

The Seven Habits of Highly Successful Families



The Seven Habits of Highly Successful Families is a book by Steven Covey, an American author and father of nine children and fifty-two grandchildren. He says the aim of his book is to build “a beautiful family culture” by learning effective ways of handling everyday life with those closest to you.

What are these habits?

The first three are about family management. Number one is “Be Proactive”. This means that when we do something, we should think about what our family values are. It also means that we apologize if we have done something wrong, try to keep our promises, and forgive those who hurt us.

“Begin with the End in Mind” is the second idea from the book. Ideally, a family should have a mission. This means that all the members decide together what are the most important things for the family. They write them down; for example, spending time together, helping others, or giving everyone enough time on their own. Of course, this can change with time, as families also change.

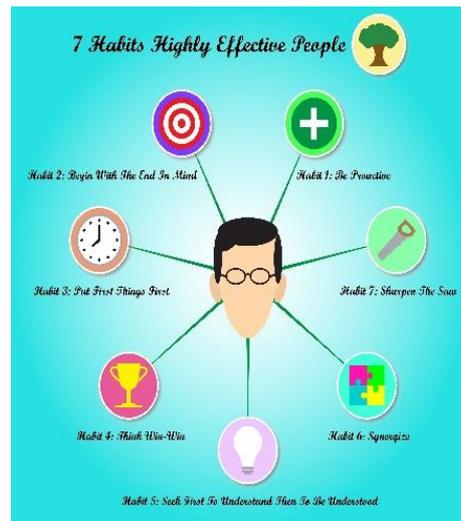
Habit number three is “Put First Things First”. It reminds us to focus on what is important, and not just urgent. Families can put aside a little time every week to plan what they need to do. These family meetings can also be the time to learn something together, solve problems, or have fun.

The next three habits are about helping others. The fourth one reminds us to “Think Win-Win”. This means that we try to find solutions which will help all members of the family. It is also the habit that helps us develop respect, and speak kindly, even when we do not agree at first.

Habit number five follows from the one before. It says we should try “First to Understand, then to be Understood”, or to practice listening with empathy. It is a successful way to communicate not just within a family, but with other people as well. Then, when it is our turn to speak, we should be honest and say what we mean without trying to hurt the other person.

“Synergize” is the sixth habit, and it stresses how important cooperation is. When we work with others, we can always do more than on our own. And who better to work with than our family?

The last habit is “Sharpening the Saw”, or finding ways in which our family develops even more. A family should find new ways to grow in body, heart, mind, and soul. What helps each family is up to its members to decide. It can be going for walks, or riding bikes; reading books, or watching films together; going to church, or discussing philosophy; cooking, or going shopping – or all of these, as long as everyone is having a good time.



Answer the questions.

- 1) Which habit (or habits) does your family already practice?
- 2) Which one do you think is most important?
- 3) Is there another habit you want to add?
- 4) What does “beautiful family culture” mean to you?
- 5) Give one example for each habit that you would like to implement in your family.
- 6) Can you think of ways to use these habits in the classroom?