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In todays competitive world, success is often associated with a zero-sum game, where one persons triumph comes at the expense of others. However, Think Win-Win, one of the seven habits of highly effective people, challenges this mindset. Coined by Stephen R. Covey in his book, The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, the Win-Win paradigm emphasizes the importance of seeking mutually beneficial outcomes in all interactions. Today, we will explore the concept of Think Win-Win and understand how adopting this approach can lead to greater success, improved relationships, and a more fulfilling life. ID: Two puzzle pieces that say win-win Think Win-Win is a mindset that recognizes the value of cooperation and collaboration. It involves seeking solutions that are not only advantageous to oneself but also consider the interests and needs of others. The Win-Win approach acknowledges that when people work together towards a common goal, everyone can achieve success and satisfaction. Contrary to the competitive Win-Lose mentality, which promotes self-centeredness and short-term gains, Think Win-Win fosters an abundance mindset. It believes that there are enough resources, opportunities, and successes to go around for everyone, without depriving others of their chance to excel. Rather than viewing others as adversaries, individuals adopting Think Win-Win see them as potential collaborators and partners in achieving shared success. Enhanced Relationships: Adopting a Win-Win mindset cultivates a positive and empathetic attitude toward others. By actively seeking mutually beneficial outcomes, individuals build strong and trusting relationships, both personally and professionally. When people feel valued and respected, it becomes easier to collaborate, communicate effectively, and resolve conflicts constructively. Increased Creativity and Innovation: Think Win-Win encourages an open exchange of ideas and diverse perspectives. When individuals collaborate, combining their unique strengths and expertise, they create an environment that stimulates creativity and innovation. By leveraging collective intelligence, teams can develop groundbreaking solutions and achieve outcomes that surpass individual efforts. Sustainable Success: Win-Win fosters sustainable success by promoting long-term thinking. Instead of resorting to tactics that yield short-term gains at the expense of others, individuals with a Win-Win mindset focus on building enduring relationships, maintaining trust, and creating win-win outcomes repeatedly. Such an approach establishes a foundation for continued growth and success. Personal Fulfillment: The Win-Win paradigm aligns personal and professional goals with the values of integrity, collaboration, and empathy. When individuals prioritize mutual benefits and genuine concern for others, they experience a sense of fulfillment and purpose. Helping others succeed becomes an inherent part of their success journey, leading to a more satisfying and meaningful life. Adopting the Think Win-Win approach requires a conscious effort to shift our perspective and behavior. Here are some strategies to practice and cultivate a Win-Win mindset: Seek Mutual Goals: Identify shared objectives and work towards finding solutions that benefit all parties involved. This involves active listening, empathizing with others needs, and looking for creative alternatives that address everyones interests. Collaborate and Communicate: Effective collaboration and communication are essential for Win-Win outcomes. Encourage open dialogue, exchange feedback, and maintain transparency to foster trust and build strong relationships. Value the opinions and contributions of others, fostering an inclusive and collaborative environment. Embrace Abundance Mentality: Replace scarcity thinking with an abundance mindset. Recognize that there are ample resources, opportunities, and successes available for everyone. Celebrate the achievements of others, seeing them as inspiration rather than competition. Win-Win or No Deal: In situations where finding a mutually beneficial solution seems challenging, be willing to consider alternatives, such as No Deal. It is better to walk away from an agreement that doesnt meet both parties needs rather than settle for a suboptimal outcome. Practice Empathy and Understanding: Put yourself in others shoes to better understand their perspectives and motivations. Empathy helps build rapport, strengthens relationships, and facilitates win-win problem-solving by considering diverse viewpoints. Adopting the Think Win-Win paradigm is not just a strategy for successful interactions; it is a transformative mindset that shapes our approach to life. By fostering collaboration, empathy, and mutual benefit, we create an environment conducive to personal growth, harmonious relationships, and sustainable success. Embracing Win-Win thinking allows us to transcend the limitations of a zero-sum game and discover a world of abundant opportunities where everyone can thrive. So, lets challenge the status quo and choose Win-Win for a more fulfilling and prosperous future. Here are books from Stephen R Covey on Amazon! Tags# 7 Habits# Covey# leadership Were currently on habit four of seven in our 7 Habits of Highly Effective People blog series!If this is the first time you have heard about this series were sharing, the aim is to provide a reminder of Coveys ever-valuable habits, with a personal leadership twist. Each blog gives you insight into each habit and provides tools to help you develop these highly effective behaviours.Collect all seven habits crib sheets (links at end of this post) for a complete guide to developing effective personal leadership through the lense of Coveys 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. The habit were honing in on this week is, a personal favourite of mine, Think win-win.What is Habit Three?Think win-winLets define itGoogle defines win-win as a situation in which each party benefits in some way.What does it mean?This habit is about working in collaboration with others and not competitively. Its about getting the most out of every relationship you have; it is where one plus one equals three, because the value gained from sharing ideas, thinking collaboratively and finding the win-win is so significant.Developing this habit involves consistently thinking of others; considering their values and ensuring their thoughts and feelings are at the forefront of your mind. In doing this, you can ensure that your behaviour is appropriate given the time and situation and you can work with that person without unhealthy conflict or upset. But its not just about being empathic; it requires confidence, courage and openness as well.Why is it important?In order to get anywhere in the world, we need to work with people, co-operate and collaborate. In doing this, we can help ourselves, help others and encourage others to help themselves! Its a lot more challenging to achieve than a win-lose situation, but so much more rewarding and fruitful.Develop this habit: Practical toolsFor me, developing this habit is all about feedback. Feedback on ideas, approaches, behaviour, anything that can help us achieve better solutions, conclusions and relationships. In giving feedback we need to be empathic and courageous, saying what needs to be said with the other persons thoughts and feelings in mind.Giving feedback effectively helps us to develop better relationships, whilst improving our abilities to demonstrate emotional intelligence. Its about thinking how can I help this person but also, how can this person help me? If we can start to show some of these tendencies in our organisations we can really start to form highly effective teams and a highly collaborative environment.Remember, for you to win, someone does not have to lose.I hope there are some useful things in here for you to take away and have a think about. Look out for the next in our seven habits series, Seek first to understand then to be understood.Catch up on the other posts in this series:Habit One: Be ProactiveHabit Two: Begin with the end in mindHabit Three: Put first things first Welcome back toour monthly seriesthat summarizes, expands, and riffs on each of the seven habits laid out inThe 7 Habits of Highly Effective Peopleby Stephen Covey.The first of Coveys 7 Habits are what he calls the habits of private victory: Being Proactive, Beginning With the End in Mind, and Putting First Things First prompt us to get our own lives in order. By living these first three habits, we start acting as autonomous, high-agency individuals, learn to recognize what we want in life, and begin to turn our ideals into reality.But we dont live in a vacuum. We have to interact with other people who have their own desires and ambitions that might conflict with our own. Sure, your goal in life might be to get a job with a certain company, but that company has its own goals and might not think youre the guy to help reach them. Or maybe you have a goal of working out first thing in the morning, but your wife wants you to help get the kids ready for the day.How do you successfully navigate the world as an individual who lives among other individuals?Thats what the next three habits seek to answer. Covey calls them the habits of public victory, and the first of this trio of outward-facing habits Think Win/Win provides the framework, or paradigm in Covey-speak, for all of them.Seek to Order Yourself First, Before You Seek to Order the WorldThe habits of public victory build off the habits of private victory. You cant skip the inward habits and expect to successfully implement the outward ones. Before you can successfully interact and cooperate with other individuals, you have to be an individual yourself. You have to know who you are, where youre going, and what you stand for. Failure to develop a strong sense of self will only result in frustration and confusion as you bump up against other people who all have their own agendas, and will pull you this way and that.In other words, if you want to fix the world, start by fixing yourself first.Jordan B. Peterson has said something similar; to paraphrase Peterson-speak: Sort yourself out, bucko, before you try sorting out the world.Now does this mean you have to have your inner life in complete order before you start trying to order the world around you? Of course not. Youd never get started with the outward habits if you did that. No one is ever entirely sorted out. Its a lifelong process. But if you are to have any progress with the outer habits, you need to be in progress with developing the inner ones.The Public Habits Are Unsexy, But CriticalWhile its crucial to order yourself before you try ordering the world, I think a bigger problem than getting these steps out of order, is failing to ever move on to the latter part of the equation.While sorting yourself out may seem like a hardcore principle, and is indeed a task that will require grit and determination, in truth, its the easiest, most fun and excitement-filled part of improving your life.Its a bit thrilling to set your own course. The project has a wonderfully simple, single-minded focus; responsible for yourself alone, youre freed from the entangling burdens of external alliances.I think thats why Ive noticed when people talk about The 7 Habits, they talk enthusiastically about the first three, which have to do with private victories what I call the sexy habits and pretty much ignore the subsequent ones that deal with other people.But the habits of public victory are overlooked at an individuals peril. They may be unsexy, but theyre critical to achievement in every area of life.Here in America, we love the idea of the self-made man. The scrappy, rugged individualist who, without any help from others, pulls himself up by his bootstraps and makes his way in the world.Its certainly an inspiring archetype that encourages the admirable virtues of initiative and self-reliance.But its a myth. A useful and inspiring myth, but a myth nonetheless.The reality is that our success in life isnt purely an individual effort. Yes, it requires pluck and drive on our part, but it also requires the cooperation of others, no matter how autonomous your path in life.If youre a writer, you need readers. If youre an entrepreneur, you need customers and have to deal with employees. If you want to create a flourishing family culture, you need to work together on it with your wife. If you want friends, well, you need to interact with folks other than yourself!You cant reach full flourishing in your professional, familial, and social life without other people.So while personal initiative is necessary for success, its not sufficient. Our relationships (and a bit of luck) are the other critical part of the equation.The 4 Paradigms of RelationshipsRelationships may be essential to our success, but they sure can be hard to navigate. We have to work with people who have their own ideas, their own goals, and their own way of viewing the world.In every relationship, whether business or personal, each party wants something, and Covey lays out four possible dynamics/outcomes that can emerge from this collision of agendas:Win/WinEverybody feels like they benefit from the relationship. Agreements and solutions are mutually advantageous and all parties are committed to making the agreement work. In business, this could mean a contract thats equally beneficial; in a family, it could be a chore arrangement that both parents and children are on board with.Win/LoseIn a Win/Lose paradigm, you get what you want while the other party feels like they got the short end of the stick. According to Covey, individuals who utilize a Win/Lose paradigm tend to use positions, power, credentials, possessions, or personality to get their way.Win/Lose is when a boss tells his employee that he needs to stay late after work or else hell lose his job, or when a parent tells his kid to pick up his room because I said so.Theres certainly a place for a Win/Lose paradigm. A football game requires a winner and loser, some business markets can only support one dominant firm, and sometimes kids have to do stuff they dont want to do, even if, from their perspective, they dont stand to benefit.But the Win/Lose dynamic often results in a pyrrhic victory you gain what you want in the short-term, while damaging a relationship in the long-term.Lose/WinIndividuals who take the Lose/Win approach towards relationships are the stereotypical nice guys. Theyre the doormats of life. They just let people walk all over them. They approach every encounter with another person through the paradigm of I surrender, and you get what you want.Ill do whatever you want to do.Oh, you were late with that report? Thats completely fine! Dont worry about it. No big deal!I wont go hang out with my friends because I know it bothers you.For Covey, Lose/Win is even worse than Win/Lose because at least the person who approaches relationships from the latter perspective has some standards and self-respect that hes willing to fight for! The Lose/Win guy doesnt believe in anything he just wants to avoid conflict and keep people liking him.The insidious thing about Lose/Win is that while it can smooth relationships over in the short-term, resentment and anger slowly builds up in the individual who takes this approach towards life. And that resentment can eventually ooze out in passive aggressiveness or explode in rage.That isnt to say there isnt sometimes a place for Lose/Win in our lives. Maybe we take that approach when the issue is truly not worth making a fuss over, or when belaboring it would do harm to the long-term relationship. Maybe a negotiating partner wants a term that would inconvenience you in the short-term, but is a big deal to him; you can make a federal case about it, but it may harm the business relationship down the road. Covey would argue that maybe the wise thing to do is concede on that point and take the hit for the sake of your long-term prospects. Knowing when to fold, though, requires one to have a firm sense of purpose and self.Lose/LoseLose/Lose is cutting off your nose to spite your face. If youre going down, everyone else is going down with you. Lose/Lose situations occur when two stubborn and prideful people are pitted against each other. Lose/Lose is the businessman who bankrupts his company litigating a lawsuit that was launched to get back at a competitor; its the friend who makes the evening miserable for everyone because he didnt get to do what he wanted.While Win/Lose or Lose/Win can be used strategically and sparingly, theres probably no situation in which adopting the Lose/Lose approach is beneficial.How Seeking Win/Win Relationships Develops Your MaturityWhile theres certainly a time and place for Win/Lose and Lose/Win in our dealings with our fellow humans, Covey believes that the Win/Win dynamic is the one we should strive for most, since its the only one in which you get what you want and you strengthen the long-term health of a relationship.But I also think that seeking win/win relationships is a key in helping us achieve maturity a firm, well-sorted posture that promotes well-being and success in every area of life.Heres how:Develops your humility. The idea that you can get where youre going alone is a product of ego, and ego is the enemy. Individual success, Covey says, is actually a product of interdependency, and interdependency naturally presupposes dependency, a condition we hate to countenance. But forthrightly acknowledging the way we rely on others to exist and succeed demonstrates not only a clear-eyed realism, but a sober humility.Recognizes the full humanity of others. When youre young (or immature at any age), you feel the world revolves around you. Even if its unconscious, you dont see everyone else as fully human at least not in the way you see yourself; you dont recognize the fact that they have needs, desires, and dreams that are just as salient to them as yours are to you. (How long did it take you to realize that your parents dont exist entirely as your mother and father, but are people with lives and identities just as distinct and complex as your own?)When you seek Win/Win relationships, you recognize that other people have goals that are just as real as yours you recognize their individuality. That not only helps you understand the world better, and navigate it with less frustration, but that level of perspicuity makes you a more mature, fully formed individual yourself.Requires a long-term perspective. When you go through life trying to make relationships Win/Lose, you can certainly get what you want in the short-term. But you burn bridges, and often sabotage your chances of success in the long-term. Seeking a Win/Win situation thus involves exercising the capacity of delayed gratification putting in the effort upfront to make sure that not only do you get want you want, but that the other person does too, so that youll not only benefit in the moment but down the line as well.Requires becoming assertive. Guys who approach relationships from the paradigm of Win/Lose are overly aggressive. Guys who approach them from the paradigm of Lose/Lose are overly passive.The best approach is to avoid these extremes in favor of pursuing a golden mean between them; that is, being assertive.Diagram from The 7 Habits of Highly Effective PeopleWhen youre assertive, youre able to state what you want firmly and without apology, but also take into consideration the needs and desires of others. You dont act like a petulant child and just make demands, nor let people walk all over you like a quintessential Nice Guy. You directly pursue what you want, without being an a**hole about it.Or as Covey eloquently puts it, Maturity is the balance between courage and consideration.Offers a grown-up challenge. The public, outward-facing habits arent as sexy or fun as the inward-focused, private ones because the latter deal with a single variable: yourself.But cultivating the other-oriented habits can offer its own distinct satisfaction, interest, and even excitement, when viewed from a certain frame of mind one which, befitting Coveys terminology, sees relationships as something of a game.Now, I dont mean you should treat relationships as a game in the sense of treating people as playthings without regard to their feelings and goals. But rather looking at them as a challenge, a puzzle, an arena in which thoughtful tactics and strategy must be deployed. Every scenario is different, and there are no preset or universal rules. How can you maneuver multiple variables so that everyone ends up with some reward? What moves can you make so that you get what you want, but the other person feels like they benefit as well? Can you improvise? Can you use your phronesis your practical wisdom to find the best solution?Figuring how to get to Win/Win isnt a childs game, but a mature pursuit for he whos sorted out himself, and is ready to move on to sorting out the world.Be sure to listen to my podcast with Stephens son about his fathers famous principles:Read the Whole Series Habit 4: think win/win is all about finding resolutions. Interactions between people constantly include some sort of negotiation, big or small: Where are we going to dinner? What movie are we going to watch? How much will you sell your product for? How much will you buy it for?Habit 4: think win/win is one of the 7 habits that aims to find a solution that benefits both sides, where everyone is happy with the decision and committed to the plan. People with a habit 4: think win/win frame of mind value cooperation over competition and believe that there is plenty of money, success, happiness, and good fortune to go around. There are six paradigms for difficult interactions. It is the goal in habit 4: think win/win to be enabled to enact the win/win paradigm as much as possible. Its important to recognize when, where, and how to use it. Stephen Coveys think win/win paradigm can help us do that.Reaching a habit 4: think Win/Win resolution can be difficult, and sometimes feels impossible. It often requires you to persist in dialogues longer, even when it feels youve reached an impasse. You also must listen carefully and genuinely try to understand the other persons perspective and goals, then explicitly and respectfully express your own point of view (well go into detail about how to do this in Habit 5). Eventually both parties can reach a solution that neither could have come up with on her own.The Win/Lose paradigm makes everything a competition, making it seem that one persons success must come at the expense of someone elses success. Leaders with the Win/Lose mentality use an authoritarian style of leadership; people with this mindset tend to use their authority, power, status, or personality to get what they want.Most people have a deeply embedded Win/Lose mentality thats taught early on and reinforced through different life experiences.Sports, school, and sibling rivalries are think win/win examples of deeply embedded forms of the win/lose paradigm.While there are situations when a Win/Lose approach is appropriate, most of life calls for cooperation, not competition.People with the Lose/Win paradigm are more interested in taking the path of least resistance than getting what they want. They generally want to appease and gain acceptance by the other person, and they tend to be intimidated by others strengths and shy away from expressing their own wants and feelings. Leaders with this paradigm have a permissive, indulgent style of leadership.People with a Lose/Win mindset lose not only in their interactions, but also in their own well-being: They tend to suppress a lot of feelings, which can fester and bubble up in anger, resentment, cynicism, and psychosomatic illnesses that can especially affect the respiratory, nervous, and circulatory systems.Recognizing these situations is important to understanding habit 4: think win/win.When two people with a Win/Lose paradigm get in a standoff, their attitudes can devolve into a vindictive Lose/Lose mentality, meaning that you want the other person to lose so badly that you are willing to take a hit as well. Lose/Lose is the result of getting so focused on the demise of your enemy that you become blind to everything else, including your own well-being. You may also develop a Lose/Lose paradigm if youre very dependent and have no sense of personal direction, so you think that if youre unhappy then others should be, too (think: misery loves company). Stephen Coveys think win/win paradigm advises against the lose/lose paradigm.A Win paradigm is different than Win/Lose or Win/Win because it only focuses on your own outcome; if you have a Win mentality, you want to get what you want whether the other person wins or loses. The Win paradigm is an every-man-for-himself mentality youre concerned with taking care of yourself, and you expect others to do the same for themselves.Sometimes a Win/Win resolution is impossible, and its better for the relationship if you walk away from a negotiation altogether. If its clear that the two parties arent going to see eye to eye, or they have entirely different goals and expectations, it can save a lot of tension and problems in the relationship to forego a deal and keep the relationship healthy and options open to collaborate on something else down the road.This is where the Win/Win or No Deal paradigm comes in: With this framework, youre determined to find a solution that benefits both parties and, if thats impossible, youre at peace with walking away from the deal, knowing that your goals and values dont align in this situation.Having the No Deal option in mind as you go into a negotiation prevents you from forcing a deal that will inevitably bring issues later, potentially hurting the relationship. Win/Win or No Deal shows that you value the relationship more than the negotiation. This is especially useful for families and personal relationships, or early stages of business relationships.No single paradigm is best for every situation; there will be times when different frameworks are appropriate. The challenge is to have an accurate enough perspective of a situation to determine which paradigm fits best, without just defaulting to what your scripting has ingrained in you.Of course, youll choose different paradigms for different situations. In a sports game, youll likely choose a win/lose, but a win/win is best for most interperesonal relatinoships. In fact, Win/Win is generally the only viable option in interpersonal relationships. If both parties dont win, they both ultimately lose in the long-term effectiveness of the relationship.Either a Win/Lose or Lose/Win paradigm will bring a short-term win to one party, but the losing side will develop negative feelings that harm the relationship in the long term. In a business dealing, if I get a win in this negotiation, you may walk away and decide you dont want to work with me in the future. That becomes a loss for me too.Lose/Lose obviously does nothing to benefit a productive interdependent relationship. And the lack of consideration for the other person in a Win paradigm doesnt foster the necessary trust and cooperation for an effective interdependent relationship.Each situation is unique, and while a win/win paradigm is ideal, there may also be situations where a different paradigm is best.A Win/Win paradigm is essential to a successful interdependent relationship, but its admittedly difficult; it takes courage, consideration, willingness to learn about the other person, and an ability to influence the other person.There are five components necessary for a Win/Win paradigm, each creating the foundation for the next: Character, Relationships, Agreements, Systems, and Processes.Character is the bedrock of a Win/Win paradigm, encompassing three critical traits.Integrity your commitment to walk the talk and live out your values and principles is essential to a Win/Win mindset. If you dont know what your values are, then you cant determine what constitutes a win for you in the first place.Maturity requires you to balance the courage to express your goals and expectations with the consideration to factor in the other persons perspective. Courage allows you to pursue the P (what you want) while also maintaining the PC (the relationship)An Abundance Mentality reassures you that there is plenty of success, money, and happiness for everyone. You can only see the possibility of both people winning if you believe that one persons success doesnt come at the expense of the other persons success.With a strong character foundation, you can use habit 4: think win/win of the 7 habits to build win/win relationships with Emotional Bank Accounts that carry high balances of trust and mutual respect. That trust is essential because you have to believe that the other person respects and cares about you so much that they genuinely want you both to win. Both parties must care enough about each other and the relationship that theyre willing to do the sometimes difficult and tedious work of reaching a mutually beneficial resolution.When youre trying to find a Win/Win solution with a person who has a Win/Lose paradigm, focus on the relationship: Make deposits in the Emotional Bank Account, show that you respect and appreciate the other person and her perspective. Dont be reactive, but rather try to truly listen to and understand the other person. This process is itself a major deposit in the Emotional Bank Account, and eventually the other person may recognize that you genuinely want a Win/Win solution.Once youve established Win/Win relationships, you can create Win/Win agreements. Establishing an effective Win/Win agreement entails the five steps we discussed in stewardship delegation.Identify the desired results (without dictating the methods to reach them) and deadlines.Explain the parameters for achieving the results and warn of potential pitfalls.List the resources available whether human, technical, organizational, or financial.Create accountability by setting standards and establishing check-ins.Describe the positive and negative consequences of success or failure.There are four kinds of positive and negative consequences that a manager or parent can impose (as opposed to natural consequences that are beyond either persons control):Financial: bonus, allowance, or penaltiesPsychological: approval, respect, credibility, or loss thereofOpportunity: training and benefitsResponsibility: an increase or decrease in authorityWhen people know what theyre supposed to achieve (results and accountability) and what will happen if they succeed (consequences) without being confined to any particular method of getting there theyre inclined to be incredibly motivated, creative, and innovative in reaching that goal.This can create highly successful think win/win scenarios.In order for agreements to be effective, the entire system has to be set up to reinforce the principles in your mission statement: Everything from training to communication to compensation systems need to align with the same values. If you want to embed a Win/Win mentality among your employees, dont set up office competitions that undermine a spirit of cooperation. Even the most competent employees wont perform to their full potential in a system that doesnt support Win/Win.In one habit 4: think win/win example, Stephen Covey worked with a large real estate company that held annual sales meetings where top performing employees were presented awards. The first time Covey attended, about 40 people received awards for achievements based on comparisons, like Most Sales and Highest Earned Commissions out of the 800 employees at the meeting. Despite all the fanfare, the other 760 people had essentially lost; the company wanted to instill a Win/Win culture, but they had created a Win/Lose system.Covey worked with the organization to reform the system to reflect a Win/Win paradigm and create a habit 4: think win/win scenario: They developed individual performance agreements that reflected the work and goals of each employee or team, and the following year the company presented awards to about 800 employees out of the 1,000 who attended the annual meeting. These awards recognized associates who met personal and team goals, and as a result everyone was able to celebrate and encourage each other more genuinely because each persons achievement had been her own, not as a result of someone elses shortcomings. Stephen Coveys win/win paradigm proved successful. With all the components in place a character foundation, relationships built from that paradigm, agreements made, and systems in place how do you actually arrive at a habit 4: think Win/Win scenario?Try to understand the issue from the other persons perspective, reiterating her concerns back to her in an effort to fully understand her goals and concerns.Name the most important issues and concerns of both sides. Describe these as objectively and straightforwardly as possible.Figure out what results would be agreeable to both parties.Determine a third option beyond either sides proposition that can achieve those results.This same framework is reflected in Harvard law professors Roger Fisher and William Urys explanation of principled negotiation, and works as a think win/win example: A principled approach to negotiation focuses on the problem as opposed to the person, creates options that benefit both parties, and uses objective criteria to measure those benefits.Taking a Win/Win approach to negotiation and problem-solving is a paradigm shift for many people who were embedded with a Win/Lose framework. Use these steps to start practicing Win/Win and the 7 habits in your life.Habit 4: Think Win/Win7 Habits of Highly Effective People Why Win-Win? Many people think in terms of either/or: either youre nice or youre tough. Win-win requires that you be both. It is a balancing act between courage and consideration.There are three vital character traits that are essential to this paradigm:Integrity: sticking with your true feelings, values, and commitments.Maturity: expressing your ideas and feelings with courage and consideration for the ideas and feelings of others.Abundance Mentality: believing there is plenty for everyone. Page 2 Communication is the most important skill in life. You spend years learning how to read, write, and speak. But what about listening? What training have you had that enables you to listen so you really, deeply understand another human being? Probably none, right? If youre like most people, you probably seek first to be understood; you want to get your point across. In doing so, you may ignore the other person completely, pretend that youre listening, selectively hear only certain parts of the conversation or attentively focus on only the words being said, but miss the meaning entirely. So why does this happen? Because most people listen with the intent to reply, not to understand. You listen to yourself as you prepare in your mind what you are going to say, the questions you are going to ask, etc. You filter everything you hear through your life experiences, your frame of reference. You check what you hear against your autobiography and see how it measures up. Consequently, you decide prematurely what the other person means before they finish communicating. Do any of the following sound familiar? You might be saying, Hey, wait a minute. Im just trying to relate to the person by drawing on my own experiences. Is that so bad? In some situations, autobiographical responses may be appropriate, such as when another person specifically asks for help from your point of view or when there is already a very high level of trust in the relationship. Page 3 You know you are synergizing when you: Have a change of heart.Feel new energy and excitement.See things in a new way.Feel that the relationship has transformed.End up with an idea or a result that is better than what either of you started with (3rd Alternative). Page 4 Feeling good doesnt just happen. Living a life in balance means taking the necessary time to renew yourself. Its all up to you. You can renew yourself through relaxation. Or you can totally burn yourself out by overdoing everything. Page 5 Habit 1: Be Proactive is about taking responsibility for your life. Proactive people recognize that they are response-able. They dont blame circumstances, conditions, or conditioning for their behavior. They know they can choose their behavior. Reactive people, on the other hand, are often affected by their physical environment. They find external sources to blame for their behavior. If the weather is good, they feel good. If it isnt, it affects their attitude and performance, and they blame the weather. All these external forces act as stimuli that we respond to. Between the stimulus and the response is our greatest powerwe have the freedom to choose our response. One of the most important things we choose is what we say. Our language is a good indicator of how we see ourselves. A proactive person uses proactive languageI can, I will, I prefer, etc. A reactive person uses reactive languageI cant, I have to, if only. Reactive people believe they are not responsible for what they say and dothey have no choice. Proactive people focus their efforts on their Circle of Influence. They work on the things they can do something about: health, children, or problems at work. Reactive people focus their efforts in the Circle of Concernthings over which they have little or no control: the national debt, terrorism, or the weather. Gaining an awareness of the areas in which we expend our energies is a giant step in becoming proactive. Page 6 Understand the end result Begin With the End in Mind means to begin each day, task, or project with a clear vision of your desired direction and destination, and then continue by flexing your proactive muscles to make things happen. Page 7 The Four Quadrants of Time Management We spend our time in one of four ways, depending on the two factors that define an activity: urgent and important. Urgent means it requires immediate attention. Urgent things act on us and are usually visible. For example, a ringing phone is urgent. Important things, on the other hand, have to do with results. It contributes to our mission, values, and high-priority goals. We react to urgent matters. Important matters that are not urgent require more initiative, more proactivity. Unlike most of my other blog posts, I was having a difficult time figuring out a way of making this post on why it is important to think win win relatable, memorable, and entertaining. But then I found them, a series of two images that perfectly get across the message I am trying to convey regarding think win win.The best part is the images need no explanation from me! I will present the first one now and the second one after we discuss the whole concept of think win win.What Does Think Win Win Mean?In his incredible bestseller, The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change, Stephen Covey explains the essence of think win win:Win/Win is a frame of mind and heart that constantly seeks mutual benefit in all human interactions. Win/Win means that agreements or solutions are mutually beneficial, mutually satisfying. With a Win/Win solution, all parties feel good about the decision and feel committed to the action plan. Win/Win sees life as a cooperative not a competitive arenaWin/Win is based on the paradigm that there is plenty for everybody, that one persons success is not achieved at the expense or exclusion of the success of others. 1Why it is Important to Think Win WinThe whole idea of think win win is something that will have a profound impact on all of your relationships by helping to build a sense of trust.If someone knows that you are genuinely concerned about them, it will do nothing but make your future interactions with them both better and easier.By engaging in think win win to make sure others benefit from our actions we will in turn take ourselves to an even higher level as the other person is going to want to act similarly toward us.The Other 5 Paradigms of InteractionAs Covey explains, think win win isnt merely a technique but rather it is one of the 6 paradigms of interaction with the others being:Win/LoseThe first alternative to think win win is Win/Lose which we are all familiar with. It says that I win, and you lose. While there is a time and place for Win/Lose thinking such as athletic events, most of life is simply not a competition. Think of a marriage, if one person is winning and another is losing, both are losing!Lose/WinLose/Win is basically giving up or giving in. For example, I lose, you win or ok, go ahead and have your way with me. As is the case with Win/Lose, Lose/Win is typically a weak position that is derived from personal insecurities.Lose/LoseA Lose/Lose situation occurs when you have two Win/Lose people getting together. When these two stubborn, competitive, egotistical people interact both will end up losing and the result will be a situation where one or both tries to get even.WinAnother common paradigm is Win where you dont exactly want the other person to lose, that point is irrelevant. What is relevant is that you get your way. It is the every man or woman for themselves mentality where you will secure what you need and let them figure out their side.Win/Win or No DealThe last option which Covey describes is one called Win/Win or No Deal which is as Covey explains if we cant find a solution that would benefit us both, we agree to disagree agreeablyNo Deal. No expectations have been created, no performance contracts established. I dont hire you or we dont take on a particular assignment together because its obvious that our values or our goals are going in opposite directions. It is so much better to realize this up front instead of downstream when expectations have been created and both parties have been disillusioned. 1 The only caveat with using Win/Win or No Deal in business is that it works best at the start of business relationships and may not be viable in continuing business relationships. Which Paradigm is Best?The answer to the question which paradigm is the best? is it all depends. You see, it all depends on the situation, if you are playing in an NFL football game, Win/Lose is the obvious choice. If you are really concerned more about a relationship and dont care about the result you may go for Lose/Win, as in your being happy is more important than what we do, so lets do it your way this time.However, in most situations think win/win is the best course of action as Covey says:Most situations, in fact, are part of an interdependent reality, and then Win/Win is really the only viable optionIn the long run, if it isnt a win for both of us, we both lose. Thats why think win win is the only real alternative in interdependent realities. 1Dimensions Needed to Think Win/WinCovey believes that in order to think win win and to use it successfully in all of our interactions it must be used alongside several dimensions of life:CharacterSomeone who approaches life with a think win win mentality possesses three critical character traits:Integrity: being true to your feelings, values and commitments.Maturity: being able to express your thoughts and ideas with confidence and consideration for the thoughts and ideas of others.Abundance mentality: realizing that there is enough to go around for everyone.RelationshipsCovey describes making deposits in emotional bank accounts of others or doing things for others without expecting anything in return. This creates the trust and credibility that think win win scenarios can be built upon.AgreementsAs Covey says, From relationships flow the agreements that give definition and direction to Win/Win. 1 These agreements typically contain the following 5 elements which are made extremely explicit: the desired results, guidelines, resources, accountability, and consequences.Structure and SystemsThe whole paradigm of Win/Win can only survive in an environment that supports it, namely cooperation rather than competition. All of the systems planning, communication, information, compensation need to be aligned with think win win.The Process to Make Think Win Win HappenBefore we get to the second image that I promised above, lets first discuss the four-step process that Covey recommends to make think win win happen:First, see the problem from the other point of view, Really seek to understand and to give expression to the needs and concerns of the other party as well as or better than they can themselves.Second, identify the key issues and concerns (not positions) involved.Third, determine what results would constitute a fully acceptable solution.And fourth, identify possible new options to achieve those results. 1And Now for the Second Imagethat perfectly demonstrates the concept of think win win.But first, lets refresh our memories by taking a look at the first image again:Ok, now for the second image:So, the moral of the story is this:If a couple of asses can figure out how to think win win, so can the rest of us!Until next time, think win win, sometimes you need to be an ass, and as alwaysPYMFP!RickUse it or Lose ItThe 4 step process that Covey recommends to think win win that we discussed above is:First, see the problem from the other point of view, Really seek to understand and to give expression to the needs and concerns of the other party as well as or better than they can themselves.Second, identify the key issues and concerns (not positions) involved.Third, determine what results would constitute a fully acceptable solution.And fourth, identify possible new options to achieve those results.When to Use ItUse think win win when there is a high degree of interdependence between you and others or when it makes sense to cooperate.What Do You Think?What do you think of the concept of think win win? Do you use it in your life? Will you try to think win win more after reading this post? Please share your thoughts in the comments below!References1 The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change by Stephen CoveyIf you enjoyed this post, it would mean the world to us if you shared it with people you care about via any of the social media platforms below!Popular Previous Posts:This is How to Get Out of Your Comfort Zone!Kaizen: This is How Little Improvements Add Up!This is the Best Time of Day to Do Certain Things!Dont Break the Chain and Stop Procrastinating! Habit 4: Think Win-Win isnt just about being nice. Its a character-based code for human interaction and collaboration.Most of us learn to base our self-worth on comparison and competition. We think about succeeding in terms of someone else failingif I win, they lose; or if they win, I lose. Life becomes a zero-sum game. We start to believe theres only so much to go around, and if they get a big piece, theres less for me; its not fair, and Im going to do everything I can to get my share.These paradigms of scarcity are worth shifting. Win-win is about constantly seeking mutual benefit in all human interactionsabout finding solutions that are truly beneficial and satisfying for everyone involved. To go for win-win, we not only have to be empathic, but we also have to be confident. We not only have to be considerate and sensitive, we also have to be brave.That balance between courage and consideration is the essence of real maturity and is fundamental to a win-win approach to life. Win-win requires that we be both high in courage and high in consideration, that we approach others with generosity and a sense of partnership. When we do thatwhen we demonstrate our investment in their interests and successfully advocate for our own needswe build stronger, more trusting relationships. Free Guide Bringing an Abundance Mindset to Your Companys Culture Free Webcast Learn how The 7 Habitscourse has been reimagined to be more relevant and impactful for the next generation. The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People Engage with us. Request a demo. Our Customer Service Team will be contacting you shortly.We appreciate you taking the time to fill out the form. You may also call us at:1-888-868-1776. Win-win sees life as a cooperative arena, not a competitive one. Win-win is a frame of mind and heart that constantly seeks mutual benefit in all human interactions. Win-win means agreements or solutions are mutually beneficial and satisfying.Many people think in terms of either/or: either youre nice or youre tough. Win-win requires that you be both. It is a balancing act between courage and consideration. To go for win-win, you not only have to be empathic, but you also have to be confident. You not only have to be considerate and sensitive, you also have to be brave. To do thatto achieve that balance between courage and considerationis the essence of real maturity and is fundamental to win-win. The 7 Habits of Highly Effective PeopleHabit #1: Be ProactiveHabit #2: Begin with the End in MindHabit #3: Put First Things FirstHabit #4: Think Win-WinHabit #5: Seek First to Understand, Then to Be UnderstoodHabit #6: SynergizeHabit #7: Sharpen the SawSummary* Source: Stephen R. Covey 7 Habits / Habit #4: Think Win-Win Written by aymeric February 28, 2019 Habit four is all about creating a win-win situation. Covey describes the significance of a win-win situation that leads to mutual benefit because if one side gets the edge over the other, it creates a win-win situation that is good for one side but bad for the other. For the habit of highly effective people, he lays emphasis that win-win makes things cooperative instead of competitive because both parties are mutually benefited. Covey further explained that a win-win attitude has the outcome of three important character traits:maturity, integrity and an abundance mentality. Covey, in this effective peoples habit, also explains that for a win-win, you not only have to be empathic but also confident enough; otherwise, the win-win situation might not be possible. Human relationships are often dominated by comparisons and competition from the early years of our lives. We think about succeeding in terms of someone else losing if I win, you lose, if you win, I lose. Its the mentality of fighting for a larger piece of the pie. But what if both of us could eat some of the pie and be fully satisfied? This is what habit 4 thinks winning is all about transforming life into a cooperative field instead of a competition using the best habits. Think Win-Win The idea behind think win-win, i.e., habit 4 is to have the courage to seek mutual benefit from all human interactions instead of having winners on the one side and losers on the other. Achieving a win win way of interacting with others is more than just being nice or looking for a quick fix. A win-win solution isnt easy. When it is impossible to reach a win-win solution, you should suggest a No Deal. This has remained the habit of highly effective people. What is Habit 4? TThink win-win isnt about being nice, nor is it a quick-fix technique. It is a character-based code for human interaction and collaboration. Most of us learn to base our self-worth on comparisons and competition. We think about succeeding in terms of someone else failingthat is, if I win, you lose; or if you win, I lose. Life becomes a zero-sum game. There is only so much pie to go around, and if you get a big piece, there is less for me; its not fair, and Im going to make sure you dont get any more. We all play the game, but how much fun is it really? Why is Habit 4 so Important? Habit 4 has a profound impact on the quality of your relationships. It helps build long-lasting trust that will make all interactions a lot easier. It will bring more luck in your life, too. In Coveys terms, the Fourth Habit helps make deposits