

# Private Victories:

## Inside-Out Professional Growth With The 7 Habits Effect

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People®

FranklinCovey

LEADERSHIP RESOURCES MALAYSIA

As professionals, we know it to be true: Success in life and at work starts with the one thing you can control above all else—yourself.

This is where *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*—the bestselling book and the most trusted framework to improve individual effectiveness, leadership, and team performance—can be put into practice. This proven methodology can be used to improve outcomes for your employees' endeavors, whether personal or professional.

Private Victories arise from the mastery of the habits that build character, interpersonal skills, and emotional intelligence, which can then enable Public Victories in the workplace and broadly in life.

This is not a new item for your team's to-do list, but rather a system that will help them manage everything on their plate.

In a recent FranklinCovey survey[1] , 60 percent of respondents said that multiple times a month, they feel like, "There is so much to do. There is never enough time." Turning to *The 7 Habits*, first for personal positioning and then in their interactions with others, can help your teams move beyond this log-jam moment. It can enable more interpersonal and organizational effectiveness in individuals, which together create optimized performance on teams.

This guide focuses on *The 7 Habits* as they relate to Private Victories—the personal accomplishments of self-mastery or self-discipline. Our next guide focuses on how *The 7 Habits* can be put into action for Public Victories—the accomplishments that relate to working with others, especially in the professional realm.

**Unlock potential. Unleash performance. That's The 7 Habits Effect.**



[1] Data comes from an October 2023 global survey of 200 full-time employees. (Though a global sample, respondents were all English-speaking).

# Building the Habits of Personal Leadership: The Foundation of Private Victories

In this guide, we focus on the essentials of effectiveness—concepts such as personal responsibility, vision, and time management. Personal leadership is embodied in an individual's ability to understand their own strengths and motivations and then apply their energy to their most important goals.

These changes may become apparent only to the individual at first, which will give them the confidence and motivation to build and refine their habits further, in a virtuous cycle. Developing character and principle-based thinking will elevate their professional capacity, as well as their life more broadly.

One participant in *7 Habits* training, a mechanical engineer, described the effect of the framework on personal performance: "It's very life changing. It makes you reevaluate how you handle things daily, whether it's with your colleagues, friends, family, spouse, or children."

The process starts with building the habits of personal leadership. **Habits 1, 2, and 3** focus on your attitude toward life, your goals and values, and how you manage your time.



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# Habit 1: Be Proactive®

Shifting from a reactive mindset to one that anticipates and solves problems is an essential first step for your employees in improving their individual effectiveness.

Getting ahead of issues will not eliminate all of them entirely, but it will stop some problems from developing in the first place. Proactive thinking will also enable your people to handle those problems that do arise, leading to greater happiness and capacity for all that life brings.

Our survey found that 40 percent of respondents frequently feel that they "have a hard time handling the little things that go wrong." The survey respondents who found they were frequently flummoxed by these issues also reported that it prevents them from being happier or more effective.

Being proactive can begin with the simplest considerations: Your train occasionally delays your morning commute. When it's running late, you find you become stressed about making your first morning meeting. Why not catch the earlier one and spend a relaxing 15 minutes at a café outside the office preparing for the day?

Being proactive can also be more complex. The COVID-19 pandemic presented many such opportunities. Remember the companies that quickly diversified their supply chains? Or restaurants that quickly pivoted to new take-out models?



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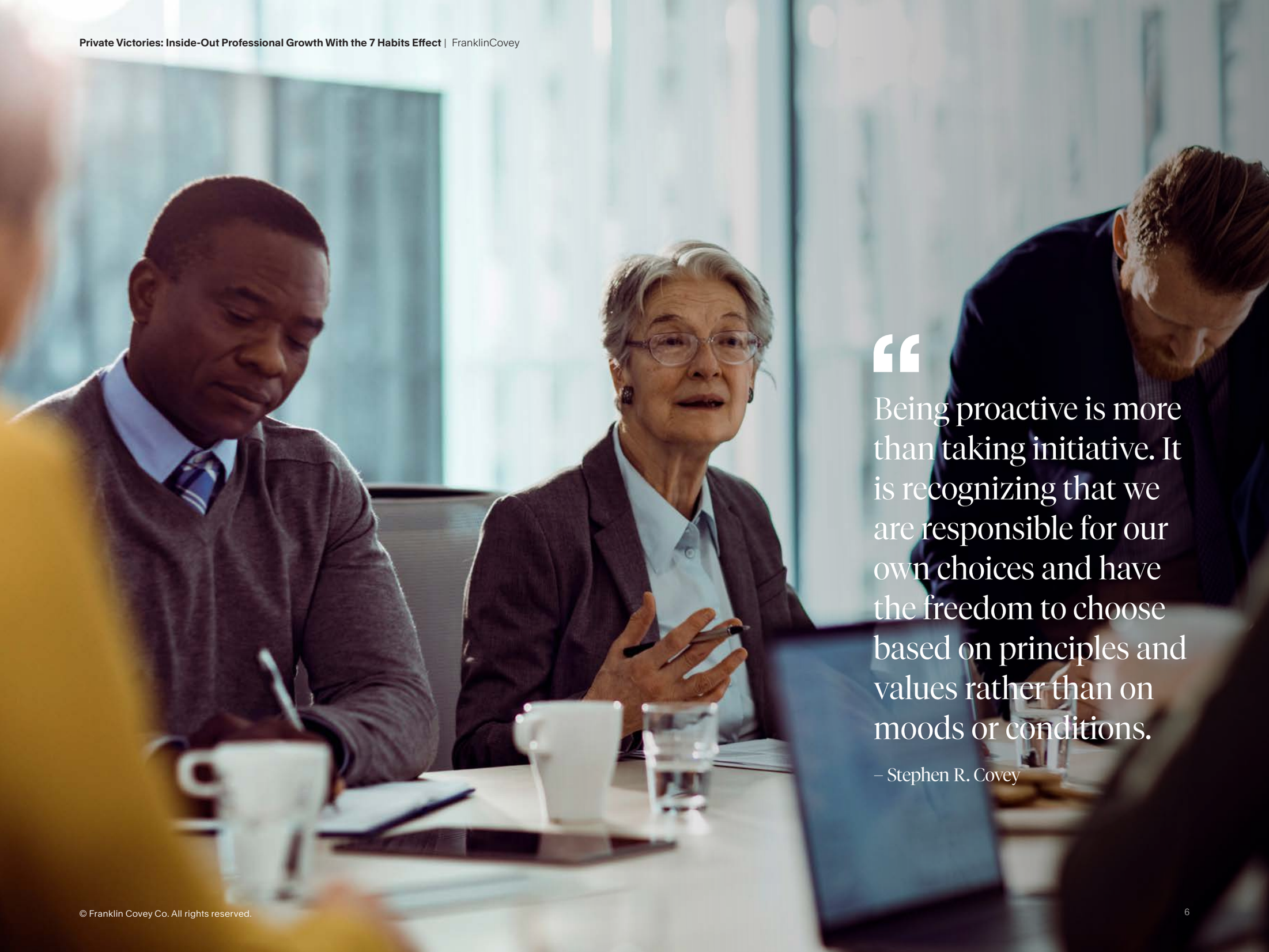
For some businesses, these proactive shifts represented the difference between continued success and going out of business.

Global semiconductor maker X-FAB has seen the benefits of *The 7 Habits* in many ways, but proactivity has been especially impactful. The former CEO of X-FAB says, "In the industry we're in, we need engineers to be more proactive, and I've seen that [happen] over the last three to five years" since the company began incorporating FranklinCovey training. He added that it was important for engineers to know that if they take initiative and take responsibility, occasionally getting it wrong doesn't come with negative repercussions.

Encouraging proactivity in your people can start with your own proactive exercise: Look around and imagine the problems that your people might face in the coming weeks, quarters, or years. Perhaps there's an awkward conversation that an employee is dreading or a decision that they know is coming. What can they do to get ahead of those?

A material handler at Mississippi Power said that *7 Habits* training helped him to thrive through the implementation of **Habit 1: Be Proactive.** He prioritizes attention on what he can control in his Circle of Influence®, rather than the worrying things outside of his influence in his Circle of Concern™.

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> Being proactive is more than taking initiative. It is recognizing that we are responsible for our own choices and have the freedom to choose based on principles and values rather than on moods or conditions.
>
> – Stephen R. Covey

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# Habit 2: Begin With the End in Mind®

Your employees can be inspired to think: What is the outcome you are trying to achieve?

"How different our lives are when we really know what is deeply important to us, and keeping that picture in mind, we manage ourselves each day to be and to do what really matters most."

– Stephen R. Covey

Having a personal mission statement, and then aligning everyday activities to long-term goals, is fundamental to both individual and organizational success. Without it, employees may wander from the most impactful work or may be attracted by less important, seemingly urgent tasks.

Creating a personal mission statement takes time, reflection, and refinement. Here are some steps that your teams can take on an individual level:

- Write some notes on what matters most to you, your family, and your team.
- Consider your own unique strengths: What you are most proud of and passionate about?
- What would you want people to say about you at your 80th birthday party?

If each of your employees begins with the end in mind and reflects on their own personal mission and capabilities, your team will operate from a higher purpose. This will keep your teams grounded and agile, even during times of change.

Mississippi Power knew it needed such prioritization when its industry began to deregulate. In its search for a set of principles that might guide it through enormous, inevitable change, the Mississippi Power Human Resources Director and her colleagues turned to *The 7 Habits* because "they were timeless," she said. "That's what appealed to us."

For more, use this tool for building your own personal mission statement.

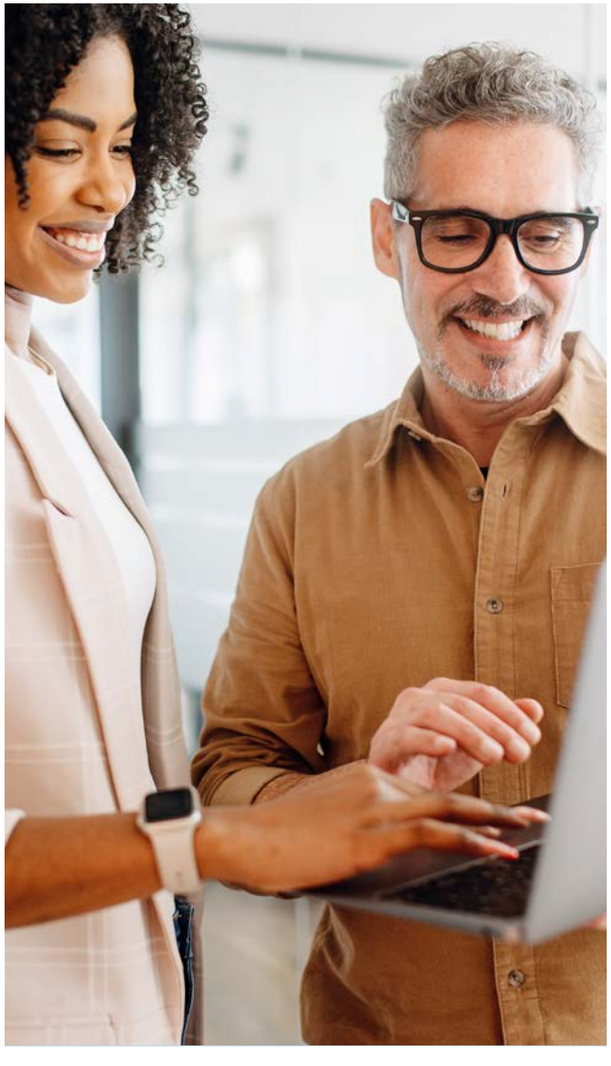
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> “Some habits of ineffectiveness are rooted in our social conditioning toward quick-fix, short-term thinking.
>
> – Stephen R. Covey

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# Habit 3: Put First Things First®



Prioritization is critical to maintaining focus on the truly important goals, rather than being carried away in the onrush of merely urgent tasks that arise in the day-to-day.

In the much-affirmed survey question cited above, "There is so much to do. There is not enough time," there was additional reporting on the impact that this feeling can have on respondents' lives.

Some 44 percent said feeling this way prevents them from feeling happier and more effective. More than 30 percent said they feel this way frequently, and that it makes their work/life balance "miserable" at times.

All of this has damaging ripple effects at home and work: The 24 percent of respondents who feel this way find themselves questioning life choices, including whether they should stay in their job or in their relationship.

This tells us that Habit 3 is about more than time management; it's about life management. This is where you become centered on principles, rather than a mood or whim. It's also where you learn to deprioritize seemingly urgent but ultimately unimportant things.

If you have done the work to create a personal mission statement in Habit 2, then Habit 3 is where you put that mission into practice. What is your purpose and your role? What are your values and your priorities? What are your "first things" where you find the most worth? If you put first things first, you'll be more organized by managing time and events according to the personal priorities you established in Habit 2.

For Steven Chipman, president and CEO of Birchwood, that meant having the best automotive company in Canada—a target he knew he'd never reach without properly leading his employees.

To that end, nearly two decades ago, he engaged FranklinCovey and then watched as the number of people under him grew from 50 to 850. Knowing what mattered most to him, Chipman prioritized the same level of attentiveness throughout the company's expansion. As his employees will tell you today, despite the growing headcount, he still knows everyone by name.

But it's not only CEOs who can put these habits into action and see a chain reaction. One *7 Habits* training participant in the government sector described how their efforts were elevated by the practice of Habit 3, among others. It was "very worthwhile to enhance work/life balance and quality of life," the participant said, calling it "a perspective-changer for both professional and personal growth."

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# Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw®

Here in our Private Victories exploration, we skip to Habit 7, which is critical to both personal and professional development.

Self-renewal in the various spheres of life—physical, social/emotional, mental, and spiritual—will keep you fresh to practice the other six habits. This habit creates balance by prioritizing anything from exercise to downtime, quality time with family, or meditation. There are probably as many ways to Sharpen the Saw as there are people on your team. But finding that balance is critical to performance.

One startling statistic: In our survey of 200 employees globally, 47 percent said: "I have a hard time taking care of myself." These respondents said they feel this way often enough that it prevents them from being happier and more effective.

Imagine the benefit to your team's effectiveness if the nearly half of them that feel this way could come to work feeling truly fresh. By prioritizing personal renewal, individuals can continue to build on their progress and achieve even more.



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“Renewal is the principle—and the process—that empowers us to move on an upward spiral of growth and change, of continuous improvement.”.

– Stephen R. Covey

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# Unlock Potential. Unleash Performance.

We've reimagined *The 7 Habits®* course to be even more relevant and impactful for today's workers.

Among the benefits on a personal level are the principles that can increase individual effectiveness, build strong character, and change behavior in ways that are authentic and lasting. *The 7 Habits* are based on universal truths and enduring principles. They're grounded in decades of research and development—and based on the best-selling business book of all time. In fact, it's been the top leadership training framework for over 35 years.

FranklinCovey is the most trusted leadership company in the world, with operations in over 150+ countries. We transform organizations by building exceptional leaders, teams, and cultures that get breakthrough results. Available through the FranklinCovey All Access Pass®, our best-in-class content, experts, technology, and metrics seamlessly integrate to ensure lasting behavior change at scale. Our approach to leadership has been tested and refined by working with tens of thousands of teams and organizations over the past 30 years.

To learn more, email us at info@leadershipresources.my, or visit franklincoveymalaysia.com. **Or call us at:**

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