Habit 6: **Synergize** - *Work together to achieve more*

Synergy is the creation of a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. 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. 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, 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.

**Synergy Is:**

- Celebrating Differences
- Teamwork
- Open-mindedness
- Finding new and better ways
- Thinking outside the box
- Brainstorming

**Synergy Is Not:**

- Tolerating differences
- Working independently
- Thinking you’re always right
- Compromise
- Always coloring within the lines
- Insisting on only one right answer

**Roadblocks to Synergy** - Although there are many, two of the largest roadblocks to synergy are cliques and prejudice.

**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. Those on the outside feel like second-class citizens, and those on the inside often suffer from superiority complexes.

**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.

**Reflection**
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. Where do you see synergy around you? Nature? School? Family? Community or Church?

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.

This week, look around and notice how much synergy is going on around you, such as two hands working together and teamwork.

A time when I was outside a clique or observed someone else outside a clique was:

Something I can do to avoid treating others with prejudice is:

An area in which I might be prejudiced is:

One thing I can do to overcome this prejudice is: