

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families by Stephen R. Covey

Habit 1: Be proactive.

Families and family members are responsible for their own choices and have the freedom to choose based on principles and values rather than on moods or conditions. They develop and use their four unique human gifts:

Self-awareness, conscience, imagination, and independent will

and take an inside-out approach to creating change. They choose not to be victims, to be reactive, or to blame others.

Habit 2: Begin with the end in mind.

Families shape their own future by creating a mental vision and purpose for any project, large or small. They don't just live day to day with no clear purpose in mind. The highest form of mental creation is a marriage or family mission statement.

1. What is our family about?
2. What kind of a family do we want to have?
3. What kind of home do you want to invite your friends to?
4. What is embarrassing to you?
5. What makes you want to come home every day?
6. What do the parents/guardians in our family do well?
7. What could we do better?
8. What things are truly important to us as a family?
9. What are our family's highest goals?
10. What are our unique gifts, talents, and abilities?
11. What principles do we believe in as a family?

Habit 3: Put first things first.

Families organize and execute around their most important priorities as expressed in their personal, marriage and family mission statements. They have weekly family times and regular one-on-one bonding times. They are driven by purpose, not by the agendas and forces surrounding them.

Habit 4: Think "win-win."

Family members think in terms of mutual benefit. They foster support and mutual respect. They think independently - "we", not "me" - develop win-win agreements. They don't think selfishly (win-lose) or like a martyr (lose-win).

Habit 5: Seek first to understand...then to be understood.

Family members seek first to listen with the intent to understand the thoughts and feelings of others, then seek to effectively communicate their own thoughts and feelings. Through understanding, they build deep relationships of trust and love. They give helpful feedback. They don't withhold feedback, nor do they seek first to be understood.

Habit 6: Synergize.

Family members thrive on individual and family strengths so that, by respecting and valuing one another's differences, the whole becomes greater than the sum of the parts. They build a mutual problem-solving and opportunity-seizing culture. They foster a nurturing family spirit of loving, learning and contributing.

Habit 7: Sharpen the saw.

The family increases its effectiveness through regular personal and family renewal in four basic areas of life: physical, social/emotional, spiritual, and mental. They establish traditions that nurture the spirit of family renewal.