

Humphreys College

NEWSLETTER SUPPLEMENT

SUMMER QUARTER

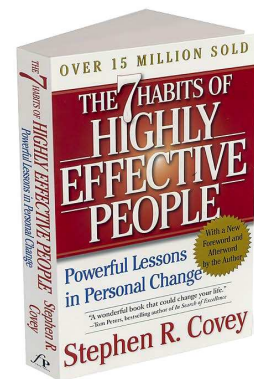
SEPTEMBER 2009

SEVEN QUESTIONS ABOUT SEVEN HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE OUR INTERVIEW WITH RANDY RAHMOLLER

Dr. Stephen R. Covey is not only a bestselling author, a popular international guru, and one of Time magazine's 25 most influential Americans, but also a former university professor. The mission statement of his Leadership Center reads: "We enable greatness in people and organizations everywhere." Randy Rahmoller, Adjunct Professor at Humphreys College, is one of Covey's admirers. He even volunteered his time for the Learning Center's open workshops based on Covey's "seven habits leading from effectiveness to greatness." Students who attended them, and those who have taken his courses, know that Randy Rahmoller is--special. In my view, he offers an extensive knowledge mixed with wisdom and a mature, insightful understanding of life values. His teaching style correlates with Humphreys' mission. For more than a century, Humphreys has been a school of opportunity, as though driven by Covey's dictum: "While we cannot always choose what happen to us, we can choose our responses... We put forth the initiative necessary to create our own circumstances."

What triggered your genuine interest in Covey's ideas?

Randy Rahmoller: "Many years ago, I found Covey's *Seven Habits* in the Denver Airport. His work explains how there are two types of people: *proactive* and *reactive*. As a responsible and trustworthy leader, the *proactive person* gets the job done. There is no whining and excuse-making. These people remind me of the old television series *MacGyver* (1985-1992). Secret agent Angus MacGyver could save the world with a piece of chewing gum. The person who takes the 'bull by the horns' creates his/her own weather, does not live by 'default'. The *reactive person* makes an excuse for everything from breathing to bad hair days. Any sad situation is always due to someone else. 'My computer crashed.' 'My car did not start.' The reactive person is not in a position to act, just react and whine to whatever is thrown his/her way. In the corporate world, twenty percent of the people do eighty percent of the work. The reactive person chooses to vanish into the eighty percent of the do-as-little-as-possible group and hopes to slide through life. When the report card arrives, the whining begins again. Stephen Covey argues that people can change. A new view of life can begin. We can work outward from a 'circle of influence'... We can do it immediately, one step at a time. We can become better students, instructors, and citizens. It is all grounded in our values and principles."



Could you summarize the core ideas of Covey's "habits"?

"Covey emphasizes that life must have a blueprint. It is essential to know where you are going. He challenges his readers to think and dream ahead, not in terms of materialistic and vocational goals, but in light of values and principles. Think about this: How would you like to be remembered at your own funeral? What do you hope that people would say? If you really take this challenge to heart, the blueprint has begun. Little by little, day by day, you are living the principle-centered life. A shift begins from the reactive mindset into the realm of the proactive. You seek to understand, before seeking to be understood. Time is your ally. Others will begin to seek your advice. The path that lies before you is unlimited."

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

Have you found Covey's wisdom useful in your own life?

“Absolutely. Every day there is new wisdom to be tapped. If I am not tapping, then the old reactive mindset can take over quicker than a wildfire, and the blame-game begins. There is a Hindu mantra that beckons me every day: I AM IN CONTROL OF ALL OF MY FORCES. With this, when I find myself in the ditch, there is some fresh air blowing.”

What can today's college student learn from Covey?

“Learning never stops. I have a friend who retired at the age of 65. He was employed by the San Joaquin County Department of Aging and Elder Abuse. What do you think he did after retiring, play checkers in the park and take afternoon naps? Hardly! After returning to school and receiving a credential, he now teaches kindergarten. This gentleman is ‘dialed-in’ to what really matters in life. Who could be a better example for these young minds than a guy who has helped the elderly? Never let yourself ‘go to seed.’ When you receive that diploma, remember that this is only the beginning.”

What can today's college instructor learn from Covey?

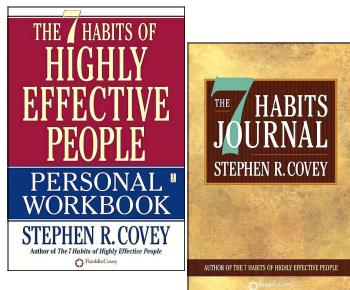
“Remember that the student with the reactive paradigm can undergo a shift to the proactive camp. It can begin with the instructor. Stick with your grading program and do not allow yourself to be influenced by the reactive orchestra, but assure the student who beckons for help that no challenge is too great, then devote the time necessary to assist the student. Each quarter I use an analogy of mowing the lawn. It matters not to me if the lines aren’t straight, as long as they are out there pushing the mower.”

In his 2004 bestseller, "The 8th Habit," Covey argues that the Knowledge Worker Age requires new attitudes towards effectiveness...

“We live in an age of technology that does not inspire us to lead, or for that matter, to think. Years ago, my wife Linda and I were traveling somewhere in Idaho or Wyoming. We were miles from nowhere. On the horizon, a road sign appeared. It said THINK. There were no road hazards, no sharp curves. The weather was fine and the highway was wide open. What did the sign mean? What should we think about? We have attempted to relocate that sign many times, but to no avail. Perhaps it was a message. The Greek philosophers certainly saw that sign. Plato challenges us to step into a higher realm of reason. The Buddha beckons us to ‘be awake.’ Now, more than ever, we all need that road sign. Are we ruled by cell phones, iPods, and every other new fad that comes along? Do we still have the ability to think, to reason, and to dream?”

Along with an MBA from Harvard, Stephen Covey holds a Doctorate of Religious Education from Brigham Young University. However, he claims that "he never introduces religion or politics into his books or worldwide seminars." Taking into account your own educational background, is it possible to keep those realms separated?

“Covey’s work is grounded in universal principles and values. He constantly refers to fairness, honesty, integrity, dignity, service, potential, and a host of others. These principles transcend religious territory. People spend their whole miserable lives arguing about religion. *The Seven Habits* promotes a proactive approach to personal change that encompasses all. Covey would state that this is a win-win situation.”



~Stanislav Perkner

Editor’s Note: For more information about Dr. Covey’s teachings and wisdom, visit his *Community*, available at <https://www.stephencovey.com/community/>.

BOOKS I LIKE (PART I)

By Rowena M. Walker

*Generations of her students are well aware of her insistence on studying good literature. Several years ago, Professor **Rowena Walker** even developed a new course, “Biographies: Great Figures in Humanities,” which requires proactive reading of various current and historic sources. In her lectures on history, philosophy, religion, arts, law, and politics, she frequently shares her fresh reading experiences. Last quarter, Professor Walker made a Learning Center presentation titled “What to Read and Why at College.” Its participants received the list of her favorite books. Below is its first part.*

~Stanislav Perkner

Rowena Walker: There is no special order in the following list of books that I have read and enjoyed. The list matches my reading style—I read whatever I am in the mood for. Maybe you’re that way, too. I generally prefer nonfiction, but sometimes my mood directs me to fiction. You will notice that I haven’t read very many modern novels. My taste is “older” than you may like. I will put an (F) for fiction and an (N) for nonfiction. This is the “tip” of the iceberg.” Here goes!



MARGARET MITCHELL Gone With the Wind

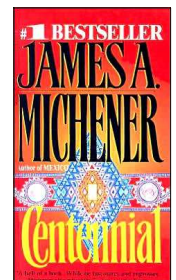
I read somewhere that this book is the all-time fiction best seller. The movie, of course, was magnificent, but the book truly helps you understand the Southern society before and immediately after the Civil War (1861-1865). In the book you get a true historical “feeling” for that era. It is very well written. Further, after having lived in the South for a while, I realize that the Southern culture is still different—it has a charm unlike anywhere else I’ve been. The book is a must read. (F)

IRVING STONE Men to Match My Mountains

I mustn’t sell the West short, since I grew up here. This award-winning book is a real winner in my heart. I worry that we no longer celebrate the great individualism that the westward movement represents. We don’t even have cowboy movies anymore! Is there no romance left in our souls?? Try this to get the West in your bones. (N)

JAMES MICHENER Centennial (any many others of Michener’s)

While we’re on the subject of the West—here is another one. It’s real history, too. Michener has a way of writing history that is so very readable. Sometime when you’re in a library, scan the M’s and see his other books. They’re not all about the West. But, you can’t go wrong for light reading of history. (Historical novel F/N)



MARK TWAIN Huckleberry Finn

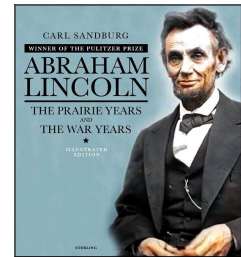
Okay, this is the best of the best! Many literary critics consider this to be the best novel of all time. Well, if it isn’t, I don’t know what is! You must not go through your life without reading this book—probably should read it more than once. (F)

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

CARL SANDBURG Abraham Lincoln

There are so many books written about our greatest president, Abraham Lincoln, that it is impossible to say which one is best. However, this is my selection—not necessarily as the best, but because it has a style that I like. Sandburg is a poet, and while this is not poetry, of course, it is written from the soul of a poet, and Lincoln deserves that. Such a man he was. He had the soul of a poet himself. (N)



JAMES FENIMORE COOPER The Last of the Mohicans, The Deerslayer, The Pathfinder

One of America’s greatest writers—wrote about the Eastern United States—in the 19th century. You might find the reading a little slow for our fast-paced life today, but the people of early America read him more than anyone else. He wrote about Indians, about colonial life and early America. The thing is—take life easy and read Cooper. You’ll be rewarded a thousand times. (F)

HUGH THOMAS Conquest: Montezuma, Cortes, and the Fall of Old Mexico; Rivers of Gold: The Rise of the Spanish Empire

As far as I am concerned, Sir Thomas could keep on writing about the Spanish world forever. Our textbooks don’t have enough history, and from the time I read his book on Mexico, I was hooked. His latest is about the explorations of Columbus to Magellan. Of special interest is his portrait of Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand and the coming together of Spain. (N)

IRVING STONE Clarence Darrow for the Defense

You prospective law students must not miss this one! And those of you who are interested in social reform will find this fascinating. Darrow was not only a sharp lawyer, but he had a social conscience as well. His interest here was in the early labor strikes and

the way the laboring man was treated in the early 20th century. (N)

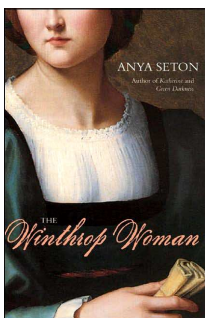
BRET HARTE Short Stories

“The Luck of Roaring Camp,” “The Society upon the Stanislaus,” “The Outcasts of Poker Flat”—these are some of the titles written by a truly colorful author. He was writing about California—the camping, mining, and did it with real frontier humor. (F)

ROBERT LEWIS TAYLOR The Travels of Jaimie McPheeters

You will become attached to Jaimie McPheeters. He headed for California with his father during the days when gold had been discovered in California. They certainly had experiences and adventures. Good, light reading. (F/N)

ANYA SETON The Winthrop Woman



This is the story of John Winthrop’s niece. (He was the first governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony.) Apparently he thought her to be quite “loose,” and indeed, it was difficult for her to abide by the strictness of that Puritan colony. This book is a little “soap-operaish” compared with the Scarlet Letter—not really in the same class, but you certainly do get the feel for Puritanism. The facts are correct. (F/N)

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LEO TOLSTOY **Anna Karenina**

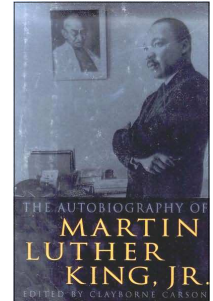
Of course you've heard of War and Peace by Tolstoy—his monumental work that we're all supposed to read. I really prefer Anna Karenina, although it can be quite sad. It's a great work, however, and you learn almost as much about Russia as you do in War and Peace. (F)

BORIS PASTERNAK **Doctor Zhivago**

Another great Russian writer. This is a Gone with the Wind type of novel, and it's been made into a movie as well. Very deep and gripping. Again, a serious story, but you learn about Russia too. (F)

CLAYBORNE CARLSON, ed. **The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.**

Many students tell me they didn't want to put this book down when I assigned it in my Great Biographies class. It really is a great "read," and you marvel at his background and his idea and experiences. (N)



HARPER LEE **To Kill a Mockingbird**

If your high school literature teacher did not have you read this, then you must do it on your own. And I mean "must." The characters are wonderful and it presents a picture of the South that is better than a history book can do. Of course, it really is history. (F)

CATHERINE DRINKER BOWEN **The Miracle at Philadelphia**

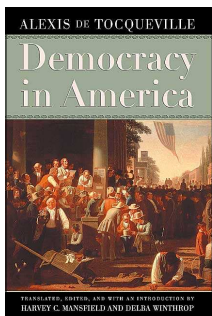
A painless and delightful way to read about the Founding Fathers' writing of the Constitution. Don't say "ugh!" She makes you feel as if you were there in 18th century America. (N)

DANIEL DEFOE **Robinson Crusoe**

Don't think this will be dull reading! True, it's not blow-by-blow excitement. However, I was completely surprised at how much I enjoyed it. (F)

JANE JACOBS **The Death and Life of Great American Cities**

Ms. Jacobs, to me, represents one of those people in the world who is gifted with foresight. She saw what we were doing to our cities to make them unlivable and ugly. She warned that our neighborhoods were not the warm and friendly places they once were. She campaigned her whole life—through sociology—to steer city planners in the right direction. They usually didn't listen. But she was right. She is so readable—talks about the old New York neighborhoods and the warmth and friendliness there! She ended up moving to Canada. This is a classic. (N)



ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE **Democracy in America**

You've all been assigned at one time or another to read Tocqueville. He was the 19th-century visitor to America who came, looked, saw, went home, and wrote about it. His amazing ability to define Americans and our institutions and to predict the future resulted in a book that is a genuine classic. He's easy to read, too. After a few readings, you ask yourself, "How could he be so prophetic?" (N)

ISAIAH BERLIN **The Proper Study of Mankind, and Roots of Romanticism**

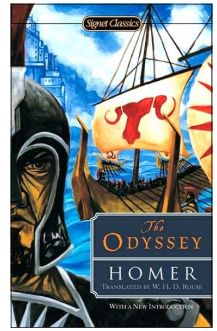
Maybe a little stuffy for reading by the pool. But I like history and I like to read the essays of those who are so good at interpreting that history. Sometimes they really do know where we've been and where we're going. (N)

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

HOMER The Odyssey

I hope you won't just look at this and say, "Yah, right." It is much easier reading than The Iliad. I think—and remember your literature teachers usually recommend both. I refuse to hear your arguments about them being too cumbersome to read. At least, The Odyssey really isn't. Maybe The Iliad is guilty. I admit I had a hard time with that. (F)



JANE AUSTEN Pride and Prejudice, Sense and Sensibility, Emma, and Persuasion

How could I possibly leave my favorites toward the end of Part I of my recommended books! These are truly my favorites. They are about ordinary (upper middle-class) English life at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries. They are such great classics—remember, classics fit the readers' tastes of any time period because they have common threads that have been characteristic of the human spirit from the beginning of history—that modern-day Hollywood continues to make and re-make them into movies that we are still going to see. (F)

GEORGE ELIOT Middlemarch, Daniel Deronda, Silas Marner, and others

A little bit in the category of Jane Austen and almost as good. Some like Eliot better. By the way, George Eliot is a woman. She wrote in England when it wasn't really acceptable to be a woman author. Didn't your high school teacher have you read Silas Marner? (F)

Part II will be published in the Fall issue of the Newsletter.



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