

Enjoy Habit 6: Synergize

In the bestselling book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen R. Covey's sixth habit is Synergize. This was a fairly popular word in the 90s, especially in the business sphere, but has fallen out of the common vernacular in recent years. Perhaps it's time to reevaluate the meaning of this word to remember why it's so important and how to best implement it in your life.

The definition of *Synergize* is “[to] combine or coordinate the activity of two or more agents to produce a joint effect greater than the sum of their separate effects.” In other words, synergy is about the ability to work together towards a common goal that's larger than any single person could attain on their own. This habit is crucial for individuals and organizations alike, because it helps people find connections between their work and others', which can lead to greater innovation, creativity, and productivity. It also builds a habit of creative cooperation, allowing people to tackle problems from many different perspectives and get the best outcome *together*. By using everyone's different experience and expertise, as well as differing perspectives, it allows us to identify new solutions and innovate. But how do we create this?

Establish a common goal. Unity in any group is usually based on the desire for a shared purpose. Different team members may be filling different functions in pursuit of that goal, but having different objectives will only create chaos and conflict. Display the common goals in a central location that is accessible to everyone in the group. Likewise, individual progress towards goals should be visible as well, to reveal what is and is not on track – encouraging accountability among team members.

Be clear. Communication is essential for group success because it enables members to share thoughts and opinions, make decisions, solve problems, and develop interpersonal relationships. In order for a team to cooperate properly, everyone on the team needs to clearly know what the objective is to understand what success looks like, and how they're meant to help achieve it.

Celebrate Milestones. Typically, teams come together for an extended time to complete a project. Over time, the team that once was thriving and capitalizing on the benefits from team synergy may need a boost of energy, so all team members see the project to completion. That's why it's important to have milestones to celebrate along the way, helping the entire group stay focused and motivated.

You know synergy is happening when team members are “multipliers” not “additions”. The proof is in the results they are generating. When synergy is happening, there is an inherently higher level of efficiency in production, in creativity, and in producing results overall. How do you work to create synergy in your life? Tell us in the comments below!