

This week I finish my *Leader in Me* series with the final installment of **Habit 7 Sharpen the Saw, “The Habit of Self-Renewal”**. Thinking back of the 16 years teaching Woodworking in the shop, students would consistently have to be told to take good care of equipment and tools in order to maintain them for the next person who may need it. Despite the warnings, students would get in a hurry, wanting to get their project quickly, and not bother to check the condition/adjustment of the band saw, table saw, or jigsaw blades. Or only after doing damage to their project did they realize the router bit, biscuit joiner, or planer wasn’t sharpened/adjusted correctly. It was especially important for me as their instructor to provide preventative maintenance as well. Each summer I removed all saw blades and had them professionally sharpened in preparation for the upcoming school year. This analogy relates well to the challenge we have as individuals to maintain renewal, continuous improvement, and balance in our daily lives. How are we preparing in advance for the challenges of each day, to consistently prevent difficulties and challenges that may occur?

Taking the time daily to invest in ourselves gives us the ability to do everything else that we face throughout the day. In Covey’s words, “this highly effective practice helps us to achieve *Daily Private Victory*. Humans are made up of four dimensions, Body, Heart, Mind, and Soul, with each aspect requiring continuous renewal to remain in balance. If one is neglected, it will negatively impact the other three. In the same way, if each is nourished, all four will flourish. Habit 7, Sharpen the Saw, is the ability to preserve and enhance the greatest asset you have- YOU”!

For me it’s all about getting up in time each morning for devotion and reflection, controlling my temper and not saying unkind things to people, overcoming the fear of the “What If’s” of life, disciplining myself to eat healthily, and protecting the family table time. The *Daily Private Victory* is a practice. Its pattern, routine, or regimen that you follow every day to renew yourself in the four dimensions of life. The *Daily Private Victory* allows you to master the *Public Victory*. Achieving the *Daily Private Victory* will affect every decision and every relationship in a positive way. When we invest in ourselves we can more effectively then invest and serve others.

Sharpen the Saw!!

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