

H A B I T

3

Put **First Things First**



**Will
and Won't
Power**

I watched the Indy 500, and I was thinking that if they left earlier they wouldn't have to go so fast.

STEVEN WRIGHT, COMEDIAN

I was listening to a speech on tape when the speaker began comparing the challenges faced by today's teens to those of teens who lived 150 years ago. I listened with interest. I agreed with most of what he said until this: "The challenge that teens faced 150 years ago was hard work. The challenge that teens face today is a lack of hard work."

Ex-squeeze me! I mumbled to myself. *A lack of hard work? What are you smokin'?* I think teens are busier today and working harder than ever. I see it with my own eyes every day. Between school, extracurricular activities, teams, clubs, student government, athletics, part-time jobs, helping to raise a younger brother or sister, and on and on, there's barely time to breathe. A lack of hard work? Ha! Milking cows and mending fences doesn't sound any more difficult than juggling the multifaceted life of a modern teen.

Let's face it. You've got a lot to do and there just isn't enough time. After school you have rehearsal, followed by work. You've also gotta study for that biology test tomorrow. And don't forget to give your friend a call. On top of that, you should exercise. The dog needs a walk. And your room is a wreck. What will you do?

Habit 3, Put First Things First, can help. It's all about learning to prioritize and manage your time so that your first things come first, not last. But there's more to this habit than just time management. Putting first things first also deals with learning to overcome your fears and being strong during hard moments.

In Habit 2, you decided what your first things are. Habit 3, then, is putting them *first* in your life.

Sure we can have a nice list of goals and good intentions, but doing them, putting them first is the hard part. That's why I call Habit 3 the habit of *will-power* (the strength to say yes to your most important things) and *won't-power* (the strength to say no to less important things and to peer pressure).

The first three habits build upon each other. Habit 1 says, "You are the driver, not the passenger." Habit 2 says, "Decide where you want to go and draw up a map to get you there." Habit 3 says, "Get there! Don't let roadblocks knock you off course."

● PACKING MORE INTO YOUR LIFE

Have you ever packed a suitcase and noticed how much more you can fit inside when you neatly fold and organize your clothes instead of just throwing them in? It's really quite surprising. The same goes for your life. The better you organize yourself, the more you'll be able to pack in—more time for family and friends, more time for school, more time for yourself, more time for your first things.

I'd like to show you an amazing model called the Time Quadrants that can help you pack more in (especially important things). It's made up of two primary ingredients, "important" and "urgent."

Important—your most important things, your first things, activities that contribute to your mission and your goals.

Urgent—pressing things, in-your-face things, activities that demand immediate attention.

In general, we spend our time in four different time quadrants, as shown below. Each quadrant contains different kinds of activities and is represented by a type of person.



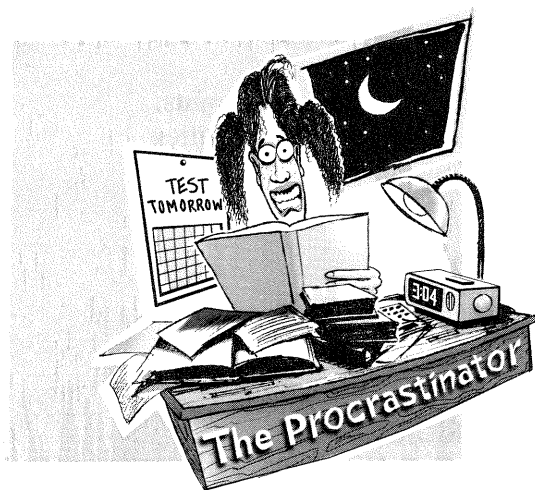
The Time Quadrants

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	<p>1 THE PROCRASTINATOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EXAM TOMORROW • FRIEND GETS INJURED • LATE FOR WORK • PROJECT DUE TODAY • CAR BREAKS DOWN 	<p>2 THE PRIORITIZER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLANNING, GOAL SETTING • ESSAY DUE IN A WEEK • EXERCISE • RELATIONSHIPS • RELAXATION
NOT IMPORTANT	<p>3 THE YES-MAN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNIMPORTANT PHONE CALLS • INTERRUPTIONS • OTHER PEOPLE'S SMALL PROBLEMS • PEER PRESSURE 	<p>4 THE SLACKER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TOO MUCH TV • ENDLESS PHONE CALLS • EXCESSIVE COMPUTER GAMES • MALL MARATHONS • TIME WASTERS

If you haven't already noticed, we live in a society that is addicted to urgency. It's the NOW generation. That's why we have instant pudding, Minute rice, crash diets, fast food, buns of steel in seven days, pay-per-view, pagers, cell phones, and so on. It reminds me of the spoiled rich girl in *Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*, who keeps saying, "Now, Daddy! Now! I want an Umpalumpa now!"

Urgent things aren't bad, necessarily. The problem comes when we become so focused on *urgent* things that we put off *important* things that aren't urgent, like working on that report in advance going for a walk in the mountains, or writing an important letter to a friend. All these *important* things get pushed aside by *urgent* things, like phone calls, interruptions, drop-ins, deadlines, other people's problems, and other "in-your-face-do-it-now" things.

As we dig a little deeper into each quadrant, ask yourself "What quadrant am I spending most of my time in?"



QUADRANT 1: *The Procrastinator*

Let's start with Q1, things that are both urgent and important. There will always be Q1 things that we can't control and that must get done, like helping a sick child or meeting an important deadline. But we also cause many Q1 headaches because we procrastinate, like when we put off doing our homework and then have to cram all night for a test or when we neglect our car for too long and then have to take it in to get repaired. Q1 is part

of life, but if you're spending too much time in Q1, believe me, you'll be a "stress case" and you'll seldom be performing to your potential.

Meet the Procrastinator, who hangs out in Q1. Perhaps you know her. Her motto is, "I'm going to stop procrastinating—some time soon." Don't expect her to work on a paper or study for a test until the night before. And don't expect her to take time to get gas; she's usually too busy driving.

The Procrastinator is addicted to urgency. She likes to put things off and put things off and put things off ... until it becomes a crisis. But she likes it that way because, you see, doing everything at the last minute gives her a rush. In fact, her mind won't kick into gear until there's an emergency. She thrives under pressure.

Planning ahead is simply out of the question for the Procrastinator.

nator because it would ruin the excitement of doing everything at the last possible moment.

The Procrastinator reminds me of the comedian who said:

"My mom always told me that I would be a procrastinator."

I replied, "Just you wait."

I can relate to the Procrastinator because I was a cram artist in high school. I used to think I was pretty cool not studying all semester and then cramming the night before and pulling out a good grade. How stupid! Sure I got the grade, but I didn't learn a thing and I paid for it in college, and in many ways I'm still paying for it.

One procrastinating teen said it this way:

"What I do is I slack off until the end of the term and kill myself for the last two weeks. When grades come out I get around a 3.7 to 3.8, but I don't feel I have earned it because everyone else turned stuff in on time and does what they're supposed to. They're not stressed. That's how I want to be."

The results of too much time in Q1 are:

- Stress and anxiety
- Burnout
- Mediocre performance

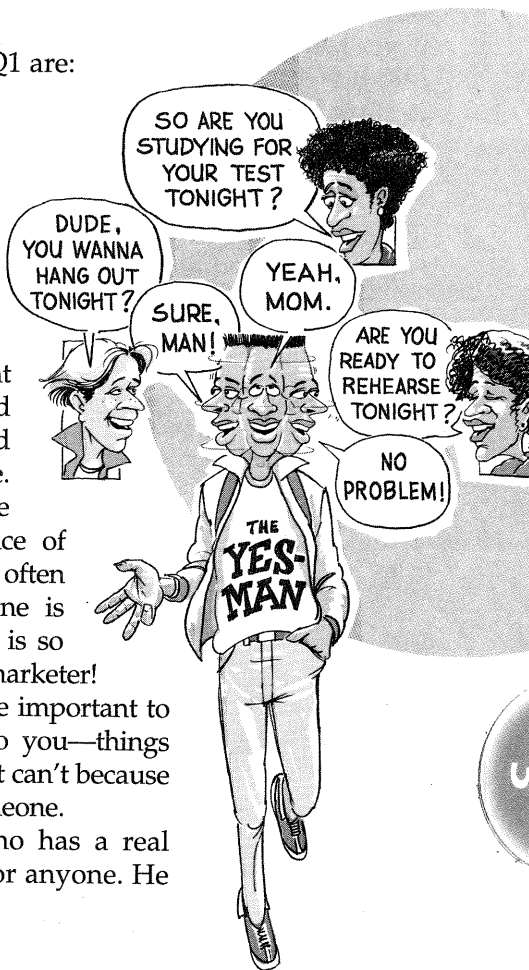
QUADRANT 2: *The Prioritizer*

We'll save the best for last.

QUADRANT 3: *The Yes-man*

Q3 represents things that are urgent but not important. It is characterized by trying to please other people and responding to their every desire. This quadrant is deceptive because urgent things have the appearance of being important. In truth, they're often not. For example, a ringing phone is urgent, but often the conversation is so unimportant, or worse, it's a telemarketer! Q3 is loaded with activities that are important to other people but not important to you—things that you would like to say no to but can't because you're afraid you might offend someone.

Meet the Yes-man of Q3, who has a real hard time saying no to anything or anyone. He



tries so hard to please everyone that he usually ends up pleasing no one, including himself. He often caves in to peer pressure because he likes to be popular and he wouldn't want to stand out. His motto is "Tomorrow, I'm going to be more assertive—if that's okay with you."

When his friends dropped by unexpectedly one evening and wanted him to go cruising till dawn, he just couldn't muster up enough courage to turn them down. He didn't want to disappoint his buddies. It didn't matter that he was taking some gargantuan test the next morning and needed to study and get some sleep.

Although he told his sister that he'd help her with math, he couldn't resist taking that urgent phone call that took most of the night but wasn't really that important.

He didn't really want to join the swimming team. He preferred art. But his dad was a swimmer and, of course, he didn't want to let him down.

I think all of us, myself included, have a little Q3 inside of us. But we won't accomplish much if we say yes to everything and never learn to focus on what's important. Comedian Bill Cosby has said it well: "I don't know the key to success, but the key to failure is to try to please everyone." Q3 is one of the worst quadrants to be in because it has no backbone. It's fickle and will blow whichever way the wind is blowing.

The results of spending too much time in Q3 are:

- Reputation for being a "pleaser"
- Lack of discipline
- Feeling like a doormat for others to wipe their feet on



UP NEXT:
WOMEN WHO
LOVE THEIR
PLUMBERS!

QUADRANT 4: *The Slacker*

Q4 is the category of waste and excess. These activities are neither urgent nor important.

Meet the Slacker who loafs about in Q4. He loves anything in excess, like too much TV, too much sleep, too many video games, or too much time on the Web. Two of his favorite pastimes include regular three-hour phone calls and mall marathons each weekend.

He is a professional loafer. Sleeping in until noon takes real skill, after all. He absolutely loves comic books. In fact, he reads several dozen a week. He's never had a job. But he's young and has

his health, so why would he want to work? School, of course, is the last thing on his mind. He'd rather, you know, just hang out.

Going to movies, chatting on the Web, or just hanging out are part of a healthy lifestyle. It's only when they're done in excess that they become a waste of time. You'll know when you cross that line. Watching that first TV show might be just what you need to relax, and that's okay. But then watching the second, third, or even fourth show (a rerun that you've seen six times) until 2 A.M. turns a relaxing evening into a wasted one.

The results of living in Q4 are:

- Lack of responsibility
- Guilt
- Flakiness

☒ **QUADRANT 2: *The Prioritizer***



Now back to Q2. Q2 is made of things that are important but not urgent, like relaxation, building friendships, exercising, planning ahead, and doing homework ... on time! It's the quadrant of excellence—the place we want to be. Q2 activities are important. But are Q2 activities urgent? No! And that's why we have trouble doing them. For example, getting a good summer job may be very important to you. But since it's weeks away and not urgent, you may put off looking for that job until it's too late and suddenly all the good jobs are filled.

Had you been in Q2, you would have planned ahead and found a better job. It wouldn't take more time, just a little more planning.

Meet the Prioritizer. Although she's by no means perfect, she's basically got it together. She takes a look at everything she has to do and then prioritizes, making sure her first things get done first and her last things last. Because she has the simple but powerful habit of planning ahead, she's usually on top of things. By doing her homework on time and writing her papers in advance, she does her best work and avoids the stress and burnout that come from cramming. She makes time to exercise and renew herself, even if it means pushing aside other things. The people who matter most in her life, like her friends and her family, come first. Although it's a struggle, staying balanced is important to her.

She changes the oil in her car regularly. And

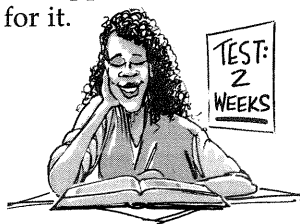


she doesn't wait until she's running on fumes to fill up with gas. She loves going to movies, surfing the Net, and reading suspense novels but never lets those activities go too far.

She's learned how to say no with a smile. When her friends dropped by unexpectedly one evening to go to a party, she said, "No thanks. I have a huge test tomorrow. But how about Friday night? Let's get together then." Her friends were okay with that and secretly wished they had had the courage to say no as well. She's learned that resisting peer pressure appears unpopular at first, but that people come to respect her for it.

The results of living in Q2 are:

- Control of your life
- Balance
- High performance



So in which quadrant are you spending the majority of your time? 1, 2, 3, or 4? Since, in reality, we all spend some time in each quadrant, the key is to shift as much time as possible into Q2. And the only way you'll find more time for Q2 is to reduce the amount of time you spend in the other quadrants. Here is how to do that:

Shrink Q1 by procrastinating less. You're always going to have lots to do in Q1. That's guaranteed. But if you can cut your procrastination in half by doing important things early, you'll be in Q1 far less often. And less Q1 time means less stress!

Say no to Q3 activities. Learn to say no to unimportant things that pull you away from more important ones. Don't be so interruptible. Trying to please everyone is like a dog trying to catch its tail. Remember, when you're saying no you're really saying yes to more important things.

Cut down on Q4, slacker activities. Don't stop doing these things, just do them less often. You don't have time to waste. Shift this time to Q2. You need to relax and kick back, but remember relaxation is Q2. Excessive relaxation is Q4.

In addition to spending more time in Q2, consider two other suggestions to help you better manage your time and put first things first: Pick up a planner and plan weekly.

● PICK UP A PLANNER

To start with, I highly recommend using a planner of some sort that has a calendar and space to write down appointments,

assignments, to-do lists, and goals. If you want, you can even make your own planner out of a spiral-bound notebook. Upon hearing the word "planner," some of you may be thinking, "Hey, I don't want to haul another book around with me." If this is your hang-up, remember that planners come in all sizes. You can get a three-pounder or an itty-bitty, portable three-ouncer.

Others may be thinking, "I don't want my life to be tied to a planner. I like my freedom." If this is you, keep in mind that a planner wasn't designed to tie you down but to free you up. With a planner you'll no longer have to worry about forgetting things or double-booking yourself. It will remind you when your papers are due and tests are to be taken. You can keep all of your important information (like telephone numbers, Web addresses, birthdays) in one place instead of on fifty scraps of paper. A planner is not meant to be your master but a tool to help you live your life.

Plan Weekly

Take fifteen minutes each week to plan your week and just watch what a difference it can make. Why weekly? Because we think in weeks and because daily planning is too narrow a focus and monthly planning is too broad a focus. Once you have a planner of some sort, follow this three-step weekly planning process.

Step 1: Identify Your Big Rocks. At the end or beginning of each week, sit down and think about what you want to accomplish for the upcoming week. Ask yourself, "What are the most important things I need to do this week?" I call these your big rocks. They are sort of like minigoals and should be tied into your mission statement and longer-term goals. Not surprisingly, you'll find that most of them will be Q2's.

You might come up with a list of big rocks that looks something like this:

My Big Rocks for the Week

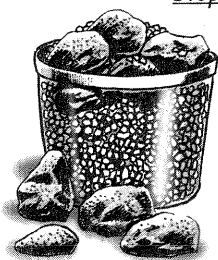
- Study for science test
- Finish reading book
- Attend Megan's game
- Complete employment application
- Party at Isabella's
- Exercise 3 times

Another way to identify your big rocks is to think through the key roles of your life, such as your role as a student, friend, family member, worker, individual, and whatever else you do and then come up

with the one or two most important things you want to get done in each role. Planning your life around roles will help you stay balanced.

ROLE	MY BIG ROCKS FOR THE WEEK
Student	Get started on history report
Friend	Mario's birthday Be more complimentary
Family	Take Colleen to mall Call Grandma
Job	Get to work on time
Me	Go to concert Write in journal every night
Debate Team	Finish research Practice openings

As you're identifying your big rocks for the week, don't get carried away. Although you may feel you have forty big rocks that must get done, be realistic and narrow your focus to no more than ten to fifteen.



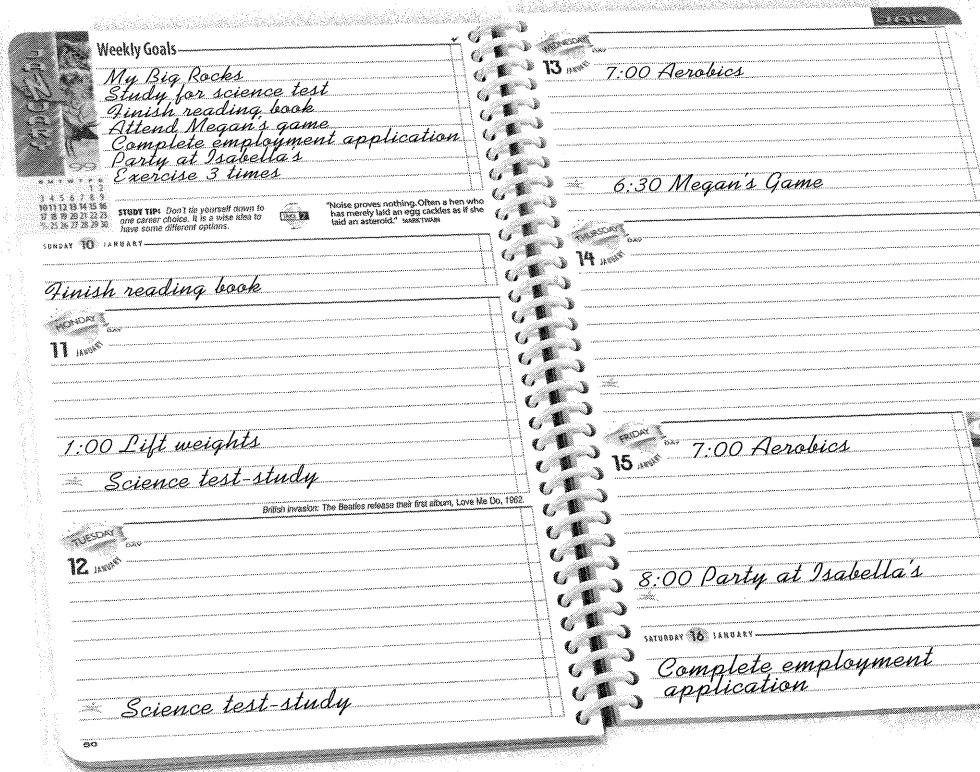
Step 2: Block Out Time for Your Big Rocks. Have you ever seen the big-rock experiment? You get a bucket and fill it half full of small pebbles. You then try to put several big rocks in the bucket, on top of the pebbles. But they don't all fit. So you empty the bucket and start over. This time you put the big rocks in the bucket first, followed by the pebbles. The pebbles neatly fill in the spaces around the big rocks. This time it all fits! The difference is the order in which the rocks and pebbles were placed in the bucket. If you put the pebbles in first, the big rocks don't all fit. But if you put the big rocks in first, everything fits, big rocks *and* pebbles. Big rocks represent your most important things. Pebbles represent all the little everyday things that suck up your time, such as chores, busy work, phone calls, and interruptions. The moral of the story is, if you don't schedule your big rocks in first, they won't get done.

During your weekly planning, block out time for your big rocks by booking them in your planner. For example, you might decide that the best time to get started on your history report is Tuesday night and the best time to call your grandma is Sunday afternoon. Now block out those times. It's like making a reservation. If



your big rock such as "give out three compliments each day this week" doesn't have a specific time attached to it, write it somewhere in your planner where it can be seen.

If you block out time for your big rocks first, the other everyday activities will fit in as well. And even if they don't, who cares? You'd rather push aside pebbles than big rocks.



Step 3: Schedule Everything Else. Once you have your big rocks booked, schedule in all of your other little to-dos, daily tasks, and appointments. Here's where the pebbles go. You may also want to look ahead on your calendar and record upcoming events and activities, like a vacation, concert, or birthday.

Adapt Daily

With your weekly plan in place, adapt each day as needed. You'll probably need to rearrange some big rocks and pebbles now and then. Try your best to follow your plan, but if you don't accomplish everything you set out to do, no big deal. Even if you only get a

third of your big rocks accomplished, that's a third more than you might have accomplished without planning ahead.

If this weekly planning method feels too rigid or complicated, don't scrap it entirely, just do weekly planning *light*. For example, you may find you only want to schedule two or three big rocks for the week and that's about it.

The point is: The simple act of planning ahead each week will help you focus on your big rocks and consequently accomplish so much more.

Does It Really Work?

Does this time-management stuff really work? You bet it does. I have personally read numerous letters from teens who have had great success with the above suggestions. Here are comments from two teens who were taught about the Time Quadrants and began using a planner and doing weekly planning:

Jacob:

I remember looking at the diagram of the Time Quadrants and saying, "Man, this is true. I do a lot of last-minute things." Like homework. If a paper was due, I'd do it Sunday night to turn in Monday, or if there was a test on Friday, I'd skip school on Thursday to study for my test. I was pretty much in crisis.

Once I figured out what was important to me, I started to prioritize and started using a planner. If I wanted to go fishing I would say, "Well, this other thing is more important. I'll do that first, and then maybe tomorrow I will have the whole day to fish." Eventually I started studying more effectively, aced my tests, and everything just fell into place. My life would have been less stressful if I only had used my time more effectively earlier.

Brooke:

My stress level has decreased because I am no longer constantly trying to remember what I have to do a few days ahead. Now I can just pull out my schedule and I'm all set. When I get in a bad mood and stressed out, I look at my schedule and realize that I still have time to do everything, especially the things just for me.

One of the few things that can't be recycled is wasted time. So make sure you treasure each moment. In the words of Queen Elizabeth I on her deathbed: "All my possessions for one moment of time."

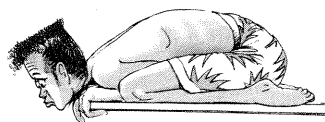
● THE OTHER HALF

Time management isn't all there is to Habit 3. It's only half of it. The other half is learning to overcome fear and peer pressure. It takes

courage and guts to stay true to your first things, like your values and standards, when the pressure is on. I once asked a group of kids, "What are your first things?" to which they answered, among other things: "family," "friends," "freedom," "excitement," "growth," "trust," "God," "stability," "belonging," "looks." I then asked, "What keeps you from putting these things first in your life?" Not surprisingly, "fear" and "peer pressure" were two of the top responses. So we're going to talk about how to deal with these.

The Comfort Zone and the Courage Zone

Putting your first things first takes courage and will often cause you to stretch outside your comfort zone. Take a peek at the Courage and Comfort Zone diagram.



Your comfort zone represents things you're familiar with, places you know, friends you're at ease with, activities you enjoy doing. Your comfort zone is risk free. It's easy.

It doesn't require any stretching. Within these boundaries we feel safe and secure.

On the other hand, things like making new friends, speaking before a large audience, or sticking up for your values makes your hair stand on end. Welcome to the courage zone! Adventure, risk, and challenge included! Everything that makes us feel uncomfortable is found here. In this territory waits uncertainty, pressure, change, the possibility of failure. But it's also the place to go for opportunity and the only place in which you'll ever reach your full potential. You'll never reach it by hanging out in your comfort zone. That's for sure.



What's that you asked? "What's so wrong about enjoying your comfort zone?"

Nothing. In fact, much of our time should be spent there. But there is something absolutely wrong with never venturing into unknown waters. You know as well as I do that people who seldom try new things or spread their wings live safe but boring lives! And who wants that? "You miss 100 percent of the shots you never take," said hockey great Wayne Gretzky. Why not show some faith in yourself, take a risk, and parachute into your courage zone from time to time? Remember, the risk of riskless living is the greatest risk of all.



It's not the
mountain
we conquer,
but ourselves.

EDMUND HILLARY
(first person to climb
Mount Everest)

Never Let Your Fears Make Your Decisions

There are a lot of sick emotions in this world, but perhaps one of the worst is *fear*. When I think about all I failed to do in my life because my fears got the best of me I ache inside. In high school I had a crush on a beautiful girl named Sherry but I never asked her out because my fears whispered, "She may not like you." I remember quitting my seventh-grade football team after one practice because I was afraid of competition. I'll never forget contemplating running for a student body office but chickening out because I was too scared of speaking in front of the whole school.

Throughout my life there have been classes I never took, friends I never made, and teams I never played for—all because of these ugly, yet very real, fears. I like how Shakespeare put it in *Measure for Measure*:



*Our doubts are traitors,
And make us lose the good we oft might win
By fearing to attempt.*

My dad once told me something I've never forgotten. "Sean," he said, "never let your fears make your decisions. You make them." Isn't that a great idea? Think of all the heroic acts that have been accomplished by people who acted in the face of fear. Think of Nelson Mandela, who was instrumental in ending the oppressive apartheid system in South Africa. Mandela was imprisoned for twenty-seven years (imagine that) for speaking out against apartheid before being elected as the first non-white president of South Africa. What if, because of his fears, he had never dared to fight the system? Or consider the unyielding courage of Susan B. Anthony as she led the long struggle that finally won women the right to vote under the U.S. Constitution. Or think of Winston

Churchill, prime minister of England during World War II, who led the free world in its fight against Nazi Germany. What if, because of self-doubt, he had been fainthearted during the war? Surely all great deeds, whether by famous people or by everyday people, were accomplished in the face of fear.

Acting in the face of fear will never be easy, but afterward you'll always be glad you did it. During my senior year in college I was short a few credits, and so I skimmed through the class schedule looking for something to fill the hours. When I came across "Private Voice Instruction," as in singing lessons, I thought, "Why not step outside my comfort zone and give it a try?"

I was careful to sign up for private lessons instead of group lessons because I didn't want to make a fool of myself by singing in front of other students.

Things went fine until the end of the semester when my singing professor brought the shocking news. "By the way, Sean, have you decided which song you want to sing before the other students?"

"What do you mean?" I asked in horror.

"Well, the class requirements state that you have to sing at least one time in front of the other private voice students."

"That would not be a good idea," I said emphatically.

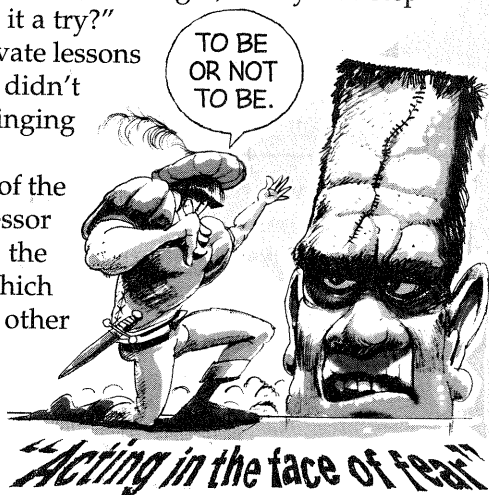
"Oh, it's no big deal. You'll do fine."

Well, to me it *was* a huge deal. The thought of singing in front of a group made me physically sick. "How am I going to get out of this one?" I thought. But I couldn't allow myself to do that because I had been speaking to various groups over the past year advising them to never let fears make their decisions. Now ... I was up to bat.

"Courage, Sean." I kept rehearsing in my mind. "You've got to at least try."

That dreaded day finally arrived. As I entered the "room of doom" where I was to make my debut, I kept trying to convince myself, "Settle down, Sean. This can't be that bad."

But it kept getting worse. I became increasingly intimidated as I discovered that nearly everyone in the room was either a music or theater major. I mean, these people really knew how to sing. Since childhood they'd been performing in musicals and choruses. My fear only increased when the first student called upon sang a song



from the play *Les Misérables* that sounded better than in the original Broadway production. The guy was incredible. Yet the class had the audacity to critique him. "I think that your tonality was a little flat," someone said. "Oh, no! What will they think of me?"

"Sean, you're up."

Now it was my turn.

As I stood in front of the class, three million light years outside my comfort zone, I kept repeating to myself, "Courage! I can't believe I'm doing this. Courage! I can't believe I'm doing this."

"I will be singing 'On the Street Where You Live' from *My Fair Lady*," I quivered.

As the accompanist began playing the prelude and all eyes fell upon me, I couldn't help but think, "How? How in the world did I get myself into this situation?" And from the smiles on everyone's faces it looked as if they were actually going to take me seriously.

"I have often walked down this street before ..." I rang out.

Even before I reached the second line, the expressions of excitement on the students' faces turned to anguish. I was so nervous that my body felt as tight as jeans just pulled from the dryer. I had to squeeze each word out.

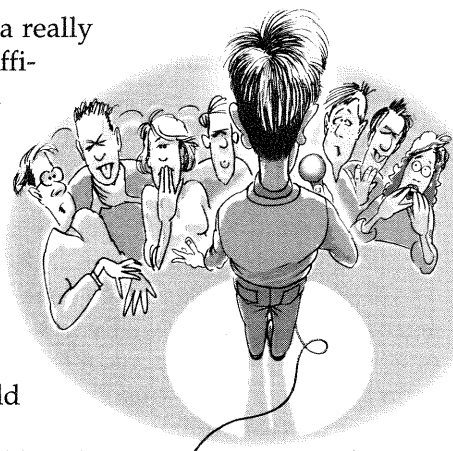
Near the end of the song is a really high note. It had always been difficult for me to reach, even in practice. Now I anticipated it with terror. But as that note approached I thought, "What the heck. Go for it!"

I don't recall if I hit that note or missed it. All I remember is that a few students were so embarrassed that despite their best efforts they could no longer bear to look at me.

I finished and sat down quickly. Silence. No one knew what to say.

"That was great, Sean."

"Thanks a lot," I shrugged, as if I believed them. But do you know what? Although that experience nearly killed me, when I left that classroom and walked alone through the empty parking lot to my car I was so proud of myself. I felt a great sense of personal accomplishment, and I frankly didn't care what anyone else thought about my high note. I had survived and I was proud of it. As Edmund Hillary, the first person to climb Mount Everest, put it,



"It's not the mountain we conquer, but ourselves." So the next time you want to:

- make a new friend,
- resist peer pressure,
- break an old habit,
- develop a new skill,
- try out for a team,
- audition for a play,
- ask out the one and only,
- change your job,
- get involved,
- be yourself,

Do it!
Do it!
Do it!
...Do it!

or even if you want to sing in public ... Do it! ... even when all your fears and doubts scream out, "You stink," "You'll fail," "Don't try." Never let your fears make your decisions. You make them.

Winning Means Rising Each Time You Fall

We all feel fear from time to time, and that's okay. "Feel the fear and do it anyway" goes the saying. One way I've learned to overcome fear is to keep this thought always in the back of my mind: *Winning is nothing more than rising each time you fall.* We should worry less about failing and more about the chances we miss when we don't even try. After all, many of the people we most admire failed many times.

For instance, Babe Ruth struck out 1,330 times. Albert Einstein didn't talk until he was four. Beethoven's music teacher said, "As a composer he is hopeless." Louis Pasteur was graded "mediocre" in chemistry. Rocket scientist Wernher von Braun failed ninth-grade algebra. Chemist Madame Marie Curie experienced near financial ruin before creating the field of nuclear chemistry and forever changing the course of science. Michael Jordan was cut from his high school basketball team when he was a sophomore.

Below are events in the life history of a man who failed many times but kept fighting back. See if you can guess who it is. This man:

- failed in business at age twenty-two
- was defeated for the state legislature at age twenty-three
- failed in business at age twenty-five
- coped with the death of his sweetheart at age twenty-six
- suffered a nervous breakdown at age twenty-seven
- was defeated for speaker at age twenty-nine
- was defeated for congressional nomination at age thirty-four
- was elected to Congress at age thirty-seven
- lost renomination for Congress at age thirty-nine

- was defeated for the Senate at age forty-six
- was defeated for the vice-presidency of the United States at age forty-seven
- and was defeated for the Senate at age forty-nine

This person was none other than Abraham Lincoln, elected president of the United States at age fifty-one. He rose each time he fell and eventually reached his destination, gaining the respect and admiration of all nations and peoples.

Two roads diverged in
a wood, and I—
I took the one less
traveled by,
And that has made all
the difference.

ROBERT FROST
POET



Be Strong in the Hard Moments

The poet Robert Frost wrote, “Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—I took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference.” I have come to believe that there are certain hard moments, diverging-road moments, that, if we are strong in them, will make “all the difference” down the road of life.

So what exactly are hard moments? Hard moments are conflicts between doing the right thing and doing the easier thing. They are the key tests, the defining moments of life—and how we handle them can literally

shape our forever. They come in two sizes, small and large.

Small hard moments occur daily and include things like getting up when your alarm rings, controlling your temper, or disciplining yourself to do your homework. If you can conquer yourself and be strong in these moments your days will run so much more smoothly. For example, if I’m weak in a hard moment and sleep in (mattress over mind), it often snowballs and becomes the first of many little failures throughout the day. But if I get up when planned (mind over mattress), it often becomes the first of many little successes.

In contrast to small hard moments, larger ones occur every so often in life and include things like choosing good friends, resisting negative peer pressure, and rebounding after a major setback: You may get cut from a team or dumped by your lover, your parents may get divorced, or you may have a death in the family. These moments have huge consequences and often strike when you’re least expecting them. If you recognize that these moments will come (and they will), then you can prepare for them and meet them head on like a warrior and come out victorious.

Be courageous at these key junctures! Don’t sacrifice your future happiness for one night of pleasure, a weekend of excitement, or a thrilling moment of revenge. If you are ever thinking

about doing something really stupid, remember these lines from Shakespeare (Wow! Shakespeare twice in one chapter):

*What win I, if I gain the thing I seek?
A dream, a breath, a froth of fleeting joy.
Who buys a minute's mirth to wail a week?
Or sells eternity to get a toy?
For one sweet grape who will the vine destroy?*

These lines are about sacrificing your future for a brief moment of joy. Who would want to give up the rest of his or her life for a toy? Or who would want to buy a minute of happiness (mirth) for a week's worth of pain? Or who would destroy an entire vine for just one grape? Only a stupid person would.

Overcoming Peer Pressure

Some of the hardest moments come when facing peer pressure. Saying no when all your friends are saying yes takes raw courage. However, standing up to peer pressure, what I call "won't power," is a massive deposit into your PBA.

A counselor at a high school shared this:

A freshman girl rushed into my office before school with tears streaming down her face. "They hate me! They hate me!"

She had just been dumped by her group of friends who told her to get lost because she had been "too good" the day before to ditch school and ride up to Chicago for the day. She said at first she wanted to go but then thought how much it would hurt her mom when the school called home and told her that her daughter wasn't in school. She felt she just couldn't do that to her mom because she had made so many sacrifices for her. She couldn't let her down!

She stood up and said no I can't do it, and everyone just blew her off. She thought the next day that everything would be okay, but it wasn't—they all told her to find new friends because she was too good for them.

Through the tears and pain she began to see that she felt good inside, but lonely, as her friends didn't accept her. But she accepted herself and gained self-respect and inner peace despite outside rejection. A life lesson learned and a moment of standing up for herself.

Sometimes peer pressure can be so strong that the only way to resist it is to remove yourself entirely from the environment you're in. This is especially the case if you're involved with a gang, a fraternity or sorority, or a tight group of friends. For Heather, changing her environment was the best solution:

Even though I knew for a long time that I needed to change my friends, I just didn't know how. My "best friend" would encourage me to do the things she was, like sleeping around and doing drugs.

Before long people at school started to call me a slut.

I still wanted to be friends with her, and my other friends, because I would think about all the good times we'd had together. Yet when I went out with them at night we would get into stuff we weren't supposed to. I knew I was holding on to things that I shouldn't be.

I decided I needed to change my whole environment and get away from it all. I asked my mom if I could go and stay with my aunt to get a new start and find a better group of friends. She agreed, and since then I've moved in with my aunt.

Now, around my new friends, I say whatever I feel is right, and I am being more myself. I don't care what people say about me, and if they don't like me, then oh well! This is me, and I am not going to change just to fit in with them. I am going to change for me.



To overcome peer pressure, you've got to care more about what *you* think of you than what *your peers* think of you, as this short poem by Portia Nelson reminds us:

*Any day of the week
I would choose to be "out"
with others
and in touch
with myself ...
than to be "in" with others
and out of touch
with myself.*

Why is peer pressure so hard to resist? It's because you are dying to belong. That's why teens are often willing to go through brutal hazing rituals to become a member of a club or get heavy into drugs and violence to become a member of a gang. Sometimes we simply need a wake-up call to snap us out of it, as was the case with Ryan:

Peer pressure and wearing the latest styles in clothes was really important to me. Then I got really sick with a kidney disease, and it just kind of seemed silly to buy a bunch of clothes when in a few months

they were not the cool thing anymore. I decided that I was going to do what was most important. I started spending more time with my family, instead of being out with my friends so much, and I stopped worrying about what they thought about me, and started being myself.

Not all peer pressure is bad. In fact, much of it can be very good. If you can find a friend who puts positive pressure on you to be your best, then hang on to him or her for dear life, because you've got something very special.

If you find yourself wanting to stand up but instead you are continually caving in to peer pressure, here are two things you can do.

First, build your personal bank account. If your self-confidence and self-respect are low, how can you expect to have the strength to resist? What can you do? You can begin today to build your PBA, little by little. Make a promise to yourself and keep it. Help someone in need. Develop a talent. Renew yourself. Eventually you'll have sufficient strength to forge your own path instead of following the beaten ones. (You may want to review the chapter on the personal bank account.)

Second, write your mission statement and set goals. If you haven't decided what your values are, how can you expect to stick up for them? It will be a whole lot easier to say no if you know what goals you're saying yes to. For example, it's easier to say no to cutting class when you are saying yes to your goal of getting good grades and making it to college. (You may want to review the chapter on Habit 2, Begin with the End in Mind.)

● THE COMMON INGREDIENT OF SUCCESS

In the final analysis, putting first things first takes discipline. It takes discipline to manage your time. It takes discipline to overcome your fears. It takes discipline to be strong in the hard moments and resist peer pressure. A man by the name of Albert E. Gray spent years studying successful people in an attempt to figure out that special ingredient that made them all successful. What do you think he found? Well, it wasn't dressing for success, or eating bran, or having a positive mental attitude. Instead, this is what he found. Read it carefully.

Albert E. Gray's Common Denominator of Success:

All successful people have the habit of doing the things failures don't like to do. They don't like doing them either necessarily. But their disliking is subordinated to the strength of their purpose.

What does this mean? It means that successful people are willing to suck it up from time to time and do things they don't like doing. Why do they do them? Because they know these things will lead them to their goals.



In other words, sometimes you just gotta exercise your special human tool called *willpower* to get things done, whether you feel like it or not. Do you think a concert pianist always enjoys hours of practice each day? Does a person who is committed to earning her own way through college enjoy taking on a second job?

I remember reading a story about an all-American collegiate wrestler who was asked what the most memorable day of his career had been. He replied that it was the one day during his career when practice had been canceled. He hated practice, but was willing to endure it for a greater purpose, his love of being the best he could be.

● A FINAL WORD

We've surveyed thousands of people on the 7 Habits and guess which habit is the hardest one to live? You guessed it! It's Habit 3. So don't get discouraged if you struggle with it. You've got company.

If you don't know where to start with Habit 3, go to the baby steps. That's what they are there for—to help you get started.



Your teen years can be some of the most exciting and adventurous years of life. So value each moment, as this poem so beautifully communicates:

*To realize the value of One Year,
Ask a student who failed his or her AP exams.*

*To realize the value of One Month,
Ask a mother who gave birth to a premature baby.*

*To realize the value of One Week,
Ask an editor of a weekly magazine.*

*To realize the value of One Day,
Ask a daily wage laborer who has six kids to feed.*

*To realize the value of One Hour,
Ask the lovers who are waiting to meet.*

*To realize the value of One Minute,
Ask a person who missed their train.*

*To realize the value of One Second,
Ask the person who survived an accident.*

*To realize the value of One Millisecond,
Ask the person who won a silver medal in the Olympics.*



COMING ATTRACTIONS

Just up ahead we'll talk about the stuff that life is made of. I think you'll be surprised what that stuff is. So keep moving! By the way, you're halfway done with the book. Congratulations!



BABY STEPS

- 1 Set a goal to use a planner for one month. Stick to your plan.

- 2 Identify your biggest time-wasters. Do you really need to spend two hours on the phone, surf the Web all night, or watch that sitcom rerun?



My biggest time-wasters:

- 3 Are you a "pleaser," someone who says yes to everything and everyone? If so, have the courage to say no today when it's the right thing to do.

- 4 If you have an important test in one week, don't procrastinate and wait until the day before to study. Suck it up and study a little each day.

- 5 Think of something you've procrastinated for a long time but that's very important to you. Block out time this week to get it done.

Item I've procrastinated forever:

- 6 Note your ten most important big rocks for the upcoming week. Now, block out time on your schedule to accomplish each one.



- 7 Identify a fear that is holding you back from reaching your goals. Decide right now to jump outside your comfort zone and stop letting that fear get the best of you.

Fear that's holding me back:

- 8 How much impact does peer pressure have on you? Identify the person or people who have the most influence upon you. Ask yourself, "Am I doing what I want to do or what they want me to do?"



Person or people who most influence me: