



EP 7 Habits Advisory Program

Handbook for Habit 2

**Adapted from The Leader in Me Activity Guide
and The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*

Student Name:

Advisory Teacher:

This packet should be read by:

Habit Two: Begin with the End in Mind

You've just been asked to put together a jigsaw puzzle. Having done many such puzzles before, you're excited to get started. You pour out all 1,000 pieces, spreading them out across a large table. You then pick up the lid to the box to look at what you're putting together. But there's no picture! It's blank! How will you ever be able to finish the puzzle without knowing what it looks like, you wonder? If you only have a one-second glimpse of what it's supposed to be. That's all you need. What a difference it would make! Without it, you don't have a clue where to even start.

Now think about your own life and its 1,000 pieces. Do you have a picture of what it will be like in the end when it's all put together like the cover of the puzzle box? Do you have a clear idea of who you want to be one year from now? Five years from now? Or are you clueless?

Habit 2, Begin with the End in Mind, means developing a clear picture of where you want to go with your life. It means deciding what your values are and setting goals. Habit 1 says you are the driver of your life, not the passenger. Habit 2 says, since you're the driver, decide where you want to go and draw up a map to get there.

"Now just wait a minute," you might be thinking. "I don't know what my end in mind is. I don't know what I want to be when I grow up." If it makes you feel any better, lots of grownups still don't know what they want to be. By saying begin with the end in mind, we're not talking about deciding every little detail of your future, like choosing your career or deciding whom you'll marry. We're just talking about thinking beyond today and deciding what direction you want to take with your life, so that each step you take is always in the right direction.

Begin with the End in Mind - What It Means

You might not realize it, but you do it all the time. Beginning with the end in mind, that is. You read a recipe before you cook. You read directions before you take a test. You create an outline before you write a paper (at least I hope you do). It's part of life.

Let's have a begin-with-the-end-in-mind experience right now using your tool of imagination (from Habit 1). Find a place where you can be alone and not interrupted. Now, clear your mind of everything. Don't worry about school, your friends, your family, or that zit on your forehead. Just focus, breathe deeply, and open your mind. In your mind's eye, visualize someone walking toward you about half a block away. At first you can't see who it is. As this person gets closer and closer, you suddenly realize, believe it or not, that it's you. But it's not today, it's you as you would *like to be* one year from now.

Now think deeply.

What have you done with your life over the past year?

How do you feel inside?
What do you look like?
What characteristics do you possess? (Remember, this is you as you would *like to be* one year from now.)

You can float back to reality now. If you were a good sport and actually tried this experiment, you probably got in touch with your deeper self. You got a feel for what's important to you and what you'd like to accomplish this next year. That's called beginning with the end in mind. And it doesn't even hurt.

Who's In the Lead

The other reason to create a vision is that if you don't, someone else will do it for you. As Jack Welch, former teen and current business executive, put it, "Control your own destiny or someone else will."

"Who will?" you may ask.

Perhaps your friends or parents or the media. Do you want your friends to tell you what you stand for? You may get along with your parents, but do you want them to make every decision about the rest of your life? The interests of others in your life may be far different from yours. Do you want to adopt the values portrayed in TV shows, magazines, and on the big screen?

By now you might be thinking, "But I don't like to think about the future so much. I like to live in the moment and go with the flow." I agree with the *live in the moment* part. We ought to enjoy the moment and not have our heads too far in the clouds. But the *go with the flow* part is not something that keeps us on track. If you decide to just go with the flow, you'll end up where the flow goes, which is usually downhill, often leading to a big pile of sludge and a life of unhappiness. You'll end up doing what everyone else is doing, which may not be *your* end in mind at all. "The road to anywhere is really a life to nowhere."

Without an end in mind of our own we are often so quick to follow anyone who is willing to lead, even into things that won't get us far. It reminds me of my friend's experience in a 10k road race. Some runners, including my friend, were waiting for the race to start, but no one knew where the starting line was. Then a few runners began walking down the road as if they knew. The other runners assumed they knew where they were going. After walking for about a mile, they all suddenly realized, that like a herd of sheep, they were following someone who had no idea where he was going at all. It turned out that the starting line was back right where they had began. Never assume that the herd must know where they are going because they usually don't.

A Personal Mission Statement

So if it is so important to have an end in mind, how do you do it? The best way I have found is to write a personal mission statement. A personal mission statement is like a personal credo or motto that states what your life is about. It is like the blueprint of your life. Countries have constitutions, which function just like a mission statement, and most companies, like Microsoft and Coca-Cola, have mission statements. Our school and school district even have mission

statements. These mission statements work for large groups, but I think they work best with individual people.

So why not write your own personal mission statement? Many teens have. As you'll see, they come in all types and varieties. Some are long and some are short. Some are poems and some are songs. Some teens have used their favorite quote as a mission statement. Others have used a picture, or photograph, or a collage.

A teen named Adam Sonse from North Carolina wrote a mission statement. He offered to share it:

MISSION STATEMENT

- Have confidence in yourself and everyone else around you.
- Be kind, courteous, and respectful to all people.
- Set reachable goals.
- Never lose sight of these goals.
- Never take the simple things in life for granted.
- Appreciate other people's differences and see their differences as a great advantage.
- Ask questions.
- Strive each day to reach interdependence.
- Remember that before you can change someone else, you must first change yourself.
- Speak with your actions, not with your words.
- Make the time to help those less fortunate than yourself or those who are having a bad day.
- Read the 7 Habits every day.

Read this mission statement every day.

So what can writing a mission statement do for you? Tons. The most important thing it will do is open your eyes to what's really important to you and help you make decisions accordingly. A personal mission statement is like a tree with deep roots. It is stable and isn't going anywhere, but it is also alive and continually growing.

You need a tree with deep roots to help you survive all of the storms of life that beat you up. As you've probably noticed already, life is anything but stable. Think about it. People change all the time. You have a best friend one minute and then they don't want to sit with you at lunch the next. You're someone's friend on day, and they're talking behind your back the next. Think about all of the events you can't control. You have to move. The country is at war. Your parents decide to separate or get a divorce.

Fads come and go. Sweaters are popular one year and on their way out the next. Rap music is the thing. Rap music stinks. While everything about you changes, a personal mission statement can be your deep-rooted tree that never moves. You can deal with change if you have an immovable trunk to hang on to.



Uncovering Your Talents

An important part of developing a personal mission statement is discovering what you're good at. One thing I know for sure is that everyone has a talent, a gift, something they do well. Some talents, like having the singing voice of an angel, attract a lot of attention. But there are many other talents, maybe not as attention grabbing but every bit as important if not more, things like being skilled at listening, making people laugh, giving, forgiving, drawing, or just being nice.

Another truth is that we all blossom at different times. So if you're a late bloomer, relax. It may take a while to uncover your talents. After carving a beautiful sculpture, Michelangelo was asked how he was able to do it. He replied by saying that the sculpture was already in the block of granite from the very beginning; he just had to chisel off everything else around it.

Likewise, Victor Frankl, a famous Jewish-Austrian psychiatrist who survived the death camps of Nazi Germany, taught that we don't *invent* our talents in life but rather we *detect* them. In other words, you are already born with your talents, you just need to uncover them.

Getting Started on Your Mission Statement

Below are four easy methods to help you get started writing your own mission statement. You may want to try one of them or combine all four of them in any way you see fit. They are just suggestions, so feel free to find your own method as well.

Method #1: The Quote Collection. Collect one to five of your very favorite quotes onto one sheet of paper. The sum of these quotes then becomes your mission statement. For some, great quotes are very inspiring, and this method works well for them.

Method #2: The Brain Dump. Speed write about your mission for fifteen minutes. Don't worry about what's coming out. Don't edit what you're writing. Just keep writing and don't stop writing. Get all of your ideas down on paper. If you get stuck, reflect on your talents. That should get your imagination power tool in gear. When your brain has been sufficiently purged, take another fifteen minutes to edit, arrange, and make sense of your brain dump. The result is that in just thirty minutes, you'll have a rough draft of your mission statement. Then over the next several weeks you can revise it, add to it, clarify it, or do whatever else you need to make it inspire you.

Method #3: The Retreat. Plan a large chunk of time, like an entire afternoon, and go to a place you adore and where you can be alone. Think deeply about your life and what you want to make of it. Review your talents. Look to the mission statement examples in this handbook for ideas. Take your time and construct your own mission statement using any method you see fit.

Method #4: The Big Lazy. If you're really lazy, use the U.S. Army's slogan "Be All That You Can Be" as your personal mission statement. (Just joking!)

A big mistake teens make when writing a mission statement is that they spend so much time thinking about making it perfect they never get started. You are much better off writing an imperfect rough draft and then improving it later.

Another big mistake that teens try to make their mission statements look like everyone else's. That doesn't work. Mission statements come in many forms: a poem, a song, a quote, a picture, many words, a single word, a collage of magazine pictures. There is no single right way to do it. You're not writing it for anyone else but you. You're not writing it for your English teacher and it's not going to be graded by anyone. It is *your* document. So make it sing! The most important question to ask yourself is, "Does it inspire me?" If you can answer yes, you did it right.

Here are two more examples of teen mission statements:

WHITNEY NOZISKA'S
MISSION STATEMENT

Care - ABOUT THE WORLD
- ABOUT LIFE
- ABOUT PEOPLE
- ABOUT MYSELF

Love - MYSELF
- MY FAMILY
- MY WORLD
- KNOWLEDGE
- LEARNING
- LIFE

Fight - FOR MY BELIEFS
- FOR MY PASSIONS
- TO ACCOMPLISH
- TO DO GOOD
- TO BE TRUE TO MYSELF
- AGAINST APATHY

Rock - THE BOAT,
DON'T LET THE
BOAT ROCK ME
- BE A ROCK

BE REMEMBERED

This one was written by Katie Hall. It is short, but to her it means everything:

MY
MISSION
STATEMENT

**NOTHING
LESS.**

Three Watch-Outs

Watch-Out #1: Negative Labels. Labels are an ugly form of prejudice. Break down the word prejudice and what do you get? Ta da! Pre-judge. Isn't that interesting. When you label someone you are pre-judging them; that means making conclusions about someone without knowing them. I don't know about you, but I can't stand it when I am unfairly judged by someone who doesn't know a thing about me.

Watch-Out #2: “It’s All Over” Syndrome. Another thing to watch out for is when you’ve made a mistake or three and you feel so bad about what you’ve done that you say to yourself, “It’s all over. I’ve blown it. Who cares what happens now?” At this point you’ll often begin to self-destruct and let it all hang out. Remember, it’s never over. If you’ve made mistakes, you’re normal. Every teen, adult, and kid has. Just get your head screwed back on straight as quickly as you can and things will start to turn around. (Try remembering to think proactively rather than reactively)

Watch-Out #3: Wrong Wall. Have you ever worked really hard to get something you wanted only to find that when you got it you felt empty inside? So often, in our quest to be more popular and to be part of the “in-group,” we lose sight of things that are far more important, like self-respect, true friendships, and peace of mind. We are often so busy climbing the ladder of success that we never take time to see if our ladder is leaning against the right wall. Having no end in mind is a problem. But having an end in mind that leads us in the wrong direction can be an even bigger problem.

How can you tell if your ladder is leaning against the wrong wall? Stop, take a moment right now and ask yourself: “Is the life I’m living leading me in the right direction?” Be brutally honest as you pause and listen to your conscience, that inner voice. What is it telling you?

Our lives don’t always require 180-degree shifts in direction. More often, we need only small shifts. But small changes can make huge destination differences. Imagine this: If you wanted to fly from New York to Tel Aviv in Israel but made a one degree change north, you would end up in Moscow, Russia instead of Tel Aviv.