



weLEAD Book Review

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What Got You Here Won't Get You There

How Successful People Become Even More Successful

Hyperion - 2007 (236 pages in hardback)

Author Marshall Goldsmith

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Noted and highly acclaimed consultant Marshall Goldsmith has written a book that will be considered a classic. What Got You Here Won't Get You There is a masterpiece of leadership wisdom. Compiling his 20 years as an executive coach and almost 30 years analyzing organizational behavior, Goldsmith approached a topic rarely explored or understood. Many people achieve a high level of success in their chosen field only to stall out or lose their edge. Why this happens and how to prevent it is the major focus of this book written in four sections.

The first section lays the foundation of why the book was written. According to Goldsmith, the reason this situation occurs is due to *behavior*. Not glaring character flaws, but what he calls "behavioral tics" or habits we repeat many times a day in the workplace. People who repeat annoying behavior on the job risk potential opportunities and growth. The key according to the author is the fact that we seldom have no idea how we are coming across to other people. We tend to interpret our behavior in one way, while others see it as something else. Goldsmith writes, "They think they have all the answers, but others see it as arrogance. They think they are contributing to a situation with helpful comments, but others see it as butting in. They think they are delegating effectively, but others see it as shirking responsibilities. They think they are holding their tongue, but others see it as unresponsiveness. They think they are letting people think for themselves, but others see it as ignoring them." In time this behavior takes a toll in credibility and position among co-workers.

Goldsmith's proven solution to these behavioral issues is firm and candid. He encourages offenders to *apologize* to everyone, *advertise* their efforts to change, *follow-up* with colleagues to see if the change is taking place and *listen* to others with *gratitude*. In the second section the author candidly outlines 21 habits that hold one back from reaching the top. This section alone makes What Got You Here Won't Get You There a fascinating treatise on self-examination. Any honest observer will notice at least a few tendencies outlined here. In the third section Goldsmith offers clear strategies on just *how* we can change for the better. This includes the importance of 360-degree feedback! This is feedback solicited from "everybody at all levels of the organization." A single chapter in this section offers more knowledge about effective feedback than some entire books on the subject. In the fourth section of the book the author presents a number of rules to better understand the process of change. In the final chapter Goldsmith reminds us about what is really important in life, including happiness, relationships, fulfilled dreams and a life with purpose.

If you think this book was written only for the elite or executive personnel of large organizations you are mistaken. We are reminded early in the book, “That’s the spirit underlying the book. It’s aimed at anyone who wants to get better – at work, at home, or any other venue.” If you decide to purchase one new book this year I encourage you to make it What Got You Here Won’t Get You There. This is the *top* tier of leadership information available!

weLEAD Rating – highly recommended

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