

A FREE EXCERPT FROM

The Human Effectiveness Code

Seven Steps to Finding Purpose, Meaning & Lasting Fulfillment

THE INTRODUCTION

by Skip Wilkins

Introduction

Have you ever wondered how some individuals have acquired the ability—with insight and wisdom—to make more informed decisions and take unique actions that consistently produce meaningful and fulfilling outcomes?

They have achieved a metamorphosis, if you will. They have acquired the ability to move from living a life by default to a life crafted by design — a life that becomes the foundation for their effectiveness as fully functioning human beings.

If you answered “yes” to the above question, then know this: so have I! And if you haven’t considered that question before, I invite you now to join me in discovering the answer.

That question intrigued me enough—and over a long enough period—that I chose to look more deeply into the process by which people significantly increase their effectiveness in any area of their life.

So, I went on a quest!

The perfect opportunity to explore this question came during my early years as an executive in the human resources department of a major utility in Phoenix, Arizona. In that capacity, I led a dedicated team of professionals across several functions: Executive/management/employee development, skills and apprenticeship training, employee relations, employee health services, AA/EEO compliance, human resource planning and performance management. Together, we were responsible for the oversight of 6,000 employees.

Over time, I noticed a pattern: There were certain individuals who consistently demonstrated clarity, resilience, and strong decision-making. They had their lives in order—not just professionally, but personally as well. I observed they consistently made choices and decisions that promoted a sense of competence and confidence. I became curious. What guided their choices? What principles, if any, were they living by? What made their effectiveness so consistent? I discovered there was a similarity in their thought processes that provided a foundation for these individuals to be highly effective in all they chose to do and accomplish.

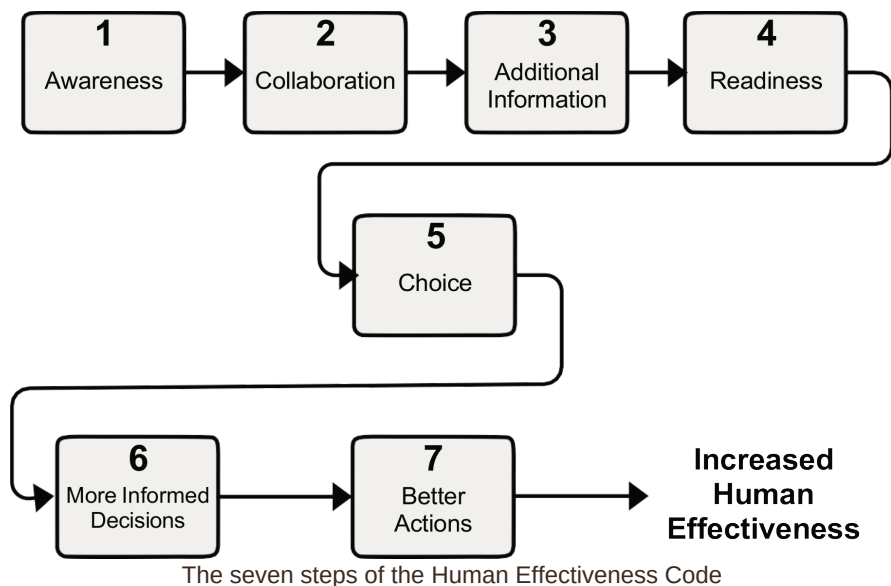
Eventually, after leaving the utility and launching my own consulting firm, Integrated Performance Systems, I have had the privilege over the past 20 years to explore those questions even further—this time with clients across a variety of business sectors. In the process, I discovered the most effective people didn’t rely on random tactics. They followed a repeatable pattern—a series of internal steps and conditions that consistently led to positive, productive, growth-oriented action.

The breakthrough, after analyzing and understanding the necessary components of human effectiveness, came on a flight from Atlanta to Phoenix. As the thoughts began to crystallize, I sketched out what would become the foundation of what I now call the Human Effectiveness Code—a framework that maps how people move from awareness to action to lasting fulfillment.

To decipher the code and for ease of understanding, I have unlocked the seven components of the code which lead to increased human effectiveness.

Overview: The “Big” Picture

Let’s first examine the “big” picture and the necessary components required for the increasing of a person’s effectiveness. Below is a schematic which identifies those components which lead to and enable higher levels of performance.



The model includes seven interconnected components which lead to increased effectiveness:

- 1. Awareness.** Becoming conscious of your thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and actions. Being self-aware includes understanding your own feelings, values, and beliefs.
- 2. Collaboration.** Inviting feedback, perspective, and insight from others to deepen awareness and accelerate learning.
- 3. Additional information.** Seeking out new knowledge, data, and perspectives to broaden your understanding. It is necessary to avoid being limited by lack of knowledge, resources, and information.

4. Readiness. Reaching a personal and mental state where change is not only possible, but welcome. One must be ready and willing to make a choice to grow and change for the better. Take, for example, someone who has become addicted to drugs or alcohol. A well-planned intervention by family members, significant others, and a professional counselor will fail if the addicted individual is not “ready” to hear the others, accept the need for sobriety, and make a positive choice to change for a better, healthier life.

5. Choice. Exercising the power to select actions that align with your values, priorities, and goals. The greatest power we have as a “human becoming” is the power to choose! The power of choice is both a blessing and a challenge. It gives us the freedom to create our destiny, but it also requires us to take responsibility for the impact of our decisions. By embracing this power, and by making thoughtful and intentional choices, we can create a life that is rich with meaning, purpose, and fulfillment.

6. More informed decisions. Making better decisions because of clarity, context, and discernment.

7. Better actions. Engaging in behavior that is deliberate, effective, and aligned with your desired outcomes.

These components form a progressive flow—from an internal understanding to external effectiveness. Each one builds on the others to create sustainable, intentional growth.

I had originally created the model without the collaboration component. However, wanting to “field test” the validity of the model, I challenged my graduate students at the University of Phoenix to analyze and discuss the model in my classes during their enrollment in Organizational Leadership.

I asked, “What is it that I may have omitted from my ‘formula?’” They informed me that to move “exponentially” from “awareness” to “additional information” a catalyst was needed! That catalyst, they proposed, would be to add “collaboration.” That is, inviting others to provide insights, wisdom, recommendations, and thoughtful answers in my quest to learn and grow.

They were right. As soon as you invite others to share their insight—when you open yourself up to external perspectives—you accelerate your development. The model was complete! As we navigate together, let’s explore, analyze, and better understand the seven exciting “components” that make up the model, and in turn, provide the ability to best understand...and apply, the key, critical components to achieving your own increased human effectiveness!

As we prepare for our journey, we should clarify, and be sure we understand, the difference between two terms: effectiveness and efficiency. To better help with that understanding, examine the schematic below.

Visualization of Efficiency vs Effectiveness

Efficiency focuses on doing things right, minimizing waste and maximizing output with available resources. Effectiveness, on the other hand, centers on doing the right things, ensuring that the chosen actions lead to the desired outcome. Effectiveness prioritizes achieving goals, while efficiency focuses on optimizing the process of achieving them.

For clarity purposes, let's look at several examples of both efficiency and effectiveness.

Efficiency

- Automating repetitive tasks to reduce manual labor.
- Streamlining workflows to reduce bottlenecks and delays.
- Optimizing inventory management to reduce storage costs and waste.

What we are simply asking is, “How can we do this task faster, with less cost, and fewer resources?”

Effectiveness

- Successfully launching a product or service that meets customer needs and generates revenue.
- Achieving a sales target by effectively targeting the right customers.
- Implementing a marketing campaign that increases brand awareness.

With effectiveness, we are asking, “Are we doing the right things to achieve our goals? Are our actions leading to the desired end results?”

Guidelines for Application of What Is Learned in This Book

To expedite your success in maximizing your fullest potential, each chapter will conclude with a practical applications section. These are designed to help you implement what you've learned and provide insight and steps to more quickly guide you in applying the lessons learned as you move through each of the chapters in this book.

As we move forward in our journey, I want to introduce you to a “secret ingredient” that will optimize your growth in performance and effectiveness. That secret ingredient is the use of “affirmative reminders”!

Introducing Affirmative Reminders: Unlocking Your Inner Effectiveness

Before we dive into the model, let me offer you something simple—but powerful—that will help you engage this process more deeply.

As you explore each of the seven components of effectiveness in the chapters ahead, you'll find a "tool" at the end of each one—something designed to help you not only understand the principles, but internalize them. That tool is called an affirmative reminder.

What Are Affirmative Reminders?

Affirmative reminders are short, emotionally resonant statements designed to anchor a specific mindset, identity, or intention. They're a form of positive affirmation—but crafted to be more targeted, more personal, and deeply integrated into your growth journey. Each one is:

- **Personal** – phrased in your voice, often starting with "I am" or "I choose."
- **Present tense** – written as though already true and already been achieved.
- **Emotionally charged** – designed to shift belief and reinforce confidence.
- **Repeatable** – simple enough to return to again and again.

They don't just help you remember what matters. They help you become someone who lives like it matters.

What to Expect in This Book

At the end of each chapter, you'll find a set of affirmative reminders that match the core idea you just explored. These are more than summaries—they are practice tools. They will help you:

- Reinforce what you've learned.
- Recenter your attention.
- Rewire limiting beliefs.

You won't have to search for them—they're built right in. By the time you finish each chapter, the reminders will feel like natural extensions of what you just discovered. Let them echo what you've learned and open a space for who you're becoming.

Why They Work

"The way you think determines the way you feel, and the way you feel determines the way you act. If you want to change how you act, you must begin by changing the way you think."

— Rick Warren

Affirmative reminders, also referred to as affirmations, are rooted in the science of personal transformation. They will help you:

Rewire thought patterns through neuroplasticity. When affirmations are repeated regularly, especially with words that elicit emotion, they stimulate neuroplasticity—the brain’s ability to form and strengthen new neural pathways. Over time, the brain starts to accept these affirmations as familiar and true, replacing old, unhelpful thought patterns.

“Neurons that fire together, wire together.”

— Donald Hebb

Train Your Attention Using the Reticular Activating System (RAS). The Reticular Activating System (RAS) is the brain’s natural attention filter. Every moment, your five senses receive an overwhelming amount of information. Without a filtering system, you would quickly experience information overload.

The RAS solves this problem. It filters incoming information and allows through what it believes is important to you. Your focus tells the RAS what matters.

How Affirmations Influence the RAS. When you repeatedly focus on an idea—through affirmations—you signal to your brain that this idea is important. The RAS then begins highlighting information, opportunities, and experiences that support that focus. For example, if you affirm, “I am surrounded by supportive people,” your attention naturally begins to notice acts of kindness, encouragement, and cooperation that you may have previously overlooked. In this way, your focus shapes what your mind allows you to see.

The Mental Process. Words. Your affirmation or statement of focus. Pictures. Images are created by the words you think and say. Emotions. The images create feelings. Performance. Feelings influence behavior and actions.

Words → Pictures → Emotions → Performance

Over time, repeated focus strengthens this cycle and supports meaningful change.

How Words Create Mental Images. Words immediately trigger pictures in the mind. If someone says “blue car,” you instantly imagine one. But if they then say “yellow school bus,” your mental image changes just as quickly. This illustrates an important principle: your mind tends to follow the images created by the words you repeat. In turn, your behavior and performance changes accordingly!

A Simple Example of the RAS at Work. My brother Tim recently wanted to buy a new Honda Ridgeline pickup with specific features. Because he thought about and talked about it often, he began noticing Ridgelines everywhere.

- While driving past a dealership, he quickly spotted several silver Ridgelines on the lot.
- At a stoplight, he immediately noticed a Ridgeline next to us with many of the features he wanted.

To Tim, these trucks suddenly seemed to appear everywhere. Why? The reticular activating system was in full operational mode! But the trucks were always there. The difference was his attention.

Because Tim had focused his thoughts on that specific vehicle, his RAS began discovering them in his environment. Eventually, Tim purchased the exact truck he had been envisioning.

The Key Lesson

Your brain constantly filters reality. What gets through that filter depends largely on what you consistently focus on. When you repeatedly direct your attention toward a goal, value, or belief, your RAS begins helping you notice people, information, and opportunities that support it. Sadly, if you focus on the things you “don’t want,” that also gets through the reticular activating system!

For example, have you ever focused on something you did not want to have happen? And when the happening took place... You affirmed, and said to yourself, “I knew that would happen!” You see, the reticular activating system doesn’t judge right or wrong, or good or bad, it simply seeks out that which you affirm! Train your focus and attention wisely.

Align your actions with your identity, making change feel natural instead of forced. Affirmations don’t just give you new thoughts. They help you see new options. They help you feel ready to act. And most importantly, they help you remember who you really are.

Turning Words into Change

These reminders aren’t homework, they’re invitations. You can:

- Speak them aloud each morning.
- Write them in your journal.
- Put them on a sticky note or in your phone.
- Whisper one during a walk.
- Sit with one before a big decision.

Use them as mirrors. Use them as mantras. Use them as anchors. I encourage you to write your own. The best reminders are the ones that feel like they came from you—because they did.

How to Write Your Own

- Start with “I am” or “I choose.”
- Use the present tense—as if it’s already true and already accomplished!
- Be specific about what matters. Not “I want to lose weight,” but rather, “I want to lose 10 pounds within the next thirty days.”
- Use positive emotion to bring it to life. “I enjoy discovering new learning opportunities!”
- Avoid “always” or “never”—say “consistently” or “regularly.”
- Imagine yourself living it and feeling it emotionally!

Here are two examples that meet the above criteria for writing a powerful, impactful affirmative reminder:

“I enjoy creating a positive, productive and constructive work environment.”

“I consciously choose to respond, not react, to life and work situations.”

The Key Principle

The brain gradually accepts what it repeatedly experiences as real. Consistent affirmations help move an idea through a natural progression:

Idea → Possibility → Belief → Identity → Behavior

When a thought is repeated with attention and emotion, it begins to shape how you see yourself—and how you act.

A Practical Daily Formula

Affirmations are most effective when practiced briefly and consistently rather than repeated constantly throughout the day.

Morning (3 minutes). Begin the day with 5–10 affirmations while visualizing the person you want to become.

Midday Reset (1 minute). Repeat 3–5 affirmations to refocus your attention and direction.

Evening Reflection (3 minutes). Repeat 5–10 affirmations while reflecting on moments from the day that support your desired growth.

Total time investment: about 5–7 minutes per day. Small daily focus creates meaningful long-term change.

What Changes Over Time

With consistent practice, many people experience change in stages:

- **2–4 weeks:** noticeable shifts in thinking and awareness.
- **6–8 weeks:** stronger behavioral changes.
- **3–6 months:** deeper identity-level transformation.

The key factors are consistency and emotional engagement, not the sheer number of repetitions.

A Final Reminder

Every person exhibits self-talk all day long. Your mind is constantly repeating messages about who you are and what is possible. Since this inner conversation is always happening, the real question is: why not direct it toward becoming the person you truly want to be?

From Insight to Identity

This book is about more than effectiveness. It’s about becoming someone who moves through the world with clarity, confidence, and quiet power. Each chapter will show you something essential. Each set of reminders will help you practice it.

I now invite you to join me as we explore and examine each of the seven components individually, and discover how each, in turn, contributes to optimizing human performance and increases human effectiveness!

What you’re about to read is the product of years of insight, challenge, reflection, and deep observation. But this isn’t just my story—it’s your opportunity. This book can guide you—but you are the one who will bring it to life!

Ready for Step One? The Human Effectiveness Code is available in hardcover, paperback, and ebook wherever books are sold. Visit thehumaneffectivenesscode.com for links and more from the Journal.