

# Personal Effectiveness

A guide to understanding personal development and effectiveness



sixty of enlightened learning  
1946 – 2006 years

roffeypark



developing  
learning  
growing

Roffey Park's approach to personal effectiveness	2
Developing greater self-confidence	4
Self-knowledge	5
Self-awareness	7
Learning through reflection	10
Building relationships and working with others	11
Final thoughts	12
About Roffey Park	14

Developing personal effectiveness is essential today. Increasingly we need to influence without formal authority and we cannot do this without confidence, clarity of purpose and the communication skills to fully express ourselves. Our roles as leaders or managers – in tough times, or during change – also require that we draw on who we are, as well as what we do to inspire and engage our people. And from coaching through to organisational development, the concept of using your 'self as an instrument' is at the heart of bringing about successful individual and organisational change.

Roffey Park is a leader in the field of Personal Effectiveness having developed people in organisations for 60 years. Our approach is based on several important assumptions:

- That 'we're all right as we are' and that we have within us all that we need to grow and become more effective in the world.
- We are naturally predisposed to learn, grow and change in order to maximise our own potential.

- We are willing to take responsibility for ourselves and our own learning.
- Who we are is as important as what we do.
- Change occurs not just by reading or thinking but by also doing.
- And that greater self-awareness enables us to have more choices, and thus make better decisions that will result in increased personal effectiveness.

The purpose of this guide is to help you change what you do on a daily basis in a way that will have a direct impact on your personal effectiveness. It provides a number of practical exercises which have been drawn from our research and the work we do with groups and individuals from all levels within a wide range of organisations.



## Here's a story from Stephen Covey's book 'The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People' to set the scene.

*Imagine walking through the woods and coming across a man chopping down a tree. He's making heavy weather of it. He has obviously been working at this task for hours, without making much progress. He is sweating and looks exhausted and you notice he's using a blunt saw.*

*'Why don't you take a short break and sharpen your saw?' you ask, 'then I'm sure it will go a lot faster'.*

*'I don't have time to sharpen the saw' the man says emphatically, 'I'm too busy sawing!'*

You see the problem. And this story often becomes a metaphor for our own lives. With the increasing complexity of day to day living – the pace at which we need to work, the blurring of boundaries between work and home and competing priorities – we often have little time to 'sharpen our saw'. But we need to take time out to develop ourselves as this is at the heart of being personally effective.

The focus on developing yourself runs throughout this guide – just as it does in the work we do at Roffey Park. Organisational effectiveness ultimately depends on the effectiveness of its individuals, irrespective of role or position. We hope to provide you with some thought-provoking and practical suggestions for developing your personal effectiveness. These will also help you develop others.



*'Man often becomes what he believes himself to be. If I keep on saying to myself that I cannot do a certain thing, it is possible that I may end by really becoming incapable of doing it. On the contrary, if I shall have the belief that I can do it, I shall surely acquire the capacity to do it, even if I may not have it at the beginning.'* **Mahatma Gandhi**

Self-confidence arises from having positive self-esteem. Your self-esteem is influenced by what you believe about yourself – whether you think about yourself positively or negatively. Gandhi's words demonstrate how your beliefs can have a positive or negative effect on your behaviour and therefore your effectiveness.

Positive self-esteem is not something you are born with. It is influenced by the experiences you have and by the actions and words of those around you, from the time when you were very young up to and including what happened yesterday. You learn to hold yourself in high or low regard depending on how you interpret both the messages you receive from others and those you give yourself. It's something you learn and if it's unhelpful to you as an adult, you can change it. But how? The first thing is to identify any negative messages you are giving yourself about your self-worth. Think of those voices as representing your 'inner critic' which can be heard every time you think negatively, fear the future, put yourself down, doubt your abilities, or expect failure. Start with these questions:

1. What are some limiting beliefs you hold about yourself? Examples might be 'I'm not very intelligent' or 'I don't deserve good things'.

2. Which of these limiting beliefs hold you back the most? There might be one or two that really get in the way of your personal effectiveness.
3. How have these limiting beliefs held you back in your life so far?
4. What will they continue to cost you if you don't do anything about them?

Now turn your responses to Question 1 into messages that improve your self-esteem. It is very difficult to silence your 'inner critic' completely but you can increase the volume of the voice that represents your 'inner fan' by turning your limiting beliefs into positive affirmations. Consistent use of these will begin to alter the basis and structure of your self talk or inner voice and produce a transformation from poor self-esteem to positive self-esteem.

So write out your limiting beliefs and then rephrase them as positive statements, written as if they are already true. Write these out and repeat them to yourself several times a day, for example – 'I am bright and intelligent' or 'I have the intelligence I need to be successful in anything I decide to do'.

Another way to boost your confidence is get into the habit of trying new things on a daily basis. We often get stuck into routines and habits which get in the way of new and different experiences. For example, if you always read the same newspaper every day, try reading a very different one for the next week. If you always have typical 'breakfast foods' in the morning, try eating for breakfast what you might eat for dinner. If you always take one route to work, try an alternative for a week. See how these small shifts help you see the world differently.

*'Know thyself'* **Delphic oracle***'You have come here to find what you already have.'* **Buddhist aphorism**

The ability to be effective rests on knowing who you are and this will have a direct impact on how you behave. It is therefore vital that you develop your knowledge of you – including your values and beliefs as well as your strengths, weaknesses, motivations, achievements and the effect you have on others.

There are several ways that you can start on this journey.

1. Try writing your autobiography. Chapter 1 should be about your life so far, Chapter 2 your life today and Chapter 3 your hopes and wishes for the future.
2. Consider your answers to some of these questions:
  - What do you stand for?
  - What line won't you cross?
  - What will people get from you?
  - What difference will you make?
  - What do you value most in life?
  - What has made you who you are today?
3. Learn to meditate daily. Research proves time and again that this has enormous benefits for health and relaxation as well as our intellect. Even taking 10 minutes each day, sitting quietly with no distractions and just letting your thoughts emerge can allow us to get to know ourselves better.

And another important part of developing self-knowledge is to elicit feedback from others.

Remember that feedback is simply information about our impact on others. It is neutral – neither positive or negative although we often associate it with negatives so it's natural to avoid seeking feedback if we fear what people might say. However, people have information about you that could be very helpful in developing greater effectiveness, so be courageous and ask them to share their knowledge with you!

Here are some guidelines in asking for feedback:

- Ask a range of people - those who know you well and those who know you less well; people you consider will be 'fans' and others who will act as 'critical friend'.
- Start by asking for feedback about the things you do that people appreciate, value, think you do well and want to see you keep doing or do more of. And only then ask for things that people find you do less well, are less helpful, or want you to do differently.

- Try not to respond defensively to what you hear, or rush in to justify something. Listen with a sense of curiosity and remember that it can also be difficult to give feedback as well as receive it.
- If necessary, ask for more clarification. 'Can you give me an example of the sort of behaviour you mention?' or 'Have there been other times when you feel I have behaved that way to you?' Stay curious and open.
- Accept praise graciously! Often we trivialise or deny good things that are said about us. Recognise when praise is given and acknowledge it – 'thank you, I also think I did that well'.
- Remember you have choices in receiving feedback. You can accept what is said (sometimes it will chime with what you already know - or suspect - about yourself); you could dismiss what is said as not true (and run the risk of not learning from the messages); you can check some things out (by asking for more detail, or asking someone else whether they have seen the same thing in you); or you can file it away for further reflection. Whatever you do, you now have some data about yourself that you didn't have before.



*'I think self-awareness is probably the most important thing towards being a champion.'*

**Billie Jean King**

*'When dealing with people, remember you are not dealing with creatures of logic, but creatures of emotion.'*

**Dale Carnegie**

There is much research to demonstrate that your effectiveness in both your work and personal life is directly linked to your awareness of emotions – both your own and others. The phrase 'emotional intelligence' or 'social intelligence' has come to represent this focus.

Cognitive ability is important but to some extent it can be compensated for by working harder (or creatively) to master technical skills. However, research shows emotional intelligence is often a greater predictor of effectiveness than IQ. The emphasis of IQ is on tasks while the emphasis of emotional intelligence is on people and relationships.

Within the working environment, there is an increasingly higher premium placed on connecting to people and understanding them so you can develop better relationships. After all, work is little more than groups of people working together for a common goal. Yet too often, people operate in a social vacuum, without realising the way to achieve more in their work is to find a way to connect with others. It is about how you develop relationships with people that make them want to work with you or for you.

In short, this aspect of self-awareness comprises two parts: **interpersonal intelligence** – being intelligent in picking up what is going on inside us and doing what we need to do about it (self-awareness) and **intrapersonal intelligence** – being intelligent in picking up in what's going on between other people and how they are feeling.

Here are two exercises to increase your effectiveness in this area.



**I. Self-awareness:** to broaden and deepen your awareness of what you are feeling.

All feelings or emotions start with something happening at a physiological level, so your body is the most effective diagnostic tool to help you tune in to what you're experiencing. Paying greater attention to what your body is telling you will help you better understand your feelings and intuitions.

Conduct a regular body check. From time to time, simply switch off from what you're doing (close your eyes if you can) and 'sweep' the various parts of your body with your attention. What do you notice? And what clues do these physical feelings give you about your emotions? Can you give a

'feeling' name to what you are experiencing? At first you might find this difficult but as you gain in experience you will be able to identify more and more subtle emotions. To help you with this, we have included a list of emotions on page 13. When you identify an emotion, ask yourself a range of questions including:

- 'Why am I feeling this?'
- 'What (if anything) do I need to do about it?'
- 'How often does this feeling arise in me?'
- 'What patterns or trends are emerging?'

Regular meditation will help with this exercise and it may also help to start a journal of these observations.



**2. Awareness of others:** to develop a greater understanding of others' emotions, develop empathy and demonstrate a real interest in others.

Being aware of others provides you with the foundation for better relationships, with a member of your family, a colleague, or a difficult client at work. Other people's emotions are often not directly expressed but are embedded in their body language (as are yours). So you sometimes have to develop a different sort of 'listening' that involves looking for small clues in their body language and then interpreting what we think we see (or sometimes sense).

When listening to someone try to:

- Practice paying attention to what people might be feeling. Until you feel confident,

you don't have to act on what you pick up. Just getting into the habit of sensing or noticing can be useful.

- Summarise what they have said (the content) but also what you sense they are feeling. You will have some clues either from the language they use (or don't use) or from their behaviour and body language. For example, 'so you appear to agree with what I'm saying, but I sense from the expression on your face that you still have some concerns about it. Am I right?'. Or 'you have to deliver some bad news to Tom next week and I get the impression that you're nervous and anxious about it'.

When people feel that you are really listening then they are also likely to feel that you understand them, or are at least trying to. Identifying emotions in others also helps people feel as if you are seeing them as a person and not simply a resource for a task.



*'In times of profound change, the learners inherit the earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists.'*

**Al Rogers**

Whether you are developing your effectiveness to move into a more senior role or simply wanting to make a greater impact in your job, one of the most important things you can do for yourself is reflected in the quotation above. Become a continuous learner. Doris Lessing described learning as 'suddenly understanding something you've understood all your life, but in a new way'. You don't need to attend a training course to do that and one of the most effective (and cost-effective) way of developing your own effectiveness is to cultivate the habit of reflective learning.

Reflective learning requires that you look back over past events and review them, searching out the meaning in those events in a way that can help you become more effective. By looking back you can reconstruct how events took place, to see what influenced them or if you followed what you had set out to do. You can examine your role in the process, what worked and what didn't, what were you pleased about and was less successful. What was the impact of your behaviour, either positive or negative, on yourself or others? What else might you have done? Looking back also allows you to look forward and ask yourself the following questions. Based on what you've learned from this review, what might you do next time? What have you learned about yourself that you needed to know for the future?

Consider taking the following actions:

- Build a series of questions for yourself based on those in the previous column and get into the habit of reviewing events regularly, even daily.
- Remember to review successes as well as events that didn't go so well. You might also include your reflections on a change in your behaviour that you have been trying, or your reflections on something someone said. It doesn't need to be huge event - even a passing conversation can be the source of much learning for you.

You can do this as personal reflection in the form of a journal, but also with others. Find a 'thinking partner' – someone who could meet up with you from time to time over a period of some months, someone to discuss ideas with, to share experiences with and who can offer you support and challenge. It could be someone who is working on similar issues as you. Split the time between you, taking turns to talk and listen – something that can be done either formally in a meeting room or by going for a walk together.

## 11 Building relationships and working with others

*'The most important single ingredient in the formula of success is knowing how to get along with people.'* **Theodore Roosevelt**

*Piglet sidled up to Pooh from behind. 'Pooh!' he whispered. 'Yes, Piglet?' 'Nothing' said Piglet, taking Pooh's paw. 'I just wanted to be sure of you.'* **A A Milne**

Today's working environment depends very much on relationships – both working with and through other people. It is rare that you can be effective without the reciprocal giving and taking from others that creates opportunities for your growth and your effectiveness. Your personal effectiveness depends to a large extent on the support and challenge that only other people can give you.

These next points represent a range of things that you can do to strengthen your relationships with others.

- This guide began by focusing on ways to raise your own self-esteem. Another way to do this – and to help others along the way – is to help them raise theirs. Take every opportunity to show them gratitude, appreciation, acceptance and encouragement. And when you can, be specific or provide an example of what they did and why it worked for you.
- Take time to truly listen to people. This may require 'listening beyond your tolerance level' but when people speak, give them quality attention. Stop, look and listen – making sure to make eye contact, to ask questions about what they are saying (both in term of content and emotions, as in the above exercise).

- Equally, you need to tell people about yourself. If you want someone to tell you about themselves, there is no better way of getting this information than giving them an insight about yourself. There seems to be a certain matching quality about questions and answers of this kind, particularly if the subject matter is personal. So rather than put people off or create embarrassment, self-disclosure is a proven way to develop and deepen relationships. However, it can feel risky, so you may want to wait until you feel confident - take courage and reach out to another person and talk to them about the things that matter most to you.
- Take on the role of coach for people and encourage them to think through their own problems. Rather than rushing in with your own ideas for solutions (which may be good ones – but hold them back) ask some good coaching questions like 'what ideas do you have for tackling this issue' or 'what have you tried so far and with what success?'. Try to encourage people's ideas and build their self-confidence.
- Offer feedback to others. You may have found that the self-knowledge which came from receiving feedback was useful. Equally, do you have information about others that they might find useful? First check out that they want to hear what you have to say. And the following model can be useful – 'when you did or said x, this is what I thought and it had this impact on me'.

Having read this guide, some things may have resonated with you. You might have thought that some of the suggestions or advice sounded helpful. But you'll never know unless you chose to try out some of the ideas.

My challenge to you now is to select one thing that you think might make a difference to your own personal effectiveness. Choose something that can be done each day and something that takes no more than 15 minutes (we think this applies to all of the ideas). Now commit to doing it for 21 days, each and every day and see what impact it has on your effectiveness.

Roffey Park's purpose is to help individuals and organisations learn, grow and become more effective. We often do that not by 'teaching' in the traditional sense but by engaging people in conversations that support and challenge them.

We have found the exercises in this guide have helped participants on our programmes and we are always interested in engaging with other people, both on specific topics and as part of our research programme. Please try the exercises in this guide and email me to tell me how it went. What did you try? What worked well? What impact did it have on you, and on others? What impact did it have on your personal effectiveness? What did you learn?

I look forward to hearing from you!



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## 13 Emotional vocabulary

Happy	Sad	Angry	Confused
Excited	Dissatisfied	Annoyed	Baffled
Blissful	Awful	Cross	Bewildered
Alive	Lonely	Grumpy	Harassed
Bubbly	Down	Irritated	Mixed up
Wonderful	Dreary	Indignant	Lost
Thrilled	Gloomy	Livid	Misunderstood
Lovely	Unwanted	Furious	Muddled
Proud	Hopeless	Outraged	Puzzled
Stupendous	Fed-up	Aggressive	Distraught
Elated	Grumpy	Seething	Unsure
Joyful	Miserable	Hostile	Hazy
Good	Sorry	Hateful	Unclear
Glad	Low	Enraged	Perplexed
Light	Deflated	Bad-tempered	Flustered

### Roffey Park programmes which cover personal effectiveness:

- Personal Effectiveness and Power – developing skills of influence, assertion and confidence  
[www.roffeypark.com/pep](http://www.roffeypark.com/pep)
- Interpersonal Relationships in Organisations – getting the most out of your relationships at work  
[www.roffeypark.com/iro](http://www.roffeypark.com/iro)
- Mastering Self Management – making better choices to maximise your performance  
[www.roffeypark.com/msm](http://www.roffeypark.com/msm)
- Developing Leadership Potential – ‘to know leadership is to know yourself’: developing choice and flexibility in leadership styles  
[www.roffeypark.com/dlp](http://www.roffeypark.com/dlp)

Roffey Park was originally set up by far-sighted individuals with the backing of enlightened companies who recognised the need to help their staff deal with the anxiety and stress of working in wartime. Decades ahead of its time, the interest in this revolutionary tailored approach was such that Roffey Park set up a Research and Training Institute in 1946 to provide training and research into what we have always believed in, the link between personal well-being and productive working.

Today we help people and organisations succeed, particularly in the areas of personal effectiveness, leadership, management, organisational development and HR. We continually update our expertise in these areas through researching the individual's experience at work and what makes organisations more effective.

**For more information, please visit**  
[www.roffeypark.com](http://www.roffeypark.com)

## Roffey Park Services

### **Executive Development Programmes.**

We offer a range of highly relevant programmes that are 2-5 days long and are designed for people, usually in groups of 12, from different organisations. Programmes are designed to encourage participants to work with real issues as well as exploring research and theory.

**Bespoke Services.** Here we address the needs of a particular organisation. We may become involved in a wide range of issues such as developing leadership capabilities, strategy, people management, managing change, executive coaching or wider

organisational development initiatives. Our approach is underpinned by clear insight and innovative design.

**Research.** Our research is recognised by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) among others as independent and high quality. Our focus is on the individual's experience at work and what makes organisations more effective. Recent reports and open seminars have covered organisational change, leadership, mergers and partnerships.

**Events and conferences.** We hold conferences, seminars, workshops and masterclasses. Designed to offer learning through shared experience with respected thinkers and practitioners, these events are thought-provoking and practical.

**MSc qualification.** Our MSc in People and Organisational Development is accredited by the University of Sussex. The qualification uses a Self Managed Learning process, which encourages people to learn in the same way as they work – by identifying personal goals and working with others to achieve the result of most relevance to them and their organisation.

If you would like more information or to receive 'Developing People', our quarterly newsletter, please contact us on: +44 (0)1293 851644 or email: [info@roffeypark.com](mailto:info@roffeypark.com).

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