



# EP 7 Habits Advisory Program

## Handbook for Habit 6

*\*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 Six: Synergize

Have you ever seen a flock of geese heading south for the winter flying in a **V** formation?

Scientists have learned some amazing things about why they fly that way:

- By flying in formation, the whole flock can fly 71% farther than if each bird flew alone. When a goose flaps its wings, it creates an updraft for the goose that follows.
- As the lead goose gets tired, he will rotate to the back of the **V** and allow another goose to take the lead position.
- The geese in the back honk to encourage those in the front.
- Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it immediately feels the resistance of trying to fly alone and quickly gets back into formation.
- Finally, when one of the geese gets sick or is wounded and falls out of formation, two geese will follow it down to help and protect it. They will stay with the injured goose until it is better or dies and then will join a new formation or create their own to catch up with the group.

Smart birds, those geese! By sharing in each other's draft, taking turns in the lead position, honking encouragement to each other, staying in formation, and watching out for the wounded, they accomplish so much more than if each bird flew solo. It makes me wonder if they took a class in Habit 6, Synergize!

What does synergy mean? In a nutshell, *synergy is achieved when two or more people work together to create a better solution than either could alone. It's not your way or my way but a better way, a higher way.*

Synergy is the reward, the delicious fruit you'll taste as you get better at living the other habits, especially at thinking Win-Win and seeking first to understand. Learning to synergize is like learning to form **V** formations with others instead of trying to fly through life solo. You'll be amazed at how much faster and farther you'll go!

To better understand what synergy is, let's see what synergy is not.

Synergy is:	Synergy is NOT:
Celebrating differences	Tolerating differences
Teamwork	Working independently
Open-mindedness	Thinking you're always right
Finding new and better ways	Compromise

## Synergy is Everywhere

Synergy is everywhere in nature. The great sequoia trees (which grow to heights of 300 feet or more) grow in clumps and share a vast array of intermingled roots. Without each other, they would blow over in a storm.

Many plants and animals live together in symbiotic relationships. If you have ever seen a picture of a small bird feeding off the back of a rhinoceros, you've seen synergy. Each benefits: The bird gets fed and the rhino gets cleaned.

Synergy isn't anything new. If you've ever been on a team of any kind, you've felt it. If you've ever worked on a group project that really came together or been on a really fun outing with a group, you've felt it.

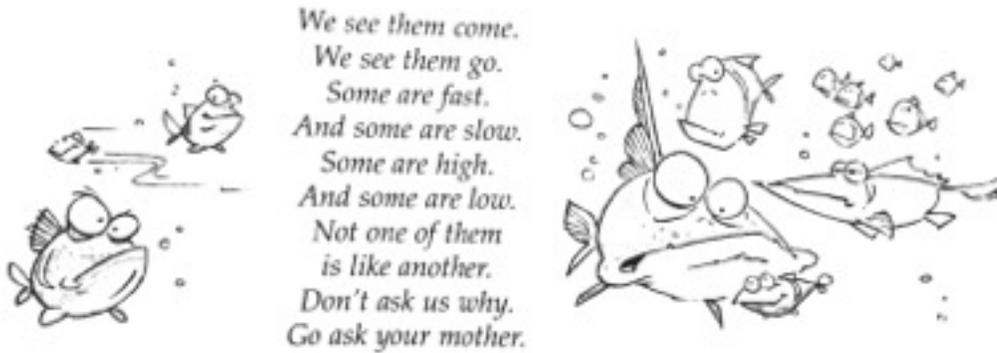
A good band is a great example of synergy. It's not just the drums, or the guitar, or the sax, or the vocalist, it's all of them together that make up the "sound." Each band member brings his or her strengths to the table to create something better than each could alone. No instrument is more important than another, just different.

## Celebrating Differences

Synergy doesn't just happen. It's a process. You have to get there. And the foundation of getting there is this: Learn to celebrate differences.

I'll never forget encountering in high school a Tongan named Fine (pronounced Fee-Nee) Unga. At first, I was scared to death of him. I mean the guy was built like a tank, was mean looking, and was known as a street fighter. We looked, dressed, talked, thought, and ate differently (you should have seen this guy eat). The only thing we had in common was football. So how in the world did we become best friends? Maybe it was because we were so different. I never quite knew what Fine was thinking or what he would do next, and that was terribly refreshing. I especially enjoyed being his friend when a fight broke out. He had strengths I didn't have and I had strengths he didn't have, so together we made a great team.

Boy, am I glad that the world isn't full of a bunch of clones who act and think exactly like me. Thank goodness for diversity. When we hear the word *diversity*, we typically think of racial and gender differences. But there is so much more to it, including differences in physical features, dress, language, wealth, religious beliefs, lifestyle, education, interests, skill, age, style, and on and on. As Dr. Seuss said in *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish*:

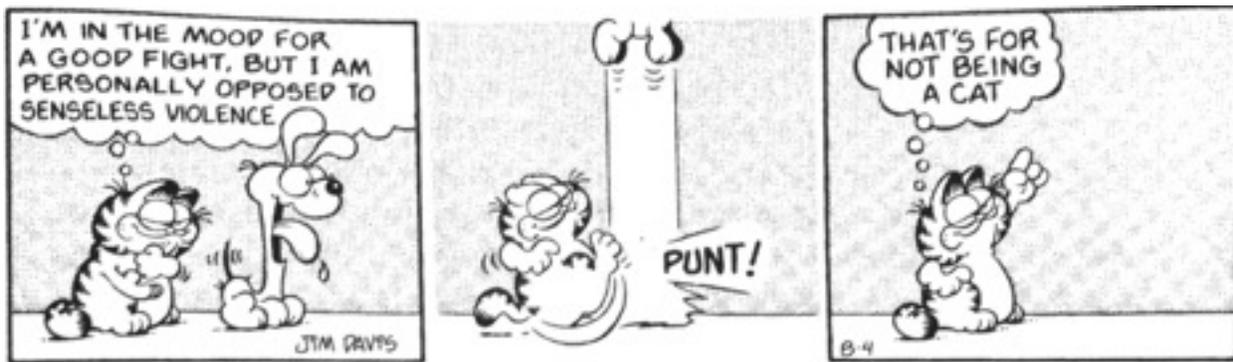


The world is fast becoming a great melting pot of cultures, race, religions, and ideas. Since this diversity around you is ever increasing, you've got an important decision to make regarding how you're going to handle it. There are three possible approaches you can take:

- Level 1: Shun diversity.
- Level 2: Tolerate diversity.
- Level 3: Celebrate diversity.

**Shunner's Profile**

Shunners are afraid (sometimes even scared to death) of differences. It disturbs them that someone may have a different skin color, worship a different God, or wear a different brand of jeans that they do, because they're convinced their way of life is the "best," "right," or "only" way. They enjoy ridiculing those who are different, all the while believing that they are saving the world from some terrible pestilence. They won't hesitate to get physical about it if they have to and will often join gangs, cliques, or anti-groups because there's strength in numbers.



**Tolerator's Profile**

Tolerators believe that everyone has the right to be different. They don't shun diversity but don't embrace it either. Their motto is: "You keep to yourself and I'll keep to myself. You do your thing and let me do mine. You don't bother me and I won't bother you."

Although they come close, they never *get to synergy* because they see the differences as hurdles, not as potential strengths to build upon. They don't know what they're missing.

## Celebrator's Profile

Celebrators value differences. They see them as an advantage, not a weakness. They've learned that two people who think differently can achieve more than two people who think alike. They realize that celebrating differences doesn't mean that you necessarily agree with those differences, such as being a Democrat or a Republican, only that you value them. In their eyes, Diversity=Creative Sparks=Opportunity.

So where do you fall on the spectrum? Take a hard look. If someone's clothes don't match yours, do you value their unique clothing styles or do you think they're out of touch?

Think about a group that had contrary religious beliefs to yours. Do you respect their beliefs or do you write them off as a bunch of weirdos?

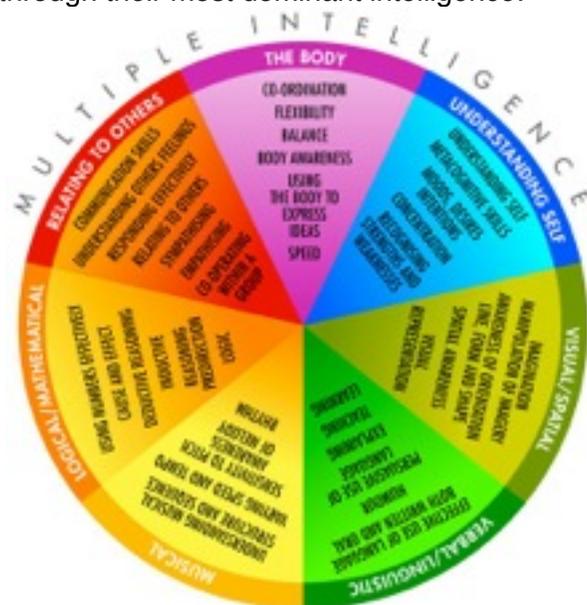
If someone lives in a different side of town than you, do you feel they could teach you a thing or two or do you label them because of where they live?

The truth is, celebrating diversity is a struggle for most of us, depending on the issue. For example, you may appreciate racial and cultural diversity and in the same breath look down on someone because of the clothes they wear.

## We Are All a Minority of One

It's much easier to appreciate differences when we realize that in one way or another, we are all a minority of one. And we should remember that diversity isn't just an external thing, it's also internal. In the book *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, Robert Fulgham says, "We are as different from one another on the inside of our heads as we appear to be different from one another on the outside of our heads." How do we differ on the inside? Well...

We learn differently. As you've probably noticed, your friend's or sister's brain doesn't work the same way yours does. Dr. Thomas Armstrong has identified seven kinds of smarts and says that kids may learn best through their most dominant intelligence:



One type isn't better than another, only different. You may be logical-mathematical dominant and your sister may be interpersonal dominant. Depending on your approach to diversity, you might say she's weird because she's so talkative, or you could take advantage of those differences and get her to help you in your speech class.

We see differently. Everyone sees the world differently and has a different paradigm about themselves, others, and life in general. To understand what I mean, let's try an experiment. Look at the picture below for a few seconds. You might say that this is a squiggly drawing of small mouse with a long tail.



But what if I told you that you were wrong? What if I told you that I don't see a mouse at all, but that I see a squiggly drawing of a man with glasses? Would you value my opinion or would you think I'm a dork because I don't see the way you do?

It goes to show that all the events of your past have formed a lens, or paradigm, through which you see the world. And since no one's past is exactly the same, no two people see exactly alike. Some see mice and some see men, and both are right!

Once you catch on that everyone views the world differently, and that everyone can be right, it will increase your understanding and respect for differing viewpoints.

We have different styles, traits, and characteristics. Read across each row and place a 4 in the blank that best describes you. Then place a 3 in the column next to the second word that best describes you in that row. Do the same for the final words using a 2 and a 1. Do this for each row.

EXAMPLE:

Imaginative	2	Investigative	4	Realistic	1	Analytical	3
-------------	---	---------------	---	-----------	---	------------	---

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3	COLUMN 4
Imaginative	Investigative	Realistic	Analytical
Adaptable	Inquisitive	Organized	Critical
Relating	Creating	Getting to Point	Debating
Personal	Adventurous	Practical	Academic
Flexible	Inventive	Precise	Systematic
Sharing	Independent	Orderly	Sensible
Cooperative	Competitive	Perfectionistic	Logical
Sensitive	Risk-Taking	Hard-Working	Intellectual
People-Person	Problem Solver	Planner	Reader
Associate	Originate	Memorize	Think Through
Spontaneous	Changer	Wants Direction	Judger
Communicating	Discovering	Cautious	Reasoning
Caring	Challenging	Practicing	Examining
Feeling	Experimenting	Doing	Thinking

Now add up your totals (don't include the example, of course) for each column and place the total in the blanks below.

COLUMN 1  Grapes      COLUMN 2  Oranges      COLUMN 3  Bananas      COLUMN 4  Melons

If your highest score was in column 1, consider yourself a grape. If your highest score was in column 2, consider yourself an orange. If your highest score was in column 3, consider yourself a banana. If your highest score was in column 4, consider yourself a melon. Now, find your fruit below and review what this may mean to you.

#### GRAPES

**Natural abilities include:**

- Being reflective
- Being sensitive
- Being flexible
- Being creative
- Preference for working in groups



**Grapes may have trouble:**

- Giving exact answer
- Focusing on one thing at a time
- Organizing

**Grapes learn best when they:**

- Can work and share with others
- Balance work with play
- Can communicate
- Are noncompetitive

**To expand their style, Grapes need to:**

- Pay more attention to details
- Not rush into things
- Be less emotional when making some decisions

#### BANANAS

**Natural abilities include:**

- Planning
- Fact-finding
- Organizing
- Following directions

**Bananas learn best when they:**

- Have an orderly environment
- Have specific outcomes
- Can trust others to do their part
- Have predictable situations

**Bananas may have trouble:**

- Understanding feelings
- Dealing with opposition
- Answering "what if" questions

**To expand their style, Bananas need to:**

- Express their own feelings more
- Get explanations of others' views
- Be less rigid



#### ORANGES

**Natural abilities include:**

- Experimenting
- Being independent
- Being curious
- Creating different approaches
- Creating change

**Oranges may have trouble:**

- Meeting time limits
- Following a lecture
- Having few options or choices



**Oranges learn best when they:**

- Can use trial and error
- Produce real products
- Can compete
- Are self-directed

**To expand their style, Oranges need to:**

- Delegate responsibility
- Be more accepting of others' ideas
- Learn to prioritize

#### MELONS

**Natural abilities include:**

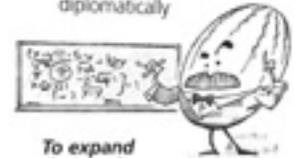
- Debating points of view
- Finding solutions
- Analyzing ideas
- Determining value or importance

**Melons learn best when they:**

- Have access to resources
- Can work independently
- Are respected for intellectual ability
- Follow traditional methods

**Melons may have trouble:**

- Working in groups
- Being criticized
- Convincing others diplomatically



**To expand their style, Melons need to:**

- Accept imperfection
- Consider all alternatives
- Consider others' feelings

### Celebrating Your Own Diversity

Our tendency is to ask, *Which fruit is best?* The answer is, *That's a dumb question.* I have three brothers. Although we have much in common, like nose size and parents, we are very different. When I was younger, I was always trying to prove to myself that my talents were better than theirs: "Sure, you may be more outgoing than me. But who cares? I'm better at school than you and that's more important." I've since seen the stupidity of that kind of thinking and am learning to appreciate the fact that they have their strengths and I have mine. No one's better or worse, only different.

Instead of trying to blend in and be like everyone else, be proud of and celebrate your unique differences and qualities. A fruit salad is delicious precisely because each fruit maintains its own flavor.

## Roadblocks to Celebrating Differences

Although there are many, three of the largest roadblocks to synergy are ignorance, cliques, and prejudice.

*Ignorance.* Ignorance means you're clueless. You don't know what other people believe, how they feel, or what they've been through. Ignorance often abounds when it comes to understanding people with differences.

*Cliques.* There's nothing wrong with wanting to be with those you're comfortable with; it becomes a problem only when your group of friends becomes so exclusive that they begin to reject everyone who isn't just like them. It's kind of hard to value differences in a close-knit clique. Those on the outside feel like second-class citizens, and those on the inside often suffer from superiority complexes. But breaking into a clique isn't hard. All you have to do is lose your identity, be assimilated, and become part of the Borg collective.

*Prejudice.* Have you ever felt stereotyped, labeled, or pre-judged by someone because your skin's the wrong color, your accent's too heavy, or you live on the wrong side of the tracks? Haven't we all, and isn't it a sick feeling?

We aren't born with prejudices. They're learned. Kids, for instance, are color blind. But as they mature they begin to pick up on the prejudices of others and form walls, as is explained in Rodgers and Hammerstein's lyrics to a song from the musical *South Pacific*:

*You've got to be taught to be afraid  
Of people whose eyes are oddly made,  
And people whose skin is a different shade,  
You've got to be carefully taught.*

*You've got to be taught before it's too late,  
Before you are six or seven or eight,  
To hate all the people your relatives hate,  
You've got to be carefully taught!*

## Sticking Up for Diversity

### Finding the "High" Way

Once you've bought into the idea that differences are a strength and not a weakness, and once you're committed to at least trying to celebrate differences, you're ready to find the High Way. The Buddhist definition of the Middle Way does not mean compromise; it means higher, like the apex of a triangle.

Synergy is more than just compromise or cooperation. Compromise is  $1 + 1 = 1.5$ . Cooperation is  $1 + 1 = 2$ . Synergy is  $1 + 1 = 3$  or more. It's creative cooperation, with an emphasis on the word *creative*. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

Builders know all about it. If one 2"x4" beam can support 607 pounds, then two 2"x4"s should be able to support 1,214 pounds, right? Actually, two 2"x4"s can support 1,821 pounds. If you nail them together, two 2"x4"s can now support 1,821 pounds. And three 2"x4"s nailed together can

support 8,481 pounds! Musicians know it works too. They know that when a C and G are perfectly in tune, it produces a third note, an E.

Synergy occurred as the founders of the United States were forming their government structure. William Patterson proposed the New Jersey Plan, which said that states should get equal representation in the government regardless of population size. This plan favored small states. James Madison had a different idea, known as the Virginia Plan, which argued that states with a greater population should have greater representation. This plan favored larger states.

After several weeks of debate, they reached a decision that all parties felt good about. They agreed to have two branches of Congress. In one branch, the Senate, each state would get two representatives, regardless of population size. In the other branch, the House of Representatives, each state would get representatives based on population.

Although it was called the Great Compromise, this famous decision could really be called the Great Synergy, because it has proved to be better than either of the original proposals.

### Getting to Synergy

Whether you're arguing with your parents over your cell phone or if you can go downtown with your friends, or simply not seeing eye to eye, there is a way to *get to synergy*. Here's a simple five-step process to help you get there.



### Teamwork and Synergy

Great teams are usually made up of five or more different types of people, with each member playing a different but important role.

Plodders. Sure and steady, they stick to a job until its done.

Followers. They are supportive of leaders. IF they hear a great idea, they can run with it.

Innovators. They are creative, idea people. They offer the sparks.

Harmonizers. They provide unity and support and are great synergizers as they work with others and encourage cooperation.

Show-offs. Fun to work with, they can be tough at times. They often add the spice and momentum needed to bring the team overall success.

Great teamwork is like a great piece of music. All the voices and instruments may be singing and playing at once, but they aren't competing. Individually, the instruments and voice make different sounds, play different notes, pause at different times; yet they blend together to make a whole new sound. This is synergy.