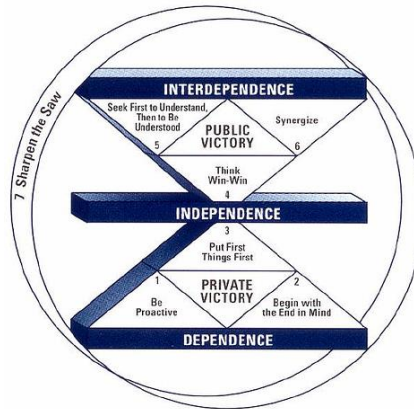


## The Principles behind the 7 Habits of Highly Successful People



The key principle is that of “Inside-Out”. It’s in my view a beautiful principle, true, but not easy to live up to. Basically with Inside-Out Covey is saying that to bring about change or to obtain what you want, you need to start with yourself first; and even more fundamentally you need to start with the most inside part of yourself.

That means your values, your beliefs, your character and your motives.

Covey goes on to say that:

“If you want to have a happy marriage, be the kind of person who generates positive energy and sidesteps negative energy rather than empowering it. If you want to have a more pleasant, cooperative teenager, be a more understanding, empathic, consistent, loving parent. If you want to have more freedom, more latitude in your job, be a more responsible, a more helpful, a more contributing employee. If you want to be trusted, be trustworthy.”

So no instant gratification, no “I want it all and I want it now” to quote Freddy Mercury. If you want something you need to earn it.

Covey backs his views up by his study of success literature published in the United States since 1776. He breaks this period up into two phases. The first 150 or so years from 1776 up to World War I the success literature was in focused on what Covey refers to as the Character Ethic.

The **Character Ethic** suggests that there are basic principles of effective living and people can only achieve true success and lasting happiness if these basic principles are embedded in their character. These principles include integrity; humility, fidelity, temperance, courage, justice, patience, industry, simplicity, modesty and the Golden Rule (treat others the way you want to be treated).

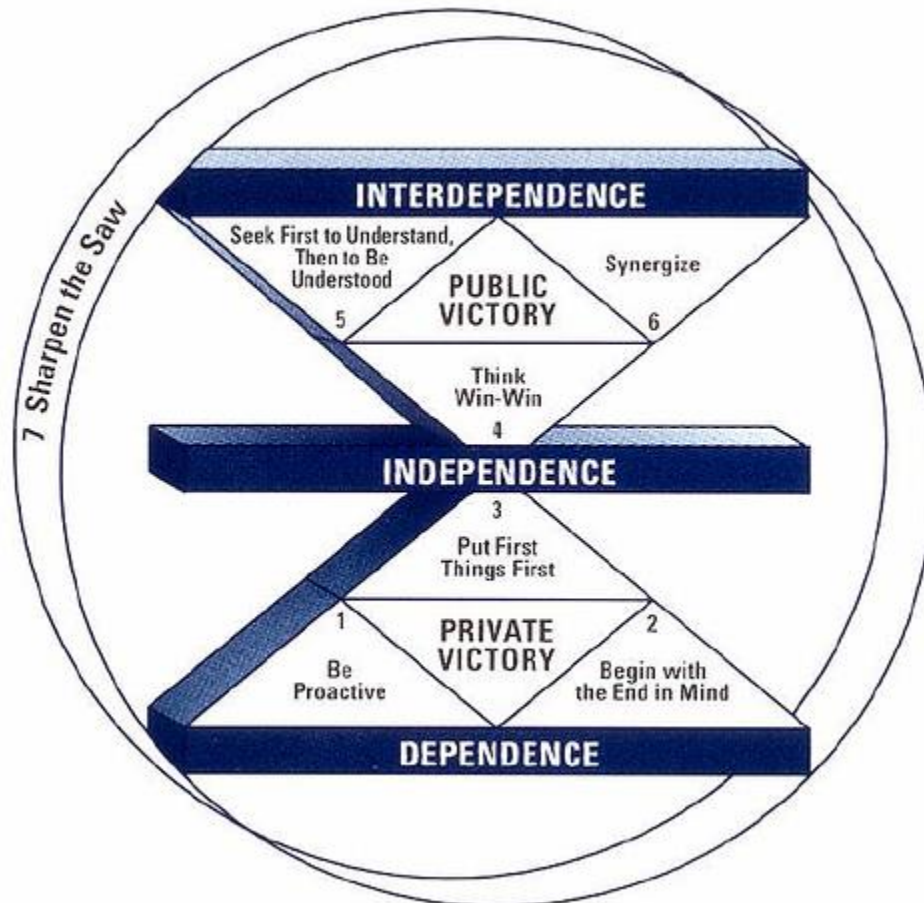
Covey finds that post World War I the view on achieving success shifts from the Character Ethic to what he calls the Personality Ethic which Covey sees as a combination of quick-fix influence techniques, power strategies, communication skills and positive attitudes. The problem is, eventually you would be discovered as insincere and shallow. Know anybody who fits this profile? I certainly do.

You can use and in fact need to use the techniques addressed by the modern day **Personality Ethic**, but for your success to last you need to build upon a basic foundation and that is the Character Ethic.

In Covey’s view our character is a composite of our habits. Changing habits is hard, but can be done by tremendous commitment. Covey defines habits as knowing what to do, knowing how to do it (or the skill), and actually doing it (desire is the motivation – or the wanting to do).

To Covey, the Seven Habits supplement the personal development of an individual from being a dependent infant or child to becoming an independent adult. But he argues that despite modern day mental models the journey shouldn't stop there. We should all move up to interdependence because we can all achieve much more through cooperation and specialization. However we must first achieve independence before we can choose interdependence.

When you look at Covey's model for his 7 habits it will hopefully make much more sense:



**Model of 7 Habits of Highly Effective People**

We all start with the basic foundation of dependence. The first three habits of being proactive, beginning with the end in mind and putting first things first will help us to achieve private victories. We will become better people. And once truly embedded we will have achieved independence.

The next step are habits 4, 5 and 6 being thinking win/win, seeking first to understand then to be understood and to synergize. Practicing those habits will allow us to book our first public victories and eventually will lead us to interdependence.

The final habit, sharpen the saw, is all about continuously improving.