Habit 6 “Synergize”
The “High” Way (1 + 1 = 3)

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:

1. 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 geese that follows.

2. As the lead goose gets tired, he will rotate to the back of the V and allow another goose to take the lead position.

3. The geese in the back honk to encourage those in the front.

4. Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it immediately feels the resistance to trying to fly alone and quickly gets back into formation.

5. 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 with a new formation or create their own to catch up with the group.

What does “synergize” 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Synergy Is:</th>
<th>Synergy is Not:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Celebrating differences</td>
<td>Tolerating differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>Working independently</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Open-mindedness | Thinking you’re always right
---|---
Finding new and better ways | Compromise

Synergy Is Everywhere

Synergy is everywhere in nature. The great Sequoia tree grows in clumps and share vast intermingled root systems. Without each other, they would blow over in a storm. Many plants and animals live together in symbiotic relationships.

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 group date, you’ve felt it.

A good band is a great example of synergy

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 is a process. You have to get there. And the foundation of getting there is this: Learn to celebrate differences.

What if the world was full of a bunch of clones who act and think exactly like you?

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, family, religious beliefs, lifestyle, education, interests, skills, age, style, and on and on.

The world is fast becoming a great melting pot of cultures, races, religions, and ideas. Since this diversity around is ever increasing, you’ve got an important decision to make regarding how you’re going to handle it. There are 3 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 different brand of jeans than they do, because they are convinced their way of life is the “best” “right,” or “only” way.

They enjoy ridiculing those who are different, all the while believing 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 is 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.” They see differences as hurdles not as potential strengths to build upon.

**Celebrator’s Profile**
Celebrators value differences. They see them as advantages, 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, only that you can value them.

Diversity = Creative Sparks = Opportunity.

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

We Are All a Minority Of One

It is much easier to appreciate differences when we realize that in one way or another, we are all a minority of one. Diversity isn’t just an external thing. It is also internal.

We learn differently.

Dr. Thomas Armstrong has identified 7 kinds of smarts and says that kids may learn best through their most dominant intelligence:

1. Linguistic – learn though reading, writing, telling stories.
2. Logical - Mathematical- learn through logic, patterns, categories, relationships
3. Bodily - Kinesthetic – learn through bodily sensations, touching
4. Spatial – learn through images and pictures
5. Musical – learn through sound and rhythm
6. Interpersonal – learn through interaction and communication with others
7. **Intrapersonal** – learn through their own feelings

*One is not better than another.

**We see differently.** Everyone sees the world differently and has a different paradigm about themselves, others, and life in general. Events of your past have formed a lens, or paradigm, through which you see the world. Since no one’s past is exactly like no one else’s, no two people see like. Some see mice and others see men, and both are right.

**We have different styles, traits, and characteristics.**

**Which Fruit Are You?**

We have different styles, traits, and characteristics. The following exercise is not meant to be an in-depth diagnosis but a fun look at some of your general characteristics and personality traits.

Read across each row and place a 4 in the blank that best describes you. Now place a 3 in the blank for the second word that best describes you. Do the same for the final words using a 2 and a 1. Do this for each row.

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imaginative</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>Investigative</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Realistic</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Analytical</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Column 1</td>
<td>Column 2</td>
<td>Column 3</td>
<td>Column 4</td>
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<td>Imaginative</td>
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<td>Realistic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adaptable</td>
<td>Inquisitive</td>
<td>Organized</td>
<td>Critical</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relating</td>
<td>Creating</td>
<td>Getting to Point</td>
<td>Debating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>Adventurous</td>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>Academic</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>Inventive</td>
<td>Precise</td>
<td>Judger</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Orderly</td>
<td>Sensible</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative</td>
<td>Competitive</td>
<td>Perfectionistic</td>
<td>Logical</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sensitive</td>
<td>Risk-Taking</td>
<td>Hard-Working</td>
<td>Intellectual</td>
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<tr>
<td>People-Person</td>
<td>Problem Solver</td>
<td>Planner</td>
<td>Reader</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieving</td>
<td>Originate</td>
<td>Memorize</td>
<td>Think Through</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Spontaneous</td>
<td>Changer</td>
<td>Plants Direction</td>
<td>Judge</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating</td>
<td>Discovering</td>
<td>Cautious</td>
<td>Reasoning</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>Challenging</td>
<td>Practicing</td>
<td>Examining</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling</td>
<td>Experimenting</td>
<td>Doing</td>
<td>Thinking</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column 1</th>
<th>Column 2</th>
<th>Column 3</th>
<th>Column 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GRAPES</td>
<td>ORANGES</td>
<td>BANANAS</td>
<td>MELONS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If your highest score was in column 1 (Grape)
If your highest score was in column 3 (banana)
If your highest score was in column 2 (orange)
If your highest score was in column 4 (melon)

Grapes
### Natural Abilities Include:
- Being Reflective
- Being Sensitive
- Being Flexible
- Being Creative
- Preference For Working In Groups

### Grapes Learn Best When They:
- Can Work And Share With Others
- Balance Work With Play
- Can Communicate
- Are Noncompetitive

### Grapes May Have Trouble:
- Giving Exact Answers
- Focusing On One Thing At A Time
- Organizing

### To Expand Their Style, Grapes need to:
- Pay More Attention To Details
- Not Rush Into Things
- Be Less Emotional When Making Some Decisions

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### Oranges

### Natural Abilities Include:
- Experimenting
- Being Independent
- Being Curious
- Creating Different Approaches
- Creating Change

### Oranges Learn Best When They:
- Can Use Trial And Error
- Produce Real Products
- Can Compete
- Are Self-Directed

### Oranges May Have Trouble:
- Meeting Time Limits
- Following A Lecture
- Having Few Options Or Choices

### To Expand Their Style, Oranges need to:
- Delegate Responsibility
- Be More Accepting Of Others' Ideas
- Learn To Prioritize

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### Bananas
### Natural Abilities Include:
- Planning
- Fact-Finding
- Organizing
- Following Directions

### Bananas Learn Best When They:
- Have An Orderly Environment
- Have Specific Outcomes
- Can Trust Other 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

### 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

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**Celebrate Your Own Diversity**

Our tendency is to ask, which fruit is best? The answer is … that’s a dumb question.

No one is better or worse, only different.

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

Ignorance – means you are clueless. You don’t know what other people believe, how they feel, or what they’ve been through.

Cliquettes

There is nothing wrong with wanting to be with those you are comfortable with; it becomes a problem only when your group of friends become so exclusive that they reject everyone who isn’t just like them.

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 prejudged by someone because of your skin’s color, your accent, or you live on the wrong side of the tracks? Haven’t we all and isn’t it a sick feeling?

We are not born with prejudices. They are learned.

Finding The “High” Way

Once you’ve bought into the idea that differences are a strength and not a weakness, and once you are committed to at least trying to celebrate differences, you are 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 $1 + 1 = 1 \frac{1}{2}$.

Cooperation is $1 + 1 = 2$.

**Synergy is $1 + 1 = 3!$**

The whole is greater than the sum of the parts!

**Getting to Synergy**

Whether you are arguing with your parents over dating and curfew guidelines or planning a school activity with your peers or simply not seeing eye to eye, there is a way to get to synergy.

**Getting To Synergy**
If you follow the basics of the above formula, you will be amazed at what can happen.

But it takes a lot of maturity to get to synergy. You have to be willing to listen to the other point of view. You then need to have the courage to express your point of view. Finally, you’ve got to let your creative juices flow.

The Getting to Synergy Action Plan is a guideline, nothing more. The steps don’t always have to be in order, and you don’t have to do all of them.
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 it’s done.

**Followers** – They are very supportive of leaders. If they hear a great idea, they can run with it.

**Innovators** – They are the 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. They blend together to create a whole new sound.
The wonderful by-product of teamwork and synergy is that it builds relationships.