

Have you ever wondered, “Are Stephen Covey’s 7 Habits the same as character traits?” If so, that is a very good question to ask. In his book titled The Leader In Me, Stephen Covey clarifies the relationship between the 7 Habits and character traits.

“The 7 Habits contain many of the traits and life skills that parents, business leaders, and educators have been calling our students to be taught. The first column contains competencies, while the far right column contains character traits. This points out that while the 7 Habits do contain character traits, they are about more than character. They contain workforce and life-readiness skills, or what we again are calling **leadership skills.**” Leader in Me (2008) by Stephen Covey.

Habits	Competencies	Character Traits
Habits 1-3 Be Proactive Begin with the End in Mind Put First Things First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal setting • Planning • Time Management • Organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiative • Responsibility • Vision • Integrity
Habits 4-6 Think Win Win Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood Synergize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict Management • Listening/Empathy • Speaking Skills • Problem Solving • Teamwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Ethics/Manners • Honesty • Openness • Valuing Diversity
Habit 7 Sharpen The Saw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Wellness • Social Skills • Mental Skills • Emotional Stability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution/Meaning • Desire to Learn • Fun

Now let’s take a look at just one example... responsibility. You may think of this word as “response-ability” or the ability to choose our response. Our behavior and actions are a product of our choices which are based on **values**.

Proactive leaders recognize the importance of being responsible. We are responsible for our own lives. We are responsible to make things happen. We are responsible to do the right thing.

Here is one way to see how the 7 Habits align with Character Traits

Be Proactive -	Responsibility
Begin With the End in Mind -	Good Judgment
Put First Things First -	Self-Discipline & Trustworthiness
Think Win-Win -	Courage & Fairness
Seek First to Understand, then to be Understood -	Kindness & Caring
Synergize -	Respect & Citizenship
Sharpen The Saw -	Perseverance

Courage - Attempting difficult things that are worthwhile

Good Judgment - Basing decisions on practical wisdom and good sense

Integrity - Being truthful, trustworthy and honest in all things

Kindness - Being considerate, courteous, helpful, and understanding of others

Perseverance - Pursuing worthy objectives in spite of difficulty

Respect - Understanding all people have value

(Source: AB Combs Counseling Corner)