

WHAT GOT YOU HERE, WON'T GET YOU THERE

by Marshall Goldsmith
Hyperion Books, 2007

- A lowly clerk expressing an opinion does not get people's notice at a company. But when the CEO expresses that opinion, everyone jumps to attention. The higher up you go, the more your suggestions become orders.
- Apologize to everyone affected by your flawed behavior because it is the only way to erase the negative baggage associated with our prior actions, and ask the same people for help in getting better.
- Advertise your efforts to bet better, people will not notice it on their own.
- Follow up religiously every month or so with colleagues because it is the only honest way to find out how you are doing and it reminds people that you are still trying.
- Listen without interrupting or arguing.
- Feed forward by eliciting advice from people on what they can do to get better in the future.
- Successful people tend to have a high internal locus of control. They do not feel like victims of fate. They see success for themselves and others as largely a function of people's motivation and ability not luck random chance, or external factors.
- Over-commitment can be as serious an obstacle to change as believing that you do not need fixing or that your flaws are part of the reason you are successful.
- When we do what we choose to do, we are committed. When we do what we have to do, we are compliant.
- If you press people to identify the motives behind their self-interest it usually boils down to four items: money, power, status, and popularity.
- People only change their ways when what they truly value is threatened.
- We spend a lot of time teaching leaders what to do. We do not spend enough time teaching leaders what to stop.
- Create a "to stop" list, not just a "to do" list.
- Winning too much: the need to win at all costs and in all situations – when it matters, when it does not, and when it is totally beside the point.
- Adding to much value: the overwhelming desire to add our two cents to every discussion
- Passing judgment: The need to rate others and impose our standards on them
- Making destructive comments: The needless sarcasms and cutting remarks that we think make us sound sharp and witty
- Starting with "no," "But," or "However": The over use of these negative qualifiers which secretly say to everyone, I'm right. You are wrong."
- Telling the world how smart we are: The need to show people we are smarter than they think we are.
- Speaking when angry: Using emotional volatility as a management tool
- Negativity, or "Let me explain why that won't work": The need to share our negative thoughts even when we were not asked
- Withholding information: The refusal to share information in order to maintain an advantage over others
- Failing to give proper recognition: The inability to praise and reward.

- Claiming credit that we do not deserve: The most annoying way to overestimate our contribution to any success
- Making excuses: The need to reposition our annoying behavior as a permanent fixture so people excuse us for it.
- Clinging to the past: The need to deflect blame away from ourselves and onto events and people from our past; a subset of blaming everyone else.
- Playing favorites: Failing to see that we are treating someone unfairly
- Refusing to express regret: The inability to take responsibility for our actions, admit we are wrong, or recognize how our actions affect others.
- Not listening: The most passive-aggressive form of disrespect for colleagues
- Failing to express gratitude: The most basic form of bad manners
- Punishing the messenger: The misguided need to attack the innocent who are usually only trying to help us.
- Passing the buck: The need to blame everyone but ourselves
- An excessive need to be “me”: Exalting our faults as virtues simply because they are who we are.
- You are not allowed to judge any helpful comment offered by a colleague or friend or family member. No matter what you privately thinking of the suggestion, you must keep your thoughts to yourself, hear the person out, and say “Thank you.
- People permit themselves to issue destructive comments under the excuse that they are true. The fact that a destructive comment is true is irrelevant. The question is not, “Is it true?” but rather, “Is it worth it?”
- Successful people become great leaders when they learn to shift the focus from themselves to others.
- To gain a friend, let him do you a favor. Benjamin Franklin
- When you declare your dependence on others, they usually agree to help. And during the course of making you a better person, they inevitably try to become better people themselves. This is how individuals change, how teams improve, how divisions grow, and how companies become world-beaters.
- The troublemaking phrase I always look out for is, “I’m confused” – because it is so subtle and dishonest. The boss is not confused, he is saying that you are confused which is another way of saying, “You are wrong.” What the boss should say is, “Thank you.” I had never considered that.” It is almost irrelevant whether the boss gives the idea any further thought. The critical issue is that saying “thank you” keeps people talking to you. Failing to say “thank you” shuts them down.
- How well you own up to your mistakes makes a bigger impression than how you revel in your successes.
- Forgiveness means letting go of the hope for a better past.
- Change is not a one-way street. It involves two parties: the person who is changing and the people who notice it.
- Leadership qualities: Clearly communicate a vision. Treat people with respect. Solicit contrary opinions. Encourage other people’s ideas. Listen to other people in meetings.
- The higher you go, the more your “issue” are behavioral.
- Pure unadulterated issue-free feedback that makes change possible has to solicit advice rather than criticism, be directed towards the future rather than obsessed with the negative past, and be couched in a way that suggests you will act on it; that in fact you are trying to do better.
- It is a whole lot easier to see our problems in others than it is to see them in ourselves.
- Even though we may be able to deny our problems to ourselves, they may be very obvious to the people who are observing us.

- If we can stop, listen, and think about what others are seeing in us, we have a great opportunity. We can compare the self that we want to be with the self that we are presenting to the rest of the world. We can then begin to make the real changes that are needed to close the gap between our stated values and our actual behavior.
- There is a difference between observing and observing with judgment.
- Feedback opportunities
- Make a list of people's casual remarks about you.
- Turn the sound off...observe people as they enter a meeting...how do they respond to you.
- Complete the sentence: If I do...(get in shape), one benefit to me is that...
- Listen to your self-aggrandizing remarks. What do you boast about?
- Look homeward. Your flaws at work do not vanish when you walk through the front door at home.
- I'm sorry. I'll try to do better.
- It is a lot harder to change people's perception of your behavior than it is to change your behavior. I calculate that you have to get 100% better in order to get 10% credit for it from your coworkers.
- Good listeners think before they speak; listen with respect; and gauge their response by asking themselves, "Is it worth it?"
- Listen, Don't interrupt. Don't finish the other person's sentences.
- The more you subsume your desire to shine, the more you will shine in the other person's eyes.
- There is an enormous disconnect between understanding and doing.
- Follow-up shows that you care about getting better. Following up with your coworkers shows that you value their opinions.
- If you study successful people, you will discover that their stories are not so much about overcoming enormous obstacles and handicaps but rather about avoiding high-risk, low-reward situations and going everything in their power to increase the odds in their favor.
- Rules for Change
 - You might not have a disease that behavioral change can cure.
 - Pick the right thing to change
 - Don't delude yourself about what you really must change
 - Don't hide from the truth you need to hear
 - There is no ideal behavior
 - If you can measure it, you can achieve it
 - Monetize the result, create a solution
 - The best time to change is now
- You cannot motivate 200 people to conquer a hill and, when they all start charging, say, "Wait a minute. Maybe this is not such a smart plan." DO that a few times, and no one's going to be inspired to take hills for you. They will just sit there and wait.
- If you manage people the way you would want to be managed, you are forgetting one thing: You are not managing you.
- Once you send a message, ask people the next day if they heard it. Then ask if they understood it. A few days later, ask if they did something about it.
- Stop trying to change people who do not think they have a problem.
- Stop trying to change people who are pursuing the wrong strategy for the organization.
- Stop trying to change people who should not be in their job.
- Stop trying to help people who think everyone else is the problem.
- Older people who have tried to achieve their dreams are always happier with their lives. Figure out your true purpose in life, and go for it!