

# 7 Habits of Highly Effective Investigators\*

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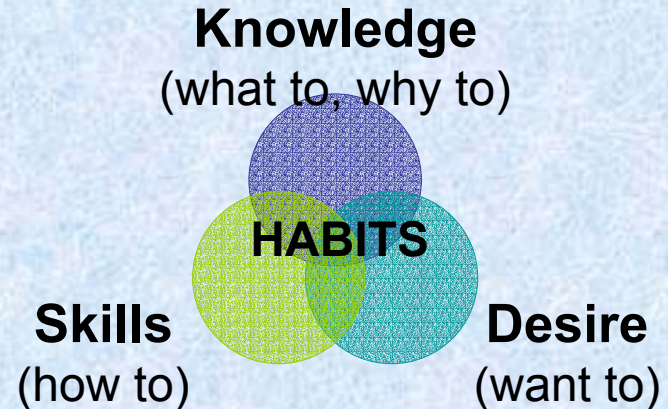
*He Huliau* – Diabetes 2004

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# “Habits”\*

- A “habit” is the intersection between knowledge, skill and desire
- “Effectiveness” is a balance between P/PC
  - production (P) of desired results & production capability (PC), the ability
  - “P/PC Balance”



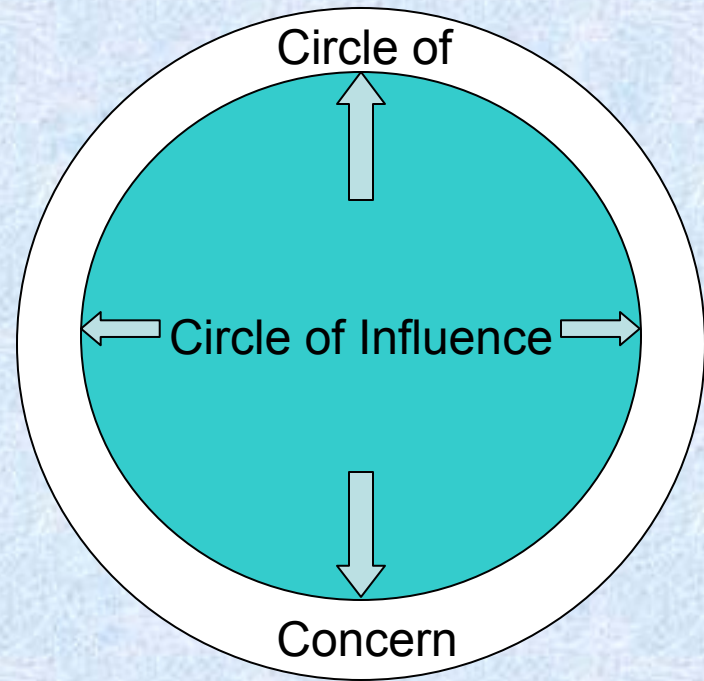
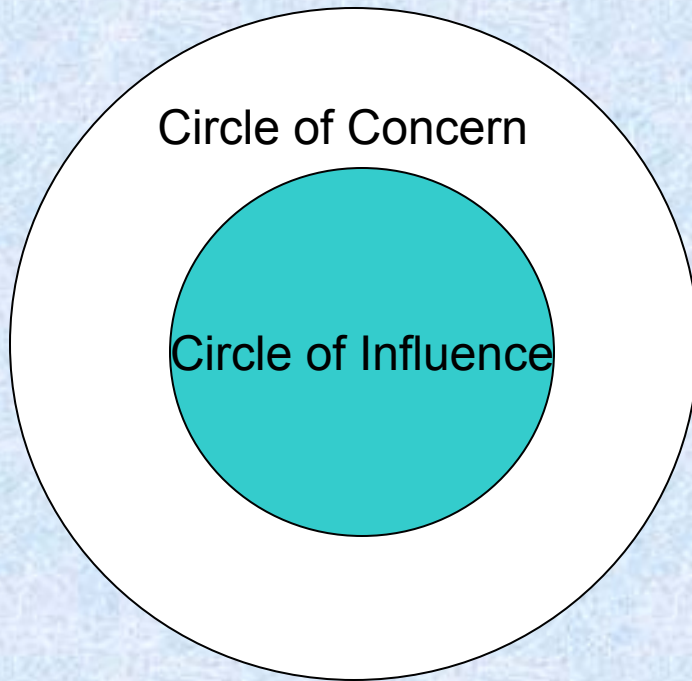
- **“Effective Investigators”**
  - Engage in habits
  - **desired results:** grants, publications, new discoveries
  - **ability:** professional growth, teaching-learning

\* Covey SR, The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, 1990

# Habit #1: Focus, focus, focus

- Be proactive in setting personal goals
  - short & long term career/research goals
  - Productive research groups – clear organizational goals
  - People within them - articulate personal goals compatible with organizational ones.
- Guard against setting impossible goals
  - specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, time sensitive.

# #1: Focus Your Attention\*



**Proactive Focus**  
(Positive energy enlarges  
the Circle of Influence)

\*Adapted from Covey SR, 1990

## Habit #2: Anticipate Your Destination

- Identify your area of research focus
- Develop a “vision” of your contributions to this/these area(s) of study.
  - Personal leadership: “doing the right thing”
  - Principle-centered: research “seeks truth”
- Know the “rules” to reach your destination
  - Examples: What is required to be NIH-funded? What is needed for promotion?

# Habit #3: Manage Your Time Well

- Poor time management = lost productivity
- 5 steps:
  - ① Consider your prior plan of goals (short/long)
  - ② Learn to say 'No' – evaluate every new proposed activity in light of your goals
  - ③ Leverage your activities – double dipping allowed!
  - ④ Re-evaluate & re-focus as needed
  - ⑤ More important to succeed at a few important tasks than to complete a large number of less important ones.

# Habit #3: Manage Your Time Well

## Specific Strategies: Prioritize!

I.

Important/Urgent

Crises

Pressing Problems

Deadline-driven projects

II.

Important/Not Urgent

Prevention, Training

Relationship building

Recognizing new opportunities

Planning, recreation

III.

Not Important/Urgent

Interruptions, some calls

Some reports, pressing matters

Some mail, some meetings

Popular activities

IV.

Not Important/Not Urgent

Trivia, busy work

Time wasters

Pleasant activities

# Habit #3: Manage Your Time Well

## Specific Strategies: Strive to Prioritize!

I.

Important/Urgent

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# Habit #3: Manage Your Time Well

## Specific Strategies: Value-based Management

- Develop a Schedule: weekly & daily
  - Ensure the proper “mix” of tasks
  - Monitor productivity & re-adjust as needed
- Block/Protect appropriate times for
  - “Creative” thinking
  - Writing Productively
- Allow for down time
  - Interruptions, phone calls, etc.

# Habit #3: Manage Your Time Well

## Specific Strategies: Conquer Procrastination!

- Research is often a complex multi-step activity
  - Breakdown the tasks into smaller increments
  - The hardest part is getting started
  - Fight the temptation of “inertia”
  - Work with the time available – sometimes 15 minutes is enough.
  - Avoid putting things off until the deadline.
    - Daily>>Weekly>>Monthly>>Quarterly>>Annual>> Long range
    - Changes the structure of the deadlines

# Habit #4: Socialize & Network in Research

- Most, if not all, research requires you to work with other experts.
- Go to talks, conferences, seminars
- Read the literature, including papers outside your area of interest.
- Anticipate evolution of the field.
- View networking as part of your job.
- Search for colleagues that share your values, similar work ethic, high standards of quality.

# Habit #5: Communicate!

- Understand that research is a highly social & political process of communication, interaction and exchange.
- Become an active listener
- Speak after listening and be calm and kind.
- Re-state the “obvious” and the “not so obvious”.
- Write clearly & concisely
  - Ensure readers/reviewers understand your message.
- Clarify your own thinking
  - evolution of thought, expose faulty reasoning
- *“Clear writing is writing that is incapable of being misunderstood” - Quintilian*

# Habit #6: Grow & Maintain Synergistic Relationships

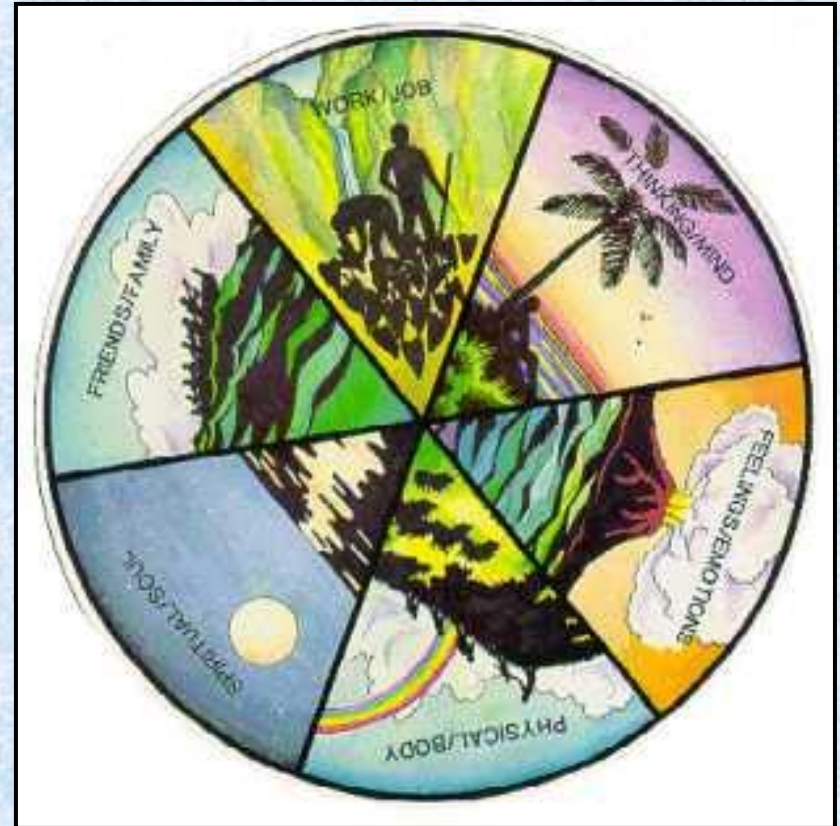
- People – your most important resource.
  - choose the right person for the job
    - skills, enthusiastic attitude
    - spell out details–quality, deadlines, resources, etc.
  - discuss the plan
    - complex jobs require planning
    - avoid micromanaging/sabotage
    - schedule progress reports/updates
  - seek agreement
    - does person understand assignment?
    - can s/he meet your deadline?
    - assure buy-in for the good job that is needed.

# Habit #6: Grow & Maintain Synergistic Relationships

- Delegate wisely
  - delegate tasks to allow more time for you to do something with higher value or that only you can do.
  - don't hesitate to confront poor performance as soon as you notice it.
    - give helpful feedback and begin constructive action.
- Promote a “kakou” attitude
  - the whole is greater than the sum of its parts

# Habit #7: Be Mindful of Lokahi

- Order your life to include time for each significant area.
  - Social/Emotional
    - stress relief, family
  - Spiritual
    - values, commitment
  - Mental/Thinking
    - reading, visualizing, writing, planning
  - Physical
    - exercise, nutrition



# Habit #7: Be Mindful of Lokahi



Mauna Loa from atop Mauna Kea

- On a normal day...
  - Have a positive attitude
  - Be proactive
  - Accept the things you cannot change & change the things you can
  - Be an active listener
  - Nurture your relationships
  - Be ruthless with time & gracious with people
  - Take time to reflect & renew your spirit.



