

By the author of
THE 7 HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE
The New York Times #1 Bestseller

PRINCIPLE- CENTERED LEADERSHIP

“Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.”

**STEPHEN R.
COVEY**

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While the works of Deming and Juran have had a big impact on Total Quality, they give merely the pieces—the “things” part; Covey brings the “people” part—the glue that holds the pieces together, that goes way beyond the “things” and creates an exponential impact by empowering people.
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You are doing a great job with the newsletter. I greatly admire you for what you're doing, I think it's possibly one of the most powerful forces for good in our country today.

—Don Williams, Managing Partner, Trammell Crow

Preface — A Principle-Centered Approach

In my seminars I often invite people to share their toughest problems or ask their hardest questions. Inevitably these deal with conflicts or dilemmas that can't be resolved using conventional approaches. Here are just a couple of examples:

- How do I balance personal and professional areas of life in the middle of constant crises and pressures?
- How can I be genuinely happy for the successes and competencies of another?
- How do we maintain control, yet give people the freedom and autonomy they need to be effective in their work?
- How do we internalize the principles of total quality and continuous improvement at all levels and in all people when they are so cynical in the wake of all the past programs of the month?

Perhaps you have asked yourself these questions as you have grappled with real-life challenges in your personal life and in your organizations. As you read this book, you will gain an understanding of the basic principles of effective leadership.

Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach him how to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime.—Lao Tzu

With understanding you will be empowered to answer these and other tough questions by yourself. Without understanding you will tend to use hit-and-miss, seat-of-the-pants approaches to living and problem-solving.

In recent years, since the publication of my book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, I have worked with many wonderful individuals who are seeking to improve the quality of their lives and the quality of their products, services, and organizations. But, sadly, I have seen that many use a variety of ill-advised approaches in sincere attempts to improve their relationships and achieve desired results.

Often these approaches reflect the inverse of the habits of effective people. In fact, my brother, John Covey, who is a master teacher, sometimes refers to them as the seven habits of ineffective people:

- Be reactive; doubt yourself and blame others.
- Work without any clear end in mind.
- Do the urgent thing first.
- Think win-lose.
- Seek first to be understood.
- If you can't win, compromise.

- Fear change and put off improvement.

Just as personal victories precede Public Victories when effective people progress along the Maturity Continuum®, so also do private failures portend embarrassing public failures when ineffective people regress along an immaturity continuum—that is, when they go from a state of dependency, where others must provide their basic needs and satisfy their wants and desires, to a state of counterdependency, where they engage in fight-or-flight behaviors, to a state of codependency where they cooperate in rather destructive ways with each other.

Now, how can people break such habits and replace them with new ones? How can you and I escape the pull of the past and recreate ourselves and achieve meaningful change in our personal lives and in our organizations?

That's what this book attempts to answer. In section 1, I deal with the personal and interpersonal applications of the principles of effectiveness; in Section 2, I deal with the managerial and organizational applications.

Some Observations of the Problem

Let me share with you some examples of the problems we all face in personal and professional life. Then I will suggest a principle-centered solution.

- Some people justify heavy-handed means in the name of virtuous ends. They say that “business is business” and that “ethics” and “principles” sometimes have to take a backseat to profits. Many of these same people see no correlation between the quality of their personal lives at home and the quality of their products and services at work. Because of the social and political environment inside their organizations and the fragmented markets outside, they think they can abuse relationships at will and still get results.
- The head coach of a professional football team told me that some of his players don't pay the price in the off season. “They come to camp out of shape,” he said. “Somehow they think they can fool me and Mother Nature, make the team, and play great in the games.”
- When I ask in my seminars, “How many of you would agree that the vast majority of the work force possess far more capability, creativity, talent, initiative, and resourcefulness than their present jobs allow or require them to use?” The affirmative response is about 99 percent. In other words, we all admit that our greatest resources are being wasted and that poor human resource management hurts our bottom line.
- Our heroes are often people who make a lot of money. And when some hero—an actor, entertainer, athlete, or other professional—suggests that we