Habit 1 - Be Proactive

I am the force, I am the captain of my life. I can choose my attitude. I am responsible for my own happiness. I am in the driver’s seat of my destiny, not just a passenger.

Proactive or Reactive The Choice is Yours

Each day you and I have about 100 chances to choose whether to be proactive or reactive.

Proactive people make choices based on values. They think before they act. They understand they cannot control everything that happens to them, but they can control what they do about it.

Unlike reactive people who are full of “carbonation”, proactive people are like “water”. No fizzing, bubbling, no pressure. They are calm, cool, and in control.

Listen To Your Language

You can usually hear the difference between proactive and reactive people by the type of language they use.

When you are reactive it is like giving someone else the remote control to your life and saying, “Here change my mood anytime your wish”. Proactive language puts the “remote control” back into your hands.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reactive Language</th>
<th>Proactive Language</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’ll Try</td>
<td>I’ll Do It</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That’s Just The Way I Am</td>
<td>I Can Do Better Than That</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There Is Nothing I Can Do</td>
<td>Let’s Look At All Our Options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Have To</td>
<td>I Choose To</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Can’t</td>
<td>There Has Got To Be A Way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You Ruined My Day</td>
<td>I’m Not Going To Let Your Bad Mood Rub Off On Me</td>
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**The “Victimitis” Virus**

It is a contagious virus where the “infected” believe that everyone has it in for them and that the world owes them something.

Mark Twain (aka Samuel Clemens) said it best, “Don’t go around saying the world owes you a living. The world owes you nothing…it was here first”!

**Besides feeling like victims, reactive people:**

- Are easily offended
- Blame others
- Get angry say things they later regret
- Whine and complain
- Wait for things to happen to them
- Change only when they have to

**It Pays to be Proactive**

Proactive people are a different breed. Proactive people:

- Are NOT easily offended
- Take responsibility for their choices
- Think before they act
Bounce back when something bad happens
Always find a way to make it happen
Focus on things they can do something about
and don’t worry about things they can’t.

We can control only one thing

The fact is we can’t control everything that happens to us. We can’t control the color of our skin, who wins the NBA finals, where we were born, who our parents are, how much tuition will be next fall, or how others might treat us …etc.

But there is one thing we can control:

How we respond to what happens to us. And that is what counts. This is why we need to stop worrying about things we can’t control and start worrying about things we can.

Next, picture two circles. The inner circle is our circle of control. It includes things we have control over, such as ourselves, our attitudes, our choices, our response to whatever happens to us.

Surrounding the circle of control is the circle of no control. It includes the thousands of things we can’t do anything about.
Now what will happen if we spend our time and energy worrying about things we cannot control, like a rude comment, a past mistake, or the weather? You guessed it! We’ll feel even more out of control, as if we are victims.

For instance, if your sister bugs you and you are always complaining about her weaknesses (something you have no control over), that won’t do anything to fix the problem.

It’ll only cause you to blame your problems on her and lose power yourself.

Proactive people, on the other hand, focus elsewhere ... on the things they can control. By doing so, they experience inner peace and gain more control of their lives.
They learn to smile about and live with the many things they can’t do anything about. They may not like them, but they know it’s no use worrying.

**Turning Setbacks Into Triumphs**

Life often deals us a bad hand and it is up to us to control how we respond. Every time we have a setback it is an opportunity for us to turn it into a triumph!

**Rising Above Abuse**

One of the hardest setbacks of all is coping with abuse.

If you have been abused it is not your fault. Abuse thrives in secrecy. By telling another person, you immediately divide your problem in half. Talk with a loved one, trusted friend, take part in a help session, or visit a professional therapist.

If the person you share your troubles with isn’t receptive then don’t give up—keep sharing until you find someone who is. Sharing your secret with another is an important step in the healing and forgiving process. Be Proactive.

Take the initiative to do it.

You do not need to live with this burden for one day longer.

**Becoming a Change Agent**

The scary thing is that bad habits such as abuse, alcoholism, and welfare dependency are often passed down from parents to kids, and, as a result, dysfunctional families keep
repeating themselves. For example, if you have been abused as a child, the statistics show that you are likely to become an abuser as well. Sometimes these problems go back generations.

**The Good News Is That You Can Stop The Cycle!**

Because you are proactive, you can stop these bad habits from being passed on.

You can become a “Change Agent” and pass on good habits to future generations, starting with your own kids.

You have the power within you to rise above whatever may have been passed down to you. No matter how bad your predicament is, you can become a change agent and create a new life for yourself and whatever may follow.

**Growing Your Proactive Muscles**

Being proactive really means two things.

1. You take responsibility for your life.
2. You must have a “Can Do” attitude.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Can-Do</th>
<th>No-Can-Do People</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take initiative to make it happen</td>
<td>Wait for something to happen to them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think about solutions and options</td>
<td>Think about problems and barriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act</td>
<td>Are acted upon</td>
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If you think “can-do” and you are creative and persistent,
It’s amazing what you can accomplish!

Don’t wait for that perfect job to fall into your lap, Go After It!

To reach your goals in life, you must seize the initiative. Some people mistake “can-do” for being pushy, aggressive, or obnoxious. WRONG!!!

Can-Do is courageous, persistent, and smart.

Just Push Pause

So when people are rude to you, where do you get the power to resist being rude back? For starters, just push pause. Yep, just reach up and push the pause button to your life just as you would on your remote control.
If you can **learn to pause**, get control, and think about how you want to respond, you’ll **make smarter decisions.**

Yes your childhood, your parents, your genes, and your environment influence you to act in certain ways, but they can’t **MAKE you** do anything. You are not determined but are free to choose.

While your life is on “pause”, open up your toolbox (the one that you were born with) and use your **4 human tools** to help you decide what to do. These tools are self-awareness, conscience, imagination, and willpower.

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Awareness</td>
<td>I can stand apart from myself and observe my thoughts and actions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conscience</td>
<td>I can listen to my inner voice to know right from wrong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imagination</td>
<td>I can envision new possibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willpower</td>
<td>I have the power to choose</td>
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We either use or fail to use our four human tools every day of our lives. The more we use them, the stronger they become and the more power we have to be proactive.
*If we fail to use them we “react” by instinct like a dog and not act by choice like a human.

WE CAN CHOOSE WHETHER TO RISE TO THE CHALLENGE OR BY CONQUERED BY THEM!