be there to fulfill your duties and give them the guidance they need. So kick back, relax, and **sharpen the saw** however you'd like to make sure that you're always at the top of your game.