Zackary Swoboda

Sports Industry Careers

Prof. Novak

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How to Win Friends and Influence People – Book Analysis

Before I started reading, I frankly did not know what to expect. Nevertheless, I am very glad that I got the opportunity to read this book. *How to Win Friends and Influence People* taught me a lot about the world, and I am confident that I will go into both personal and professional situations much more prepared. As someone who struggles with anxiety and self-reflection, this book was a complete eye-opener to me in revealing my own personal faults and starting a period of self-growth to improve myself in as many ways as possible. That being said, I found a lot of things that I could apply to my life to start making these changes.

Three main takeaways that I got from the book would be to not be so self-centered, to be more friendly when making points, and to not be such a harsh leader. The author, Dale Carnegie, told of a story where the most used world in telephone conversations is "I" according to a study by The New York Telephone Company (56). Both on phone calls and in-person conversations, I tend to put the focus on me a lot. After hearing this recount of the study, I want to make a conscious effort in conversations to not use "I" but instead focus the conversation on whomever I am speaking with instead. Being self-centered is not a good trade to exhibit when trying to make friends or connections.

In part three, chapter four, the story of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. handling the miner situation gave me a different perspective on how I should handle conversations and

disagreements in a different manner (154). In my fraternity, I often come off as a bit aggressive during debates because I feel so strongly about our chapter and want what is best for all of us. However, sometimes I am pretty harsh in discussions. Therefore, I want to try and come off as a friendlier brother and co-worker to maintain positive relationships.

Lastly, the story about the teacher scolding the student who parked his car illegally struck a chord with me as well (238). The teacher was rude and gave demands instead of being understanding and asking questions. I am sure that there are times where I am too demanding and should instead ask questions to further comprehend a scenario and build (and maintain) a good rapport. These would be my three main takeaways from the book – care about others more, execute friendlier interactions, and understand/ask questions before reacting harshly.

There are also a multitude of advice pieces that I plan to implement into my routines. One principle was to "become genuinely interested in other people" (68). In this chapter, there are countless stories to tell of this principle in action, but the story of C. M. Knaphle, Jr. resonated with me. He was trying to sell fuel to a chain-store organization for ten years but could never pull it off. He eventually, though, stopped talking about his own desire to sell fuel day in and day out and spent just two hours listening to the executive's wants and needs. Then, the executive told Knaphle that the company will purchase fuel from him (65-66). This story alone shows me that I need to start caring more about other people, and then I too shall eventually reap the benefits of being kind and compassionate.

Part three, chapter one is titled "You Can't Win an Argument," which already took me by surprise because I tend to be a bit argumentative with an aim to "win" the argument. After reading the chapter, though, I understand now why an argument cannot be won. Two lines that Carnegie included were "A man convinced against his will / Is of the same opinion still" (123).

This reiterates that people will think of you poorly by "winning" an argument because you will make them feel poorly and even dislike you. The principle at the end of the chapter said that "the only way to get the best of an argument is to avoid it" (128). This crucial piece of advice is one that I plan to implement immediately.

The last piece of advice that I plan to utilize is to "make the other person happy about doing the thing you suggest" (268). The story of John the employee cleaning the stockroom showed me that there are so many ways to highlight benefits in a negative situation (267). I want to work on emphasizing positives for others when I make requests to show the other person what they will get out of it. It makes sense because people will feel more inclined to fulfill the request if they see personal benefit as well.

The one key point I disagreed with was tackled pretty early in the book. Carnegie writes in the first chapter that "ninety-nine times out of a hundred, people don't criticize themselves for anything, no matter how wrong it may be" (5). This did not sit well with me, and perhaps it was because I was still early in the book. However, I feel like most of my friends are almost hyper-critical of themselves to the point where they drive themselves crazy. I think that people are pretty quick to judge themselves if they are in a decent state of mind. The principle at the end is also "don't criticize, condemn or complain" (18). I feel that Carnegie makes a point to criticize yourself more though, so I think this should be cleared up.

Overall, I really enjoyed getting to read the book. I learned so much about how to have positive interactions with peers, co-workers, and bosses. Lately, I've been feeling worried about the future, but this book definitely helped settle some of my anxieties. With these takeaways and pieces of advice, I am confident in my ability to do well in my future conversations, interviews, and life in general. I would highly recommend this book to any college student!