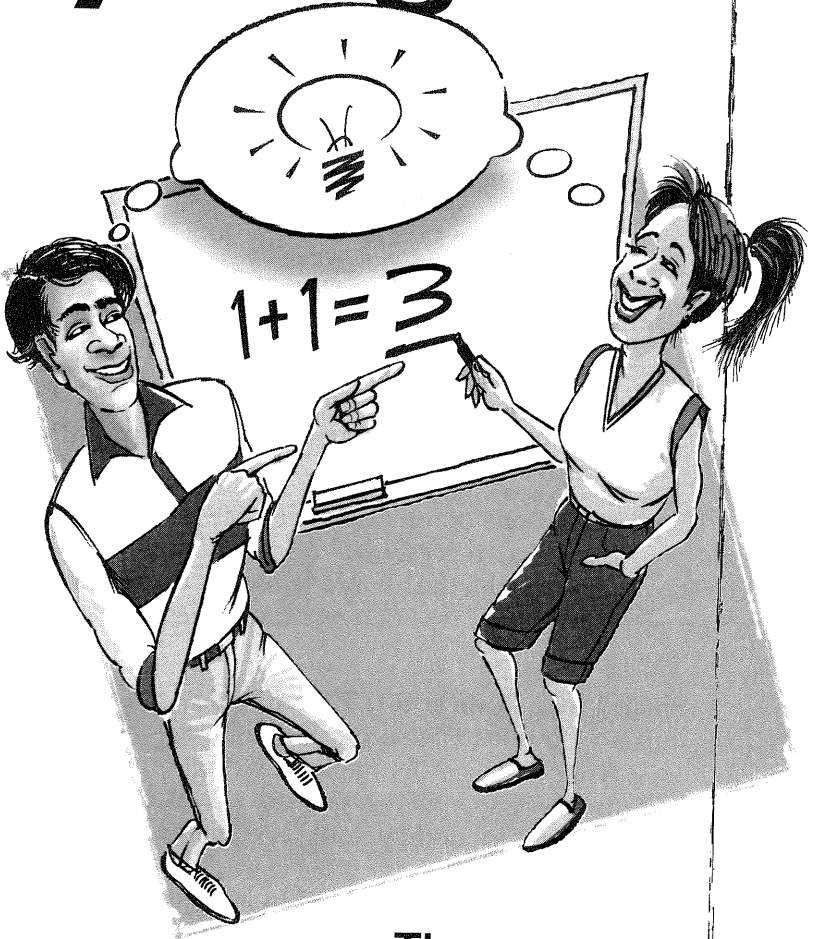


H A B I T

6

Synergize



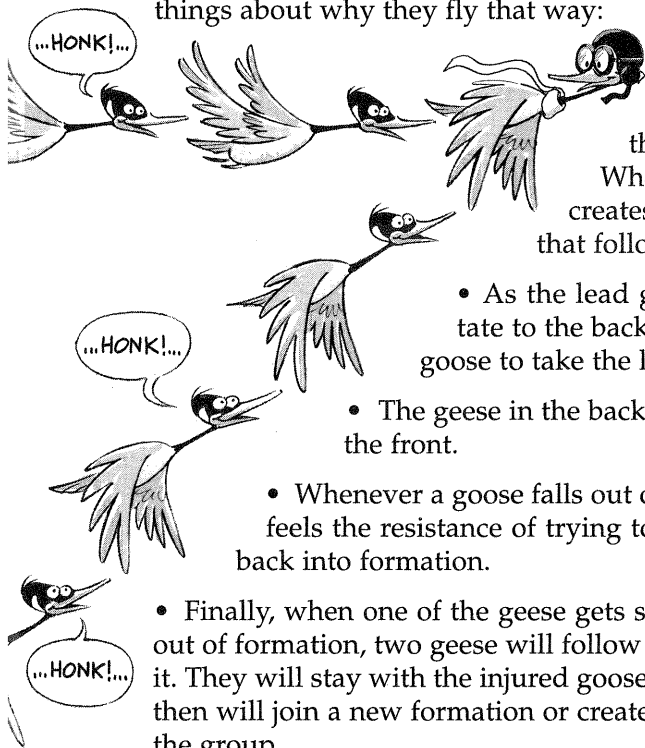
The
"High" Way

Alone

we can do so little; together we can do so much.

HELEN KELLER

Have you ever seen a flock of geese heading south for the winter flying along in a **V** formation? Scientists have learned some amazing things about why they fly that way:



- By flying in formation, the whole flock can fly 71 percent farther than if each bird flew alone. When a goose flaps its wings, it creates an updraft for the goose that follows.

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

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

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

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

Smart birds, those geese! By sharing in each other's draft, taking turns in the lead position, honking encouragement to each other, staying in formation, and watching out for the wounded, they accomplish so much more than if each bird flew solo. It makes me wonder if they took a class in Habit 6, Synergize. Hmmm ...

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.*

Synergy is the reward, the delicious fruit you'll taste as you get better at living the other habits, especially at thinking Win-Win and seeking first to understand. Learning to synergize is like learning to form **V** formations with others instead of trying to fly

through life solo. You'll be amazed at how much faster and farther you'll go!

To better understand what synergy is, let's see what synergy is not.

SYNERGY IS:

SYNERGY IS NOT:

Celebrating differences

Tolerating differences

Teamwork

Working independently

Open-mindedness

Thinking you're always right

Finding new and better ways

Compromise

● **SYNERGY IS EVERYWHERE**

Synergy is everywhere in nature. The great sequoia trees (which grow to heights of 300 feet or more) grow in clumps and share a vast array of intermingled roots. Without each other, they would blow over in a storm.

Many plants and animals live together in symbiotic relationships. If you have ever seen a picture of a small bird feeding off the back of a rhinoceros, you've seen synergy. Each benefits: The bird gets fed and the rhino gets cleaned.

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. It's not just the drums, or the guitar, or the sax, or the vocalist, it's all of them together that make up the "sound." 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's a process. You have to get there. And the foundation of getting there is this: Learn to celebrate differences.

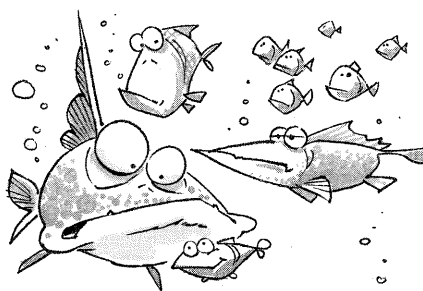
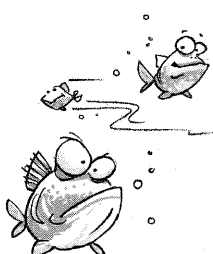
I'll never forget encountering in high school a Tongan named Fine (pronounced Fee-Nee) Unga. At first, I was scared to death of him. I mean the guy was built like a tank, was mean looking,

and was known as a street fighter. We looked, dressed, talked, thought, and ate differently (you should have seen this guy eat). The only thing we had in common was football. So how in the world did we become best friends? Maybe it was because we were so different. I never quite knew what Fine was thinking or what he would do next, and that was terribly refreshing. I especially enjoyed being his friend when a fight broke out. He had strengths I didn't have and I had strengths he didn't have, so together we made a great team.

Boy, am I glad that the world isn't full of a bunch of clones who act and think exactly like me. 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. As Dr. Seuss said in *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish*:

*We see them come.
We see them go.
Some are fast.
And some are slow.
Some are high.
And some are low.
Not one of them
is like another.
Don't ask us why.
Go ask your mother.*



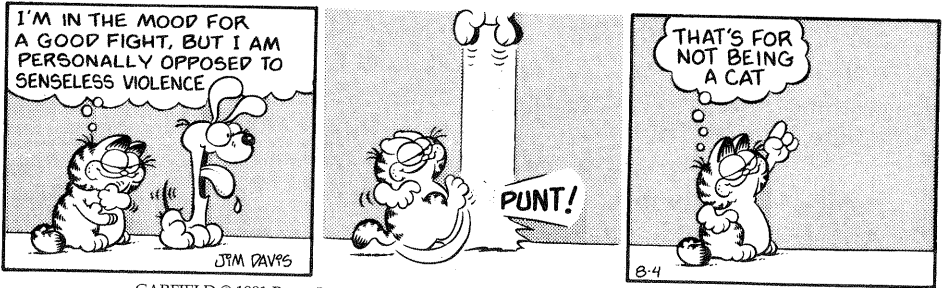
The world is fast becoming a great melting pot of cultures, races, religions, and ideas. Since this diversity around you is ever increasing, you've got an important decision to make regarding how you're going to handle it. There are three possible approaches you can take:

- 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 a different brand of jeans than they do, because they're convinced their way of life is the "best," "right," or "only" way. They enjoy ridiculing those who are different, all the while believing

that 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's strength in numbers.



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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."

Although they come close, they never *get to synergy* because they see differences as hurdles, not as potential strengths to build upon. They don't know what they're missing.

Celebrator's Profile

Celebrators value differences. They see them as an advantage, 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, such as being a Democrat or a Republican, only that you value them. In their eyes, Diversity = Creative Sparks = Opportunity.

So where do you fall on the spectrum? Take a hard look. If someone's clothes don't match yours, do you value their unique clothing styles or do you think they're "out of touch"?

Think about a group that has contrary religious beliefs to yours. Do you respect their beliefs or do you write them off as a bunch of weirdos?

If someone lives on a different side of town than you, do you feel they could teach you a thing or two or do you label them because of where they live?

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

● WE ARE ALL A MINORITY OF ONE

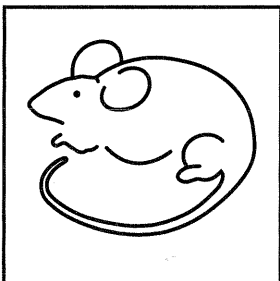
It's much easier to appreciate differences when we realize that in one way or another, we are all a minority of one. And we should remember that diversity isn't just an external thing, it's also internal. In the book *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, Robert Fulghum says, "We are as different from one another on the inside of our heads as we appear to be different from one another on the outside of our heads." How do we differ on the inside? Well ...

We learn differently. As you've probably noticed, your friend's or sister's brain doesn't work the same way yours does. Dr. Thomas Armstrong has identified seven kinds of smarts and says that kids may learn best through their most dominant intelligence:

- **LINGUISTIC:** learn through reading, writing, telling stories
- **LOGICAL-MATHEMATICAL:** learn through logic, patterns, categories, relationships
- **BODILY-KINESTHETIC:** learn through bodily sensations, touching
- **SPATIAL:** learn through images and pictures
- **MUSICAL:** learn through sound and rhythm
- **INTERPERSONAL:** learn through interaction and communication with others
- **INTRAPERSONAL:** learn through their own feelings

One type isn't better than another, only different. You may be logical-mathematical dominant and your sister may be interpersonal dominant. Depending on your approach to diversity, you might say she's weird because she's so talkative, *or* you could take advantage of those differences and get her to help you in your speech class.

We see differently. Everyone sees the world differently and has a different paradigm about themselves, others, and life in general. To understand what I mean, let's try an experiment. Look at the picture below for a few seconds. Now look at the picture on the bottom of



page 194 and describe what you see. You might say that the picture on page 194 is a squiggly drawing of a small mouse with a long tail.

But what if I told you that you were wrong? What if I told you that I don't see a mouse at all, but that I see a squiggly drawing of a man with glasses? Would you value my opinion or would you think I'm a dork because I don't see the way you do?

To understand my point of view, turn to page 200 and study the picture on the bottom of that page for a moment. Then look at page 194 again. Now can you see what I see?

It goes to show that all the events of your past have formed a lens, or paradigm, through which you see the world. And since no one's past is exactly like anyone else's, no two people see alike. Some see mice and some see men, and both are right.

Once you catch on that everyone views the world differently, and that everyone can be right, it will increase your understanding and respect for differing viewpoints. (You might want to try this same experiment with a friend.)

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. This exercise was developed by the Legislator's School in North Carolina and was adapted from *It's All in Your Mind* by Kathleen Butler.

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:

<i>Imaginative</i>	2	<i>Investigative</i>	4	<i>Realistic</i>	1	<i>Analytical</i>	3
--------------------	---	----------------------	---	------------------	---	-------------------	---

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3	COLUMN 4	
Imaginative	Investigative	Realistic	Analytical	
Adaptable	Inquisitive	Organized	Critical	
Relating	Creating	Getting to Point	Debating	
Personal	Adventurous	Practical	Academic	
Flexible	Inventive	Precise	Systematic	
Sharing	Independent	Orderly	Sensible	
Cooperative	Competitive	Perfectionistic	Logical	
Sensitive	Risk-Taking	Hard-Working	Intellectual	
People-Person	Problem Solver	Planner	Reader	
Associate	Originate	Memorize	Think Through	
Spontaneous	Changer	Wants Direction	Judger	
Communicating	Discovering	Cautious	Reasoning	
Caring	Challenging	Practicing	Examining	
Feeling	Experimenting	Doing	Thinking	

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

COLUMN 1
Grapes

COLUMN 2
Oranges

COLUMN 3
Bananas

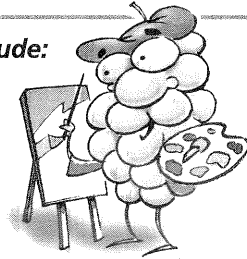
COLUMN 4
Melons

If your highest score was in column 1, consider yourself a grape.
 If your highest score was in column 2, consider yourself an orange.
 If your highest score was in column 3, consider yourself a banana.
 If your highest score was in column 4, consider yourself a melon.
 Now find your fruit below and review what this may mean to you.

GRAPES

Natural abilities include:

- Being reflective
- Being sensitive
- Being flexible
- Being creative
- Preference for working in groups



Grapes may have trouble:

- Giving exact answers
- Focusing on one thing at a time
- Organizing

Grapes learn best when they:

- Can work and share with others
- Balance work with play
- Can communicate
- Are noncompetitive

To expand their style, Grapes need to:

- Pay more attention to details
- Not rush into things
- Be less emotional when making some decisions

ORANGES

Natural abilities include:

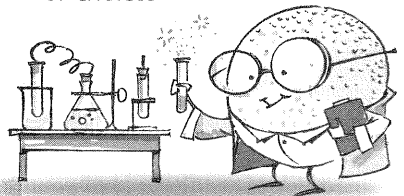
- Experimenting
- Being independent
- Being curious
- Creating different approaches
- Creating change

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

BANANAS

Natural abilities include:

- Planning
- Fact-finding
- Organizing
- Following directions

Bananas learn best when they:

- Have an orderly environment
- Have specific outcomes
- Can trust others 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:

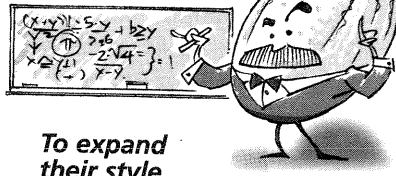
- Debating points of view
- Finding solutions
- Analyzing ideas
- Determining value or importance

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

• CELEBRATE YOUR OWN DIVERSITY

Our tendency is to ask, *Which fruit is best?* The answer is, *That's a dumb question.*

I have three brothers. Although we have much in common, like nose size and parents, we are very different. When I was younger, I was always trying to prove to myself that my talents were better

than theirs: "Sure, you may be more outgoing than me. But who cares? I'm better at school than you and that's more important." I've since seen the stupidity of that kind of thinking and am learning to appreciate the fact that they have their strengths and I have mine. No one's better or worse, only different.

That's why you shouldn't feel so bad if a member of the opposite sex (whom you are just dying to go out with) doesn't go for you. You may be the most luscious and mouth-watering grape around, but he or she may be looking for a banana. And no matter how much you want a change of fruit, you're a grape and they want a banana. (But don't worry. A grape seeker is bound to drop by.)

Instead of trying to blend in and be like everyone else, be proud of and celebrate your unique differences and qualities. A fruit salad is delicious precisely because each fruit maintains its own flavor.

● ROADBLOCKS TO CELEBRATING DIFFERENCES

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

Ignorance. Ignorance means you're clueless. You don't know what other people believe, how they feel, or what they've been through. Ignorance often abounds when it comes to understanding people with disabilities, as Crystal Lee Helms explained in an article submitted to *mirror*, a Seattle-area newspaper:

My name is Crystal. I'm 5'1" with blond hair and hazel eyes. Big deal, right? What if I told you I was deaf?

In a perfect world, it wouldn't, shouldn't matter. We don't live in a perfect world, though, and it does matter. The moment someone knows I'm deaf, their whole attitude changes. Suddenly they look at me differently. You'd be surprised how people act.

The most common question I get is, "How did you become deaf?" When I tell them, their reaction is as common as the question itself: "Oh, I'm so sorry. That's so sad." Whenever that happens I simply look them in the eye and I calmly inform them, "No, really, it's not sad at all. Don't apologize." No matter how good the intentions are, pity always makes my stomach churn.

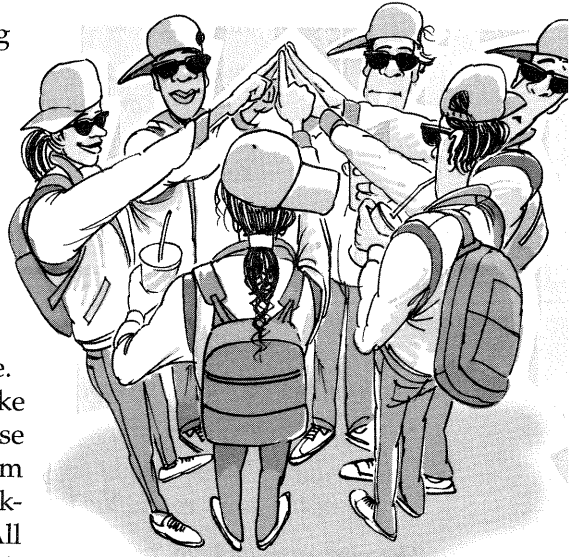
Not all attitudes put me on the defensive. Some are just plain funny. I was signing with my friends and some dude I didn't know came up to me and started talking.

"What's it like being deaf?"

"I don't know. What's it like being hearing? I mean, it isn't like anything. It just is."

You see, the thing is this: if you meet someone who is deaf, don't write them off as disabled or disadvantaged. Instead take the time to get to know them and find out what being deaf is all about. By doing this, you open yourself to understanding not only others, but, more importantly, yourself.

Cliques. There's nothing wrong with wanting to be with those you're comfortable with; it becomes a problem only when your group of friends becomes so exclusive that they begin to reject everyone who isn't just like them. It's kind of hard to value differences in a close-knit clique. Those on the outside feel like second-class citizens, and those on the inside often suffer from superiority complexes. But 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 pre-judged by someone because your skin's the wrong color, your accent's too heavy, or you live on the wrong side of the tracks? Haven't we all, and isn't it a sick feeling?

Although we are all created equally, unfortunately, we are not all treated equally. It's a sad fact that minorities of all types often have additional hurdles to leap in life because of prejudices held by so many. Racism is one of the world's oldest problems. This is Natarsha's experience:

Racism can make succeeding tougher. When you're a black student in the top 10 percent of your class, maintaining a 4.0 grade point average, some people have a tendency to feel threatened. I just wish that people would realize that everyone, no matter where they're from or what color they are, deserves the same opportunities. As far as my friends and I are concerned, prejudice will always be a battle.

We aren't born with prejudices. They're learned. Kids, for instance, are color blind. But as they mature they begin to pick up on

the prejudices of others and form walls, as is explained in Rodgers and Hammerstein's lyrics to a song from the musical *South Pacific*:

*You've got to be taught to be afraid
Of people whose eyes are oddly made,
And people whose skin is a diff'rent shade,
You've got to be carefully taught.*

*You've got to be taught before it's too late,
Before you are six or seven or eight,
To hate all the people your relatives hate,
You've got to be carefully taught!*

The following poem by an unknown source tells the sad tale of what happens when people pre-judge one another.

THE COLD WITHIN

*Six humans trapped by happenstance, in bleak and bitter cold,
Each one possessed a stick of wood, or so the story's told.*

*Their dying fire in need of logs, the first man held his back,
For of the faces 'round the fire, he noticed one was black.*

*The next man looking 'cross the way saw one not of his church,
And couldn't bring himself to give the fire his stick of birch.*

*The third one sat in tattered clothes, he gave his coat a hitch,
Why should his log be put to use to warm the idle rich?*

*The rich man just sat back and thought of the wealth he had in store,
And how to keep what he had earned from the lazy, shiftless poor.*

*The black man's face bespoke revenge as the fire passed from sight,
For all he saw in his stick of wood was a chance to spite the white.*

*The last man of this forlorn group did naught except for gain,
Giving only to those who gave was how he played the game.*

*Their logs held tight in death's still hand was proof of human sin,
They didn't die from the cold without—they died from the cold within.*

● STICKING UP FOR DIVERSITY

Fortunately, the world is full of people who are warm within and who value diversity. The following story by Bill Sanders is a wonderful example of sticking up for diversity and showing courage:

A couple of years ago, I witnessed courage that ran chills up and down my spine.

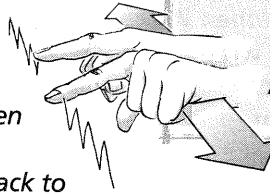
At a high school assembly, I had spoken about picking on people and how each of us has the ability to stand up for people instead of putting them down. Afterwards, we had a time when anyone could come out of the bleachers and speak into the microphone. Students could say thank-you to someone who had helped them, and some people came up and did just that. A girl thanked some friends who had helped her through family troubles. A boy spoke of some people who had supported him during an emotionally difficult time.

Then a senior girl stood up. She stepped over to the microphone, pointed to the sophomore section and challenged her whole school. "Let's stop picking on that boy. Sure, he's different from us, but we are in this thing together. On the inside he's no different from us and needs our acceptance, love, compassion and approval. He needs a friend. Why do we continually brutalize him and put him down? I'm challenging this entire school to lighten up on him and give him a chance!"

All the time she shared, I had my back to the section where that boy sat, and I had no idea who he was. But obviously the school knew. I felt almost afraid to look at his section, thinking the boy must be red in the face, wanting to crawl under his seat and hide from the world. But as I glanced back, I saw a boy smiling from ear to ear. His whole body bounced up and down, and he raised one fist in the air. His body language said, "Thank you, thank you. Keep telling them. You saved my life today!"

Differences create the challenges in life that open the door to discovery.

American Sign Language symbol for "WE ARE DIVERSE"



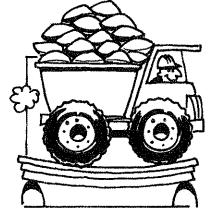
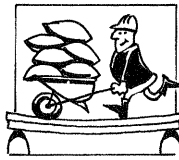
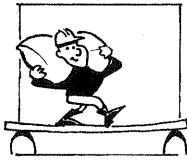
Finding the "High" Way

Once you've bought into the idea that differences are a strength and not a weakness, and once you're committed to at least trying to celebrate differences, you're 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 $1 + 1 = 3$ or more. It's creative cooperation, with an emphasis on the word *creative*. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

Builders know all about it. If one 2" x 4" beam can support 607

pounds, then two 2" x 4"s should be able to support 1,214 pounds. Right? Actually, two 2" x 4"s can support 1,821 pounds. If you nail them together, two 2" x 4"s can now support 4,878 pounds. And three 2" x 4"s nailed together can support 8,481 pounds. Musicians know how it works too. They know that when a C and G note are perfectly in tune, it produces a third note, or an E.



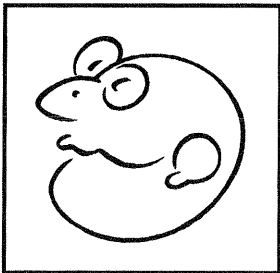
Finding the High Way always produces more, as Laney discovered:

In my physics lab the teacher was demonstrating the principle of momentum and our assignment was to construct a catapult, like in medieval times. We called it a pumpkin launcher.

There were three of us in our group, two boys and me. We are all quite different, so we came up with a lot of different ideas.

One of us wanted to use bungee cords to make the launcher flip. Someone else wanted to use tension and ropes. We tried each without much success and then we figured out a way to use both of them together. It gave a lot more spring than either would have alone. It was cool because it doubled the length of our shot.

Synergy occurred as the founders of the United States were forming their government structure. William Paterson proposed the New Jersey Plan, which said that states should get equal representation in government regardless of population size. This plan favored the smaller states. James Madison had a different idea, known as the Virginia Plan, which argued that states with greater populations should have greater representation. This plan favored the larger states.




After several weeks of debate, they reached a decision that all parties felt good about. They agreed to have two branches of Congress. In one branch, the Senate, each state would get two representatives, regardless of population size. In the other branch, the House of Representatives, each state would get representatives based on population.

Although it is called the Great Compromise, this famous decision could really be called the Great Synergy, because it has proved to be better than either of the original proposals.


● GETTING TO SYNERGY


Whether you're 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*. Here's a simple five-step process to help you get there.

Getting to Synergy
ACTION PLAN




**DEFINE THE PROBLEM
OR OPPORTUNITY**







THEIR WAY
(Seek first to understand the ideas of others.)



MY WAY
(Seek to be understood by sharing your ideas.)



BRAINSTORM
(Create new options and ideas.)



HIGH WAY
(Find the best solution.)

PHOTOCOPY THIS ACTION PLAN AND PLACE IT WHERE YOU CAN REFER TO IT OFTEN.

Let's give the action plan a try on a problem to see how it works.

The Vacation

Dad: *I don't care how you feel. You're going on this vacation whether you like it or not. We've had this planned for months, and it's important that we spend some time together as a family.*

You: *But I don't want to go. I want to be with my friends. I'll miss out on everything.*

Mom: *I don't want you staying here by yourself. I'd worry the whole time and it would ruin my vacation. We want you with us.*



DEFINE THE PROBLEM OR OPPORTUNITY

In this case, we have a problem. It's this:

My parents want me to vacation with the family, but I would rather stay home and go out with my friends.



THEIR WAY (Seek first to understand the ideas of others.)

Try using the listening skills you learned in Habit 5 so that you can really understand your mom and dad. Remember, if you want to have power and influence with your parents, they need to feel understood.

By listening, you learn the following:

This vacation is very important to my dad. He wants to have a family bonding time. He feels it won't be the same without me. Mom feels that they would worry so much about me being home alone that they wouldn't enjoy the vacation.



MY WAY (Seek to be understood by sharing your ideas.)

Now practice the second half of Habit 5 and have the courage to share your feelings. If you've taken the time to listen to them, they'll be much more likely to listen to you. So you tell your parents how you feel.

Mom and Dad, I want to stay home and be with my friends. They are very important to me. We have a lot of things planned, and I don't want to miss out on any of the fun. Besides, I go crazy when I have to drive in a crowded car all day with my little brother and sister.



BRAINSTORM (Create new options and ideas.)

This is where the magic happens. Utilize your imagination and create new ideas together that you could never think of alone. As you brainstorm, keep these tips in mind:

- **GET CREATIVE:** Throw out your wildest ideas. Let it flow.
- **AVOID CRITICISM:** Nothing kills the flow of creativity like criticism.
- **PIGGYBACK:** Keep building upon the best ideas. One great idea leads to another, which leads to another.

Brainstorming produces the following ideas:

- *Dad said we could go to a vacation spot that I would enjoy more.*
- *I mentioned that I could stay with relatives close by.*
- *Mom suggested I could take a friend with me.*
- *I mentioned using my savings and busing out to meet them, so I wouldn't have to drive in a crowded car.*
- *Mom was willing to cut the vacation short so it would be easier for me.*

- *I suggested staying home for part of the vacation and joining them later.*
- *Dad was willing to let me stay home if I would paint the fence while they were gone.*



HIGH WAY (*Find the best solution.*)

After brainstorming for a while, the best idea will usually surface. Now it's just a matter of going with it.

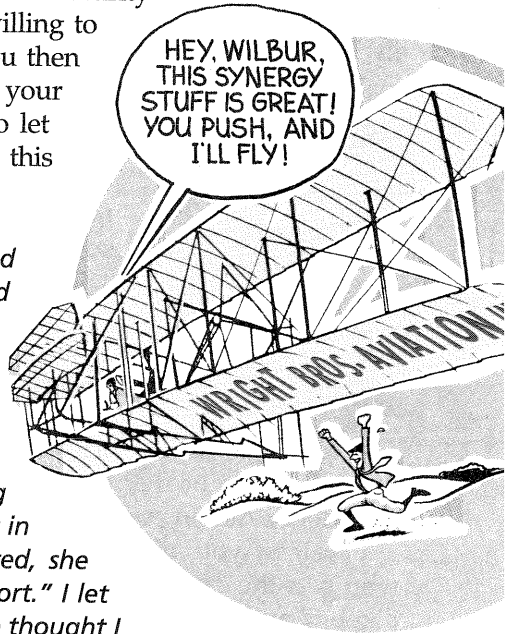
We all agreed that I could stay home during the first half of the week and then bus out with a friend to join the family for the second half. They even offered to pay the bus fare for my friend and me if I would paint the fence. It's not hard work, so I will still have time to hang out with my friends. They're happy, and so am I.

If you will follow the basics of the above formula, you'll 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. See how this eleventh grader got to synergy:

Prom was coming up and I wanted to wear a certain style dress that I had found in a fashion magazine. The only problem was that it was short on me because I am real tall. I knew my mother would flip.

We sat down that evening and discussed the prom and who was going to take me out. I showed her the dress in a magazine, and, as I had anticipated, she said, "Absolutely not. It's way too short." I let her voice her opinion about what she thought I ought to do and where I should shop.

I didn't like anything she had to say, but it was obvious that she felt very strong about it. Then we started brain dumping ideas of what I could do. And one of the ideas was to find a seamstress and see if she could sew something that would satisfy us both. I made a quick phone call to a friend, found a seamstress, and soon we were drawing up our ideas and shopping for fabric and pattern. The outcome was beautiful, very per-



sonal and different from everyone else's dress. I didn't spend as much money as I normally would have, and my friends loved the outfit too.

Go for It

The Getting to Synergy Action Plan can be used in all kinds of situations:

- You've just been assigned a group project for biology with three people you don't even know.
- You and your boyfriend can't decide whose family you should spend Thanksgiving with.
- You want to go to college, but your parents aren't willing to help you pay for it.
- As a student body officer, you and your team are in charge of planning the biggest dance of the year.
- You and your stepmom disagree on your curfew.
- You're always fighting with your brother about the computer.

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 always have to do all of them. If your RBA is extremely high with

someone, you can virtually skip the first three steps and jump right into brainstorming. On the other hand, if your RBA is low, you may need to take more time listening. It may take several conversations to solve some problems, so be patient.

Despite herculean efforts on your part to find the High Way, sometimes the other party won't make any effort at all. You may just have to keep building the RBA in these situations.

How do you normally solve conflicts? Most of the time it's usually fight (with

words or fists) or flight (you're silent or you take off). The Getting to Synergy Action Plan offers an alternative.

Pretend you and your sister are in one continuous fight over who gets the car. Each of you feels you need it more than the other person, and it's created real bad feelings between you. Having recently learned about synergy, you decide to give the Getting to Synergy Action Plan a try.



Synergy doesn't
just happen.

It's a process.

You have to get
there.



DEFINE THE PROBLEM OR OPPORTUNITY

"Sis, I'm tired of fighting over the car all the time. Let's talk and see if we can come up with a Win-Win."

"Oh, c'mon. Don't try that 7 Habits crap on me."

"I mean it. I really want to work this out."

"Fine. How do you suggest we do it? There's only one car and there's two of us."



THEIR WAY (*Seek first to understand the ideas of others.*)

"Well, to start with, tell me why you need the car all the time."

"You know why. I need a way to get home after practice."

"Why can't you get a ride with your friends?"

"I can sometimes, but it always makes me feel embarrassed because I'm so far out of their way."

"I see. Are there other reasons why you need the car?"

"Well, yeah. I sometimes like to stop by Jared's house on the way home."

"That's important to you."

"You bet."

"So you don't like scrounging rides home after practice and you want the freedom a car gives you to do things, like see Jared. Does that pretty much sum it up?"

"Yeah."



MY WAY (*Seek to be understood by sharing your ideas.*)

"Would you mind if I told you why I need the car?"

"I think I already know, but go ahead."

"It's just work. I have to be to work by 6:00 every night and you usually don't get home until about 6:30. When I have Mom take me I'm always late and my boss has a fit."

"Yeah, I know how it is with Mom."



BRAINSTORM (*Create new options and ideas.*)

"Sis, how about if you were to get out of practice a little earlier? If you got home by quarter to six, then you could have the car first and then I'd take it to work."

"I would if I could but I can't get out of practice early. What if you were to start work a little later?"

"Hey, now that I think about it, that might work. I'm sure my boss would let me start later if I ended later. Why don't we give it a try? You get the car till after practice and then I'll take it to work later."

"But what if I want to see Jared?"

"If you want to see Jared, I'd just drop you off on my way to work and pick you up on the way home. Would that be all right?"

"Yeah, that'd be fine."



HIGH WAY (*Find the best solution.*)

"So, do we have a deal?"

"Deal."

It's not always this easy. But, on the other hand, sometimes it is.

● **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.

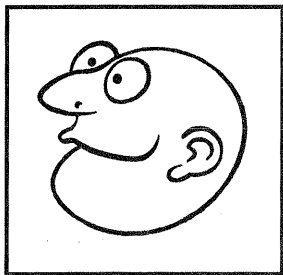
Show-offs. Fun to work with, they can be tough at times. They often add the spice and momentum needed to bring the team over-all success.

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. Individually, the instruments and voices make different sounds, play different notes, pause at different times; yet they blend together to create a whole new sound. This is synergy.

The book you are holding is dripping with synergy. When I first decided to write it, I felt overwhelmed. So I started in the only way I knew how. I got help. I immediately asked a friend for assistance. I soon put together a bigger team. I identified a few schools and educators from around the country who agreed to give feedback on drafts at different stages. I began interviewing teens one on one and in groups. I hired an artist. I put together contests asking for stories dealing with teens and the 7 Habits. By the end, there were well over 100 people involved in the creation of this book.

Slowly but surely it all came together.

Each person brought his or her talents to the table and contributed in a different way. While I focused on writing, others focused on what they were good at. One was good at collecting stories. One could find great quotes. Another knew how to edit. Some were plodders, some innovators, some show-offs. It was teamwork and synergy to the max.



The wonderful by-product of teamwork and synergy is that it builds relationships. Basketball Olympian Deborah Miller Palmore said it well: "Even when you've played the game of your life, it's the feeling of teamwork that you'll remember. You'll forget the plays, the shots, and the scores, but you'll never forget your teammates."



COMING ATTRACTIONS

If you keep reading, you'll discover the real reason why Michelle Pfeiffer looks like a million bucks. Just a few more pages and you're done!

BABY STEPS



- 1 When you meet a classmate or neighbor with a disability or impairment, don't feel sorry for them or avoid them because you don't know what to say. Instead, go out of your way to get acquainted.
- 2 The next time you are having a disagreement with a parent, try out the Getting to Synergy Action Plan. 1. Define the problem. 2. Listen to them. 3. Share your views. 4. Brainstorm. 5. Find the best solution.
- 3 Share a personal problem with an adult you trust. See if the exchanging of viewpoints leads to new insights and ideas about your problem.
- 4 This week, look around and notice how much synergy is going on all around you, such as two hands working together, teamwork, symbiotic relationships in nature, and creative problem solving.
- 5 Think about someone who irritates you. What is different about them?

What can you learn from them? _____

- 6 Brainstorm with your friends and come up with something fun, new, and different to do this weekend, instead of doing the same old thing again and again.
- 7 Rate your openness to diversity in each of the following categories. Are you a shunner, tolerator, or celebrator?

	SHUNNER	TOLERATOR	CELEBRATOR
Race			
Gender			
Religion			
Age			
Dress			

What can you do to become a celebrator in each category?
