



THE BUSINESS BOOK REVIEW

Putting the Best Business Book Ideas Into Practice

BOOK OF THE MONTH: “What Got You Here Won’t Get You There” *by Marshall Goldsmith with Mark Reiter*

Business book synopsis:

The premise of this book is how previous accomplishments often prevent leaders from gaining more success. The book analyzes why high achievers are so resistant to change due to their delusion of success pointing out that they cannot see that what got them here won’t get them there.

The book details 20 habits that can hold you back from moving up the corporate ladder. Marshall Goldsmith believes these 20 habits are the most irritating interpersonal issues in the workplace. Fortunately for each habit he gives practical solutions you can implement. The book concludes by describing the 21st habit, which the author believes is the root cause of the 20 annoying behavioral habits.

This book is divided into these four parts:

Part 1: The Trouble with Success

The book defines the place where success is as a comfortable place to be. However, achieving more success requires you to move from where you are to a new place. Because people are successful, they believe they can continue to be successful and they believe that the same habits that got them to where they are now will get them to where they want to be. The author says this is called success delusion, or in other words why we resist change when we are successful.

Part 2: The 20 Habits that hold you back and the 21st Habit that Drives the Other 20

The 21 habits are:

1. **Winning too much**—successful people move from being competitive to over-competitive and from winning because it’s necessary to winning because they want to win.
2. **Adding too much value**—it is difficult for successful people to listen to other people when others describe what is needed. Successful people need help from others to assure that the right value is added.



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3. **Passing judgment**—successful people ask for advice and then quickly pass judgment as to whether that advice is good or bad rather than getting more information.
4. **Making destructive comments**—sarcastic comments can affect other people’s performance.
5. **Starting with no, but, or however**—starting sentences with these words indicate to the other person that they are wrong.
6. **Telling the world how smart we are**—another variation of a need for people to be successful is the need to be recognized as the smartest person in a room.
7. **Speaking when angry**—people who speak when angry are usually out of control. By keeping your mouth shut no one will know what you really feel.
8. **Negativity or “let me explain why that won’t work”**—this is a put-down for someone proposing a recommendation. This phrase stops people from becoming innovative.
9. **Withholding information**—many people believe that those who possess information possess power. What this habit does is stop people from being empowered to do their job.
10. **Failing to give proper recognition**—successful people often want the rewards of success, and do not take the time to recognize another person’s contribution.
11. **Claiming credit that we don’t deserve**—successful people often assume that what they did made the difference between success and failure. In doing this, they frequently take credit for the work of other people and give that credit to themselves.
12. **Making excuses**—if something goes wrong, people don’t want to hear excuses. Successful people should take the blame for their own mistakes and not try to minimize their mistakes by making excuses.
13. **Clinging to the past**—this habit involves successful people talking about the successes in the past. They want credibility today for things they’ve done years ago.
14. **Playing favorites**—people know when successful people play favorites. Rewards are often considered “beauty contests” because they know the reward will be given by the successful person to their favorite person.
15. **Refusing to express regret**—many successful people don’t want to apologize for something they said or did. They feel that if it is ignored, their success will get them by having to say their sorry.
16. **Not listening**—the inability of someone to listen to what you are saying is a form of rudeness. Some people do this because rather than listening they’re thinking of what they will say next. Regardless of the reason it is an annoying habit.
17. **Failing to express gratitude**—two of the sweetest words in the English language are “thank you.” Many people find it difficult to say thank you. On the other hand, no one was ever offended by being thanked too often. The failure to say thank you is a failure to recognize help.
18. **Punishing the messenger**—many times successful people will punish someone who tells them the truth. When messengers get punished, people stop telling successful people what is really going on in the organization.



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19. **Passing the buck**—in this habit, successful people, when they have problems, blame other people for the cause of the problem. Rather than accepting responsibility they pass the failure buck to a colleague.
20. **An excessive need to be “me”**—thinking about me basically disregards what other people think about you. The less you focus on the need to “be me” and the more you consider what your staff is feeling the more it will benefit you.

The Key Habit

21. **Goal obsession**—this habit stands apart from the other 20 habits not because it is a flaw but because it is often the root cause of annoying behavior. The successful person which is goal obsessed tends to disregard everything that does not contribute to achieving the goal.

Part 3: How we can Change for the Better

The author lists five things that we can do to get better. Getting better means minimizing the 21 habits that are annoying to others. The five things are:

1. **Feedback**—get feedback from as many people as possible about your actions.
2. **Tell the world**—after you have decided to make a change, advertise that change to the impacted people.
3. **Listening**—concentrate on listening to what others say before you think about how you will respond.
4. **Expressing gratitude**—thank people for what they do to help you.
5. **Following up**—go back to the individuals that are impacted by your behavior and every month or so ask for comments and suggestions on how you can improve.

Part 4: Pulling out the Stops

This section of the book provides eight rules that will help you get better handling the process of change. The key principal and all eight rules is that you must want to change if change is going to be effective. Those individuals who believe they might possess one or more of these 21 annoying habits, reading this book will provide real insight on how to break those habits.

How you can use this book in your job and personal life:

Most successful people do not recognize the type of habits they have that are annoying to others. People less successful do not recognize how those habits can prevent them from being successful. You cannot change until you recognize that what you are doing is not desirable behavior and take action to make change.



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The following three steps are designed to help you use the material in this book to help you be more successful in your current job and a better candidate for a promotion.

1. **Use the 21 habits as a self assessment checklist**—for each of the 21 habits, ask yourself is this one of my negative habits. If so, list it.
2. **Prioritize your negative habits in what you believe is the order of importance to correct**—if you have, for example, six negative habits, list them in sequence from one to six, with one being the habit you believe is most annoying. For both item one and this item, you may want to interact with colleagues you trust to determine if there are other habits that you have not recognized as negative habits and your prioritization of how those negative habits impact others.
3. **Begin changing the negative habits one by one**—pick the habit which is viewed as most negative by yourself and/or your peers and use the material in the book to minimize or eliminate that negative habit.