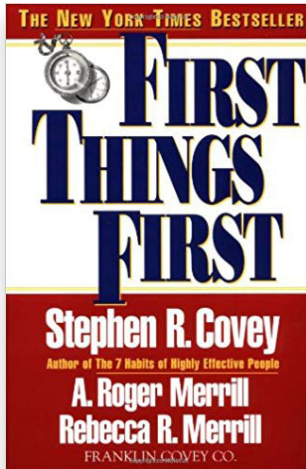


EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARIES

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THE SUMMARY

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Introduction

If you were to pause and think seriously about the “first things” in your life, the three or four things that matter most, what would they be? Are these things receiving the care, emphasis, and time you really want to give them?

Why is it that so often our first things aren’t first? For years we’ve been given methods, techniques, tools, and information on how to manage and control our time. We’ve been told that if we keep working harder, learn to do things better and faster, use some new device or tool, or file or organize in a particular way, then we’ll be able to do it all. So we buy the new planner, go to the new class, read the new book. We learn it, apply it, try harder, and what happens? For most of the people we meet, the result is increased frustration and guilt.

Basing our happiness on our ability to control everything is futile. While we do control our choice of action, we cannot control the consequences of our choices. Universal laws or principles do. Thus, we are not in control of our lives; principles are. We suggest that this idea provides key insight into the frustration people have had with the traditional “time management” approach to life.

There is no shortcut, but there is a path. The path is based on principles revered throughout history. If there is one message to glean from this

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wisdom, it is that a meaningful life is not a matter of speed or efficiency. It's much more a matter of what you do and why you do it, than how fast you get it done.

SECTION ONE: THE CLOCKS AND THE COMPASS

Chapter 1: How Many People on Their Deathbed Wish They'd Spent More Time at the Office?

Putting first things first is an issue at the very heart of life. Almost all of us feel torn by the things we want to do, by the demands placed on us, and by the many responsibilities we have. We all feel challenged by the day-to-day and moment-by-moment decisions we must make regarding the best use of our time.

Decisions are easier when it's a question of "good" or "bad." We can easily see how some ways we could spend our time are wasteful, mind-numbing, and even destructive. But for most of us, the issue is not between the "good" and the "bad," but between the "good" and the "best." So often, the enemy of the best is the good.

Our struggle to put first things first can be characterized by the contrast between two powerful tools that direct us: the clock and compass. The clock represents our commitments, appointments, schedules, goals, activities—what we do with, and how we manage our time. The compass represents our vision, values, principles, mission, conscience, direction or what we feel is important and how we lead our lives.

The struggle comes when we sense a gap between the clock and the compass or when what we do doesn't contribute to what is most important in our lives. In our effort to close the gap between the clock and the compass in our lives, many of us turn to the field of "time management."

Understanding the underlying paradigms of time management is vitally important. Our paradigms are the maps of our minds and hearts out of which our attitudes and behaviors, and the results in our lives, grow. It creates something of a "see/do/get" cycle.

The way we see (our paradigm) leads to what we do (our attitudes and behaviors). What we do leads to the results we get in our lives. If we want to create significant change in the results, we can't just change attitudes and behaviors, methods or techniques; we have to change the basic paradigms out of which they grow. When we try to change the behavior or the method without changing the paradigm, the paradigm eventually overpowers the change. That's why attempts to "install" total quality or empowerment in organizations are unsuccessful. They can't be installed; they have to be grown. They emerge naturally out of the paradigms that create them.

Changing a planning tool or a method won't create significant change in the results we're getting in our lives although the implied promise is that it will. It's not a matter of controlling things more, better, or faster; it's questioning the whole assumption of control. As Albert Einstein said, "The significant problems we face cannot be solved by the same level of thinking that created them."

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More than an evolution, we need a revolution. We need to move beyond time management to life leadership based on paradigms that will create quality-of-life results.

Chapter 2: The Urgency Addiction

Urgency addiction is a self-destructive behavior that temporarily fills the void created by unmet needs. Instead of meeting these needs, the tools and approaches of time management often feed the addiction. They keep us focused on daily prioritization of the urgent.

It's important to realize that urgency itself is not the problem. The problem is that when urgency is the dominant factor in our lives, importance isn't. What we regard as "first things" are urgent things. We're so caught up in doing that we don't even stop to ask if what we're doing really needs to be done. As a result, we exacerbate the gap between the compass and the clock. Many important things that contribute to our overall objectives and give richness and meaning to life don't tend to act upon us or press us because they're not "urgent." They are the things that we must act upon.

In order to focus on the issues of urgency and importance more effectively, let's look at the Time Management Matrix. The Matrix categorizes our activities into four quadrants. We spend time in one of these four ways.

Quadrant I represents things that are both "urgent" and "important". Here's where we handle an irate client, meet a deadline, repair a broken-down machine, undergo heart surgery, or help a crying child who has been hurt. We need to spend time in Quadrant I. This is where we manage, where we produce, where we bring our experience and judgment to bear in responding to many needs and challenges. If we ignore it, we become buried alive. But we also need to realize that many important activities become urgent through procrastination, or because we don't do enough prevention and planning.

Quadrant II includes activities that are "important, but not urgent." This is the Quadrant of Quality. Here's where we do our long-range planning, anticipate and prevent problems, empower others, broaden our minds and increase our skills through reading and continuous professional development. We also envision how we're going to help a struggling son or daughter, prepare for important meetings and presentations, or invest in relationships through deep, honest listening. Increasing time spent in this quadrant increases our ability to do. Ignoring this quadrant feeds and enlarges Quadrant I, creating stress, burnout, and deeper crises for the person consumed by it. On the other hand, investing in this quadrant shrinks Quadrant I. Planning, preparation, and prevention keep many things from becoming urgent. Quadrant II does not act on us; we must act on it. This is the Quadrant of personal leadership.

Quadrant III is almost the phantom of Quadrant I. It includes things that are "urgent, but not important." This is the Quadrant of Deception. The noise of urgency creates the illusion of importance but the actual activities, if they're important at all, are only important to someone else. Many phone calls,

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meetings, and drop-in visitors fall into this category. We spend a lot of time in Quadrant III meeting other people's priorities and expectations, thinking we're really in Quadrant I.

Quadrant IV is reserved for those activities that are "not urgent and not important." This is the Quadrant of Waste. Of course, we really shouldn't be there at all. But we get so battle-scarred from being tossed around in Quadrants I and III that we often "escape" to Quadrant IV for survival.

When we operate out of the importance paradigm, we live in Quadrants I and II. We're out of Quadrants III and IV, and as we spend more time in preparation, prevention, planning, and empowerment, we decrease the amount of time we spend putting out fires in Quadrant I. Even the nature of Quadrant I changes. Most of the time we're there by choice, rather than by default. We may even choose to make something urgent or timely because it's important.

Now we know that real life is not as neat and tight and logical as the four quadrants would suggest. There's a continuum within and between each quadrant. There's some overlapping. The categories are a matter of degree as well as kind.

Chapter 3: To Live, to Love, to Learn, to Leave a Legacy

There are certain things that are fundamental to human fulfillment. If these basic needs aren't met, we feel empty and incomplete. We may try to fill the void through urgency addiction, or we may become complacent, temporarily satisfied with partial fulfillment. The essence of these needs is captured in the phrase "to live, to love, to learn, to leave a legacy."

The need to live is our physical need for such things as food, clothing, shelter, economic well-being, and health. The need to love is our social need to relate to other people, to belong, to love, and to be loved. The need to learn is our mental need to develop and to grow. The need to leave a legacy is our spiritual need to have a sense of meaning, purpose, personal congruence, and contribution.

Each of these needs is vitally important. Any one of these needs, unmet, reduces quality of life. If you're in debt or poor health, if you don't have adequate food, clothing, and shelter, if you feel alienated and alone, if you're mentally stagnant, or if you don't have a sense of purpose and integrity, your quality of life suffers. Vibrant health, economic security, rich, satisfying relationships, ongoing personal and professional development, and a deep sense of purpose, contribution, and personal congruence create quality of life.

Fulfilling the four needs in an integrated way is like combining elements in chemistry. When we reach a "critical mass" of integration, we experience spontaneous combustion—an explosion of inner synergy that ignites the fire within and gives vision, passion, and a spirit of adventure to life. The key to the fire within is our spiritual need to leave a legacy. It transforms other needs into capacities for contribution. Food, money, health, education, and love become resources to reach out and help fill

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the unmet needs of others.

Just as “important” as the needs are to fulfill, is the way we seek to fulfill them. Our ability to create quality of life is a function of the degree to which our lives are aligned with extrinsic realities as we seek to fulfill the basic human needs.

Just as real as “true north” in the physical world are the timeless laws of cause and effect that operate in the world of personal effectiveness and human interaction. The collective wisdom of the ages reveals these principles as recurring themes, foundational to every truly great person or society. With that in mind, we’d like to explore “true north” in the human dimension and look at how we can create an inner compass that empowers us to align our lives with it.

In using “true north” as a metaphor for principles or external realities, we’re not differentiating between technical differences such as “true north,” “magnetic north,” and “grid north.” We’re not talking about values, practices, or religion. What we are talking about are the true north realities upon which quality of life is based. These principles deal with things that, in the long run, will create happiness and quality-of-life results. They include principles such as service and reciprocity. They deal with the processes of growth and change. They include the laws that govern effective fulfillment of basic human needs and capacities.

It’s our experience that most people who think deeply about their own experience and the experience of others know that we all have basic needs and capacities that are fundamental to human fulfillment. They have an awareness of some of the true north principles that govern quality of life. They’ve had some experience with the endowments that make it possible for them to align their lives with true north. In some respects, this is a reminder of things that, deep inside, most of us already know. The fact that we know it—and that it doesn’t get translated into the fabric of our daily lives—is the frustration of the gap between the compass and the clock. Our problem, as one put it, “is to get at the wisdom we already have.”

SECTION TWO: THE MAIN THING IS TO KEEP THE MAIN THING THE MAIN THING

Chapter 4: Quadrant II Organizing: The Process of Putting First Things First

Daily planning provides us with a limited view. It’s so “close up” that we’re often kept focused on what’s right in front of us. Urgency and efficiency take the place of importance and effectiveness. Weekly organizing, on the other hand, provides a broader context to what we do. It takes a bigger picture and lets us see the “mountains” for what they really are. The activities of the day begin to take on more appropriate dimensions when viewed in the context of the week.

As you begin to organize for the coming week, the first step is to connect with what’s most important

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in your life as a whole. Context gives meaning. Consider the big picture of what you care about, and what makes the moments in your life meaningful. The key to this connection lies in the clarity of your vision around such questions as: What's most important? What gives your life meaning? What do you want to be and to do in your life?

Our next step is to identify our roles. We live our lives in terms of roles, not in the sense of role playing, but in the sense of authentic parts we've chosen to fill. We may have important roles at work, in the family, in the community, or in other areas of life. Roles represent responsibilities, relationships, and areas of contribution.

A clear set of roles provides a natural framework to create order and balance. If you have a mission statement, your roles will grow out of it. Balance among roles does not simply mean that you're spending time in each role, but that these roles work together for the accomplishment of your mission.

In addition to the roles you've identified, we'd like to suggest a separate and foundational role called "sharpen the saw." We treat this as a separate role for two reasons: 1) it's a role that everyone has, and 2) it's foundational for success in every other role.

The term "sharpen the saw" is a metaphor that describes the energy we invest in increasing our personal capacity in our physical, social, mental, and spiritual lives.

The next step is to select Quadrant II goals in each role. You'll probably be aware of several goals you could set in each role. But for now, limit yourself to the one or two goals that are most important. You may even feel, based on your inner compass, that you should not set goals in every role this week. The Quadrant II process allows for that flexibility and encourages you to use your compass in determining what's most important for you to do.

Next, effectively translating high-leverage Quadrant II goals into an action plan requires creating a framework for effective decision making throughout the week. Most people are constantly trying to find time for the "important" activities in their already overflowing Quadrant I / III schedules. They move things around, delegate them, cancel them, and postpone them all in the hope of finding time for first things. The key, however, is not to prioritize your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.

Scheduling important Quadrant II goals is a big step toward putting first things first. If we don't put the Quadrant II activities in place first, it's easy for the week to be filled by the flood of activities from Quadrants I and III that constantly clamor for our attention. It's hard to "fit in" those important Quadrant II activities that would make such a significant difference.

There are three additional things you can do at the beginning of the day that will enhance your ability to put first things first. They are:

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1. *Preview the day.* This is a much different process from the “daily planning” of traditional time management. It’s spending a few moments at the beginning of the day to revisit your schedule, enabling you to get your bearings, check your compass, look at the day in the context of the week, and renew the perspective that empowers you to respond in a meaningful way to unanticipated opportunity or challenge.
2. *Prioritize.* Before you begin to prioritize in the traditional sense, you may find it helpful to identify your activities as QI or QII. This gives you an additional opportunity to ensure that Quadrant III activities haven’t slipped into your schedule in disguise.
3. *Use some form of time planning for the day.* By separating the time-sensitive activities from the rest, you’re able to make more effective scheduling decisions and remain sensitive to important commitments. At the end of the week before you review your mission statement to begin organizing the next week, pause to ask questions such as: What goals did I achieve? What challenges did I encounter? What decisions did I make? In making decisions, did I keep first things first?

The Quadrant II organizing process reinforces the “importance” paradigm. The greatest value of the process is not what it does to your schedule, but what it does to your head. As you begin to think more in terms of importance, you begin to see time differently. You become empowered to put first things first in your life in a significant way.

Chapter 5: The Passion of Vision

When we talk about “the passion of vision,” we’re talking about a deep, sustained energy that comes from a comprehensive, principle-based, need-based, endowment-based seeing that goes beyond chronos and even kairos. It deals with a clean concept of time, from the Greek *aion*, meaning an age, a lifetime or more. It taps into the deep core of who we are and what we are about. It’s fueled by the realization of the unique contribution we have the capacity to make—the legacy we can leave. It clarifies purpose, gives direction, and empowers us to perform beyond our resources.

We call it “passion” because this vision can become a motivating force so powerful it, in effect, becomes the DNA of our lives. It’s so ingrained and integrated into every aspect of our being that it becomes the compelling impetus behind every decision we make. It’s the fire within or the explosion of inner synergy that happens when critical mass is reached in integration of the four fundamental needs. It’s the energy that makes life an adventure. It is the deep burning “yes!” that empowers us to say “no” peacefully and confidently to the less important things in our lives.

This passion can empower us to literally transcend fear, doubt, discouragement, and many other things that keep us from accomplishment and contribution.

One of the most powerful processes we’ve found to cultivate the passion of vision is creating and

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integrating an empowering personal mission statement. What we're talking about here is not simply writing a statement on belief. We're talking about accessing and creating an open connection with the deep energy that comes from a well-defined, thoroughly integrated sense of purpose and meaning in life. We're talking about creating a powerful vision based on the true north principles that ensure its achievability. We're talking about the sense of excitement and adventure that grows out of connecting with your unique purpose and the profound satisfaction that comes in fulfilling it.

Even with a powerful written document, it's vital to realize that it's impossible to translate the mission to the moment in our lives without weekly cultivation. We must consistently be pondering over it, memorizing it, writing it in our heart and in our mind, reviewing it, and using it as the basis for weekly Quadrant II organizing. You may also find it helpful to go on a personal retreat—perhaps yearly—to evaluate and update it.

Most people who feel empowered by their mission statement find that there seems to be some point at which their statement “lives.” They own it. It's theirs. The vital connection is made between the mission and the moment in life. Then, with nurturing and continuing cultivation, the mission statement becomes the primary factor that influences every moment of choice.

Chapter 6: The Balance of Rules

Most of us, when going through the Quadrant II organizing process for the first time, look at roles as a great way to organize information and tasks. While we receive some benefit from that new perspective, we benefit far more by gaining a deeper understanding of our roles that empowers us to create synergy and balance in our lives. We'd like to suggest three fundamental paradigms that create that deeper understanding.

Our “Natural” Roles Grow Out of Our Mission. Where do we get our roles? If we haven't paid the price to work them out in our deep inner life, they're probably a combination of feelings we have about ourselves and the social mirror.

But if we have paid the price, our roles are like the branches of a living tree. They grow naturally out of a common trunk which is our mission, the unique fulfillment of our needs and capacities, and common roots which are the principles that give sustenance and life. Our roles become the channels through which we live, love, learn, and leave a legacy. Without this “big picture” awareness of our roles, we can easily become consumed by some roles to the neglect of others. That's why we take the time in the Quadrant II organizing process each week to write down our roles.

When our roles grow out of mission, vision, and principles, “balance” is a deeper issue than spending time in compartmentalized boxes of life. Balance is in living, loving, learning, and leaving a legacy, and our roles create the synergistic, sometimes seasonal avenues through which we do it.

Each Role Is a Stewardship. There's no way we can escape accountability. We do make a difference

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one way or the other. We are responsible for the impact of our lives. Whatever we do with whatever we have including money, possessions, talents, even time, we leave behind us as a legacy for those who follow. Regardless of our own scripting, we can exercise our unique human endowments and choose the kind of stewards we want to be. We don't have to pass on abuse, debt, depleted natural resources, self-focus, or illusion to future generations. We can pass on a healthy environment, well cared-for possessions, a sense of responsibility, heritage of principle-based values, and the vision of contribution. By doing so, we improve quality of life both now and in the future.

Each Role Contains All Four Dimensions. Each role in our lives has a physical dimension (it requires or creates resources), a spiritual dimension (it connects to mission and principles), a social dimension (it involves relationships with other people) and a mental dimension (it requires learning).

As we review our mission each week, we connect with passion and perspective. We focus on the fundamental inner balance of our physical, social, mental, and spiritual dimensions that gives meaning to outer balance in our lives. As we review our roles, we see them as the avenues through which we can accomplish our mission. We see their social, mental, and spiritual as well as their physical dimensions. We look for ways to create synergy between them and with the needs and capacities of others.

Chapter 7: The Power of Goals

We each have what we might call a "Personal Integrity Account" that reflects the amount of trust we have in ourselves. When we make and keep commitments, such as setting and achieving goals, we make deposits. We increase our confidence in our own trustworthiness, in our ability to make and keep commitments to ourselves and to others. A high balance in this account is a great source of strength and security.

But when we don't achieve our goals, we make withdrawals, and this becomes a source of great pain. Over time, frequent withdrawals cause us to lose confidence in our ability to make and keep commitments and to trust ourselves and others. Cynicism and rationalization follow, and these attitudes sever us from the power of setting and achieving meaningful goals. Then, when we need strength of character to meet critical challenges in our lives, we find it just isn't there.

Done well, traditional goal setting is powerful because it accesses the power of two of our unique endowments: creative imagination and independent will. We use our creative imagination to visualize, and to conceive of possibilities beyond our direct experience. We use our independent will to make choices, to transcend background, scripting, and circumstance. When we set a goal, we're saying, "I can envision something different from what is, and I choose to focus my efforts to create it." We use our imagination to keep the goal in mind, and our independent will to pay the price to achieve it.

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The power of these two endowments is formidable—it's the power of purposeful living, the fundamental process of conscious change. But it's only a small part of the power available to us. What's often missing in the goal-setting process is the power of two other endowments: conscience which is the deep connection of goals to mission, needs and principles; and self-awareness or the accurate assessment of our capacity and the balance in our Personal Integrity Account.

Conscience is powerful because it creates alignment between mission and principles and gives guidance in the moment of choice. The moment we set a goal or the moment we consciously decide to focus our time and energy toward a particular purpose is a moment of choice. Goals that are connected to our inner life have the power of passion and principle. They're fueled by the fire within and based on "true north" principles that create quality-of-life results.

Self-awareness prompts us to start where we are with no illusions and no excuses, and helps us to set realistic goals. On the other hand, it also doesn't allow us to cop out with mediocrity. It helps us recognize and respect our need to stretch, to push the limits, to grow. Since much of our frustration in life comes as a result of unmet expectations, the ability to set goals that are both realistic and challenging goes a long way toward empowering us to create peace and positive growth in our lives.

Self-awareness is ear to the voice of conscience. It helps us to recognize that there are principles independent of us, to understand the futility of trying to become a law unto ourselves. It helps us to be humble and open to growth and change, to realize that we are neither omniscient nor omnipotent when we set a goal. To the best of our awareness at the time, out of all the good things we could do, we choose the best thing, for the best reason, and we plan to do it in the best way.

Still, the situation may change. We may change, and we can't act with integrity without being open to that change. To have the self-awareness to know the difference between the good and the best and to act on mission, conscience, and principles is to make the most significant deposits in our Personal Integrity Account. Integrity means more than sticking to a goal, no matter what. It's integrity of system, an integrated process that creates an open connection between the mission and the moment.

Chapter 8: The Perspective of the Week

The week represents a complete patch in the fabric of life. It includes the workdays, evenings, and the weekend. It's close enough to be highly relevant, but distant enough to provide context and perspective. It's the international standard as business, education, government, and other facets of society operate within the framework of the week. In addition, the week provides us with three useful operating perspectives.

Balanced Renewal. The perspective of the week prompts us to plan for renewal—a time for recreation

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and reflection—weekly and daily. Personal leadership is cultivating the wisdom to recognize our need for renewal and to ensure that each week provides activities that are genuinely re-creational in nature.

Whole-Parts-Whole. As we review our mission statement, we see the whole which includes the big picture, the end in mind, and the meaning in what we do. To get lost in the whole is to become an idealistic dreamer, so we then move to the parts, meaning our roles and goals. We take a “close-up” look at each part of our lives. But to get lost in the parts is to make our life more mechanical, compartmentalized, or fragmented. So as part of the process, we bring them together again into the whole, marrying the strengths of both perspectives through the normal lens of weekly organizing.

As we bring them together, we can see the interrelatedness of the parts. We see how each part of life—work, family, personal development, community activity—empowers us to contribute and fulfill our mission. We see how each part contributes to every other part, and how character and competence in any role benefit us in all roles. This “whole-parts-whole” perspective enables us to create synergy and to remove artificial barriers among roles and goals.

Content in Context. Weekly organizing puts the activities or content of our lives into the context of what’s important in our lives. It is big-picture renewal that puts us in touch with the purposes and patterns of life. It creates a powerful framework that represents our best thinking around what first things are and how we can put them first during the next seven days of our lives. When urgency pushes us, moods pull us, or unexpected opportunities beckon, we have something solid against which we can weigh the value of change. We can put content in context and choose the “best” over the “good.”

The perspective of the week nurtures balance and perspective and provides the context for making effective choices, moment by moment, regarding the things we decide to put first in our lives.

Chapter 9: Integrity in the Moment of Choice

A moment of choice is a moment of truth. It’s the testing point of our character and competence. We may find it convenient to live with the illusion that circumstances or other people are responsible for the quality of our lives, but the reality is that we are responsible (response-able) for our choices. While some of these choices may seem small and insignificant at the time, like tiny mountain rivulets that come together to create a mighty river, these decisions join together to move us with increasing force toward our final destiny. Over time, our choices become habits of the heart. More than any other factor, these habits of the heart affect our time and the quality of our lives.

The essence of principle-centered living is making the commitment to listen to and live by conscience. Why? Because of all the factors that influence us in the moment of choice, this is the

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factor that will always point to true north. This is the one that unerringly leads to quality-of-life results.

The essential purpose of the Quadrant II process is to increase the space between stimulus and response and our power to act in it with integrity. We do that as we create a personal mission statement. We do it as we organize the week. We pause between stimulus and response to proactively choose a response that is deeply integrated with principles, needs, and capacities.

On a daily, moment-by-moment basis, we increase our ability to act with integrity as we learn to pause. In that pause, integrity comes as we use our human endowments to ask with intent, listen without excuse, and act with courage.

People know it. In their deep inner lives, they know what they ought to be doing and they know it would improve their quality of life. The challenge is to develop the character and competence to listen to it and live by it; to act with integrity in the moment of choice.

Chapter 10: Learning from Living

The value of any week is not limited to what we do in it; it's also in what we learn from it and become as a result of it. For this reason, no week's experience would be complete without some kind of evaluation that enables us to process it.

Evaluation is the final step as well as the first step in a living and learning cycle that creates an upward spiral of growth. It takes us back to the beginning of the process again, but with greater capacity. As we learn from living, we're better prepared to review our mission and roles, set goals, create a framework for a new week and act with greater integrity in the moment of choice. As we organize, act, evaluate...organize, act, evaluate...and organize, act, and evaluate again, our weeks become repeating cycles of learning and growth.

Evaluation can be done in a personal journal or on the back page of the weekly worksheet as you wrap up one week and prepare for the next. You may find it helpful to create a checklist of questions to carry with you in your organizer and go through them each week before you begin the Quadrant II organizing process for the following week. You probably won't want to use more than five or six questions.

As you go through your questions, it's important to use your compass to be deeply honest and self-aware, to connect with conscience, and to use independent will and creative imagination to consider possibilities and commit to positive change. The repeated process of organizing, acting, and evaluating helps us see the consequences of our choices and actions more clearly. It's the four endowments in action. It empowers us to learn from living and to live what we learn.

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SECTION THREE: THE SYNERGY OF INTERDEPENDENCE

Chapter 11: Interdependent Reality

As we move into the interdependent reality, we'd like to ask you to think about what you've decided are "first things" in your life. How many of these things involve relationships with other people?

It's our experience that, almost without exception, everything people identify as really important has to do with others. Even those who list something such as "health" or "economic security" generally do so because they want to have the resources to enjoy life with their family and friends. Our greatest joy, and our greatest pain, comes in our relationships with others. The fact is that quality of life is, by nature, interdependent.

When we try to satisfy needs and fulfill capacities through an independent achievement, linear, chronos-only paradigm, life sometimes seems like an hour in a huge smorgasbord. There's only so much time, so we have to maximize our satisfaction, sample as much as we can. We rush through the line, grabbing as much variety as possible. We become gluttons of experiences and sensations.

As true north teaches us, the reality is that we're part of a vast, highly interrelated living ecology. Quality of life is interdependent. It's a 360-degree, totally integrated view. At the center is the personal dimension. Each of us is an individual. We have unique human endowments and some degree of character and competence in using those endowments to fulfill our fundamental needs and capacities. As individuals, we enter into relationships with other individuals. This is the interpersonal dimension. In our relationships, we work with others to accomplish tasks, represented by the managerial dimension. We align systems and coordinate work for collective purposes, which is the organizational dimension. All of these dimensions are in the context of and affect the society in which we live.

Switching from an independent to an interdependent paradigm creates a whole new way of seeing that powerfully impacts the decisions we make concerning the best use of our time and the results we get. It literally redefines importance.

When we "see" in terms of the interdependent reality, we quickly recognize the importance of time spent in Quadrant II activities such as building relationships, creating shared vision, and clarifying expectations. We also see that much of what we do in traditional time management is efficiently hacking at the leaves instead of effectively working at the interdependent root.

Chapter 12: First Things First Together

In *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, we introduced a simple three-step principle-based process to create win-win. Think win-win (based on principles of see/do/get, mutual benefit, and cooperation). Seek first to understand, then to be understood (based on principles of respect, humility, and

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authenticity). Synergize (based on principles of valuing the difference and searching for third alternatives). Let's look at this three-step process more closely in terms of what it is, how we can apply it, and the impact it has on our time and the quality of our lives.

Think Win-Win. Like Quadrant II, win-win is primarily a way of thinking. It's a fundamental paradigm based on what is probably the most often mentioned theme in all wisdom literature, the principle of mutual benefit or reciprocity, often referred to as the "Golden Rule."

As we learn to think win-win, we seek for mutual benefit in all our interactions. We start thinking in terms of other people, of society as a whole. It profoundly affects what we see as "important," how we spend our time, our response in the moment of choice, and the results we get in our lives.

Seek First to Understand, then to be Understood. When we're convinced we're right, we don't really want other people's opinions. We want submission. We want obedience to our opinions. We want to clone other people in our image. "If I want your opinion, I'll give it to you!"

The humility of principles removes this kind of arrogance. We become less concerned about who is right and more concerned about what is right. We value other people. We recognize that their conscience, too, is a repository of correct principles. We realize that their creative imagination is a rich source of ideas. We appreciate the fact that through their self-awareness and independent will, they may have gained insight and experience we don't have. So when they see things differently, we seek first to understand. Before we speak, we listen. We leave our own autobiography and invest deeply in genuinely understanding their point of view.

Synergize. Synergy is the fruit of thinking win-win and seeking first to understand. It's the combined power of synergistic creative imagination, the almost magical math where $1+1=3$ or more. It's not compromise. It's not $1+1=1\frac{1}{2}$. It's the creation of third alternatives that are genuinely better than solutions individuals could ever come up with on their own.

Chapter 13: Empowerment from the Inside Out

Empowerment can't be installed; it has to be grown. It's a matter of nurturing the conditions that create it. The more these conditions are present, the more empowered the culture will be. We don't really "empower" other people, but by nurturing these conditions, we create the environment in which they can empower themselves through the use of their four endowments. This is high-leverage Quadrant II investment that brings great returns.

Building character and competency is a process, and one of the highest-leverage things we can do in this process is to regularly seek 360-degree feedback. It takes humility to ask for and receive it. You may have to take oxygen to get through it. But understanding it and acting wisely with regard to it

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can powerfully impact your time and quality of life.

Some people have called feedback “the breakfast of champions” because of its value. Truthfully, it isn’t the breakfast; it’s the lunch. Vision is the breakfast. Self-correction is the dinner. Without vision, we have no context for feedback. We’re just responding to what someone else values or wants. We’re living out of the social mirror. We fall into the trap of trying to become all things to all people, meeting everybody’s expectations, and we end up essentially meeting nobody’s, including our own.

With a clear sense of vision and mission, we can use feedback to help us achieve a greater integrity. We have the humility to recognize that we have blind spots, that getting other perspectives will help us improve the quality of our own. We also have the wisdom to realize that feedback tells us as much about the people from whom we receive it as it does about ourselves. The responses of others reflect not only how they see us, but also how well they feel we do those things that are important to them. People are important to us, and because part of our leadership is creating shared importance, this dimension of feedback is vitally important as well. We aren’t governed by feedback; we’re governed by the principles and purposes we have built into our mission statement.

When we’re in a formal leadership role, if we’re not into micromanaging, hovering over, checking up, and managing crises, what do we spend our time doing? We create shared vision. We strengthen, coach, and mentor to help develop the capacities of individuals and teams. We build relationships of trust. We do long-range planning, scan horizons, look at stakeholders’ needs, study the trends of the market, work on systems, and create alignment. In other words, we spend time doing the important, non-urgent Quadrant II activities that make the significant difference. We’re not just into managing our time to do what’s in front of us; we literally do different things. We become a “leader/servant.”

The idea of “servant leadership” has been around for a long time, but it’s never really taken hold because the conditions of empowerment have not been in place. It becomes just another nice phrase, another way of exercising a benevolent authoritarian kind of control. Eventually it creates cynicism. But when the conditions of empowerment are in place, servant leadership creates powerful results.

SECTION FOUR: THE POWER AND PEACE OF PRINCIPLE-CENTERED LIVING

Chapter 14: From Time Management to Personal Leadership

As we exercise self-awareness and examine our paradigms, we discover that they are deeply ingrained. The change is not easy. Often we look at the to-do lists, the tasks in front of us, and we retreat to independence.

In a Quadrant II day, what changes first is our thoughts, meaning the way we see the day. Tasks provide an opportunity for growth, for improvement. We can work on our competence to learn, to

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expand our skills, to broaden our ability to perform, or on our character to be more honest, more understanding, to see the other point of view, to pause frequently and listen to conscience. We can apply ourselves to change the systems and make them more effective. The creativity that comes when we stop to pause and listen is amazing.

Sometimes it's tough. We make mistakes. We fall back into old habits of urgency addiction, old paradigms of getting more done in less time even if what we're doing is in Quadrant II. But the more we exercise personal leadership and move into Quadrant II, the more we can feel growth, and feel life. It gets better. It's an upward spiral. Each part of life starts to add to the others. There's more of every good thing.

Chapter 15: The Peace of the Results

Peace is essentially a function of putting first things first. Foundational to "first things" are the four needs and capacities which are to live, to love, to learn, to leave a legacy. Putting first things first is a function of using our self-awareness, conscience, independent will, and creative imagination to fulfill our needs and capacities in a principle-centered way.

There are principles. We do have conscience. Those two things make all the difference. They impact our thoughts and how we see everything around us. We see how vital it is to pause in that space between stimulus and response so that we can listen to our conscience and exercise the attributes of the heart to make the "best" choices. We see that there are purposes higher than self toward which we can focus our energies and efforts with passion and confidence that we can create quality-of-life results. We see the world as a place of infinite third-alternative solutions. We see the importance of creating aligned systems so that the very way we go about organizing and planning our lives reinforces the habits of the heart that create peace.

The principles and processes we've described in this book nurture peace in all four dimensions of life. Peace of conscience, peace of mind, peace in our relationships and even peace of body are within our grasp. Vision gives purpose and meaning. Roles become synergistic avenues of contribution. Goals become conscience-driven, purposeful, integrated accomplishment. The week bridges the mission and the moment in a cycle of growth. Sharpening the saw is a daily and weekly renewal. Each moment of choice becomes a space in which we can exercise our human endowments to act with integrity.

These principles and processes change the expectations many of us have about time and the quality of our lives. This is critical to peace because frustration is essentially a function of unmet expectations. We expect something to be a certain way or to produce certain results, and it doesn't. As a result, we feel frustrated.

Unmet expectations create frustration, but our expectations are within our control. We're not talking

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about lowering our expectations, but about basing them on the realities of true north. One of the richest areas for eliminating much of the frustration we experience in our lives is to examine our expectations. Whenever we feel frustrated, we can go back to the root of the problem.

- What expectation did I have that's been violated?
- Was that expectation based on true north?
- What should I do to change the expectation?
- What can I learn from this that will affect my expectations in the future?

When our expectations aren't based on true north realities, we set ourselves up for frustration and lack of peace.

Becoming principle-centered is just that: becoming. It's not arriving; it's a lifetime quest. But the more people align their lives with true north, the more they begin to develop certain characteristics common to principle-centered people. We would ask you to connect deeply with your conscience for a moment and ask yourself this final question: Is there something I feel I could do to make a difference?

Think about it. It may require letting go of illusory paradigms, rationalizing, wants, urgency addiction, even your comfort zone. But, deep inside, in all honesty of heart, do you feel there's something you could do, some contribution you could make, some legacy you could leave that would impact your family, your work team, your organization, your community, your society in a positive way?

If there is, we encourage you to act on it. As Gandhi said, "We must become the change we seek in the world." Wherever you are in terms of becoming principle-centered, we encourage you to start exercising the attributes of your heart. Make a promise and keep it. Set a goal and achieve it. There is peace in it. As Emerson said, "Nothing can bring you peace but yourself. Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principles."