



# Collaborations

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How can I be more effective, how can I change?

## Book Corner : *What Got You Here Won't Get You There* - by Marshall Goldsmith

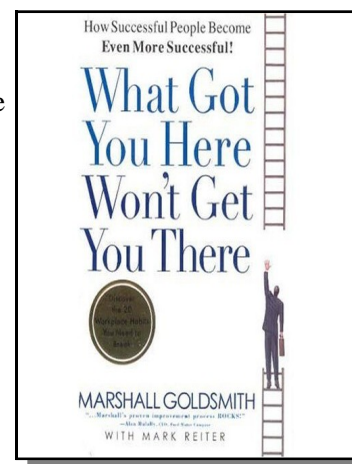
It's clear why Marshall Goldsmith is coach to many high-powered CEO's and his new book is at the top of the best seller list. Goldsmith gets what makes people tick. In this book, he shares a very practical approach to helping people change interpersonal behaviors that get in the way of their effectiveness.

Goldsmith teaches a process that includes:

- Apologize
- Advertise
- Follow-up
- Listen without prejudice
- Show gratitude
- Feed forward

He reminds us that while the solution to a behavior problem is simple, it's not easy to implement. So, he shares good ideas on how to enlist others in your change process to help make the change happen and stick.

Whether you are coaching someone else, or have a behavior you want to change in yourself, this book is a great resource!.



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## Leadership Starts with You

**Question:** I am very interested in becoming more effective as a leader. I feel torn sometimes between my own competing priorities and values. Where should I start?

**Collaborations response:** Desiring to learn and become increasingly more effective as a leader is to be applauded. Recognizing that you are in a leadership position is a significant first step. Realizing your own complexity, an excellent starting point. Your question about leadership also taps into a subject that has been written about at great length. Let's just start with you.

You have rightly targeted the one person you might be able to change. We believe that you cannot change other people. You may be able to cause them to behave differently. However, if they are to "change" it really must come from within.

Our basic approach to leadership development is: "You change for the better, you become more effective, and there will be a change for the better in the situation around you." In other words, we do not subscribe to the "How do I fix them?" school of leadership and management development. Rather, we think the question we should be constantly asking ourselves is, "How can I be more effective, how can I change?"

### Who am I?

Most, if not all, leadership development programs begin with learning more about self.

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## Leadership Starts with You

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Human beings are complex animals, with competing drives and a multitude of values. It is not easy to know oneself well.

The truth is that we have preferences for certain sets of behaviors, ways of thinking, ways of processing information, ways of working, and ways of doing things. Knowing our own preferences gives us considerable insight into how we might be more effective. It also increases our awareness that everyone isn't exactly like me.

Some of our preferences, if strongly held and practiced can be ineffective when working with people. For example, as we discussed in the last issue of Collaborations, if I am highly extroverted, I may start talking without having thought the situation through. Most highly extroverted people tend to process out loud. I may take up way more "air time" than is appropriate.

Conversely if I am highly introverted, I don't give enough signals about what I'm thinking or where I am in a group discussion. People don't know how to figure out where I am.

The brutal fact is that some of our preferences, if strongly held and practiced, cause us to be less effective as leaders and members of groups. Knowing ourselves better puts us in a position to work on our own effectiveness.

### Split personality? Acknowledging Our Own Inconsistencies

As if that weren't enough, much as we don't like to admit it, we are not always consistent. What happens when we come face to face with our own inconsistencies? It may happen when broken New Year's resolutions become far too apparent to ignore. Or, it hits us when we say one thing, and an inner voice reminds us that we don't walk our talk. At work, we make a bold statement to our peers and feel a twinge of guilty conscience: we feel the hypocrisy inside.

Psychologists call it "cognitive dissonance," a state of discomfort resulting from a difference between

simultaneously held contradictory beliefs or values; when we say one thing but do another. We will go to any lengths to avoid that feeling, hence we construct an elaborate system of delusions, denials, behaviors – that we don't even notice.

Many times we kid ourselves. We say we are one kind of person, while doing things that are contrary to our desired image.

To face the fact that we aren't acting like the person we believe we should be is painful and unpleasant. We don't have time for that. Negative emotions get in the way of our being productive and focusing on the tasks and goals at hand.

So we live with our incongruent selves, our denial, and our battling inner selves. It seems to be just part of who we are. We find a way to excuse ourselves. We are forgiving of our inconsistencies. We're only human, after all.



### The Price of Self-Ignorance

The price we pay by not knowing ourselves and not facing our own paradoxes is lessened effectiveness, maybe even fatigue, irritability, and lack of energy. It takes a tremendous amount of energy to maintain the different sides of our personality in

some sort of harmony.

Most people don't recognize the extent of their inner complexity. We grow up with ideas of what we are or who we should be that were given to us by our parents and teachers. "Oh, you are such an extravert, you just love being with people" is a message that doesn't recognize your desire to be by yourself. So we think we are one way and don't pay attention to our other side.

We run into trouble when we set goals that do not take into account the differing sides of our personalities. We say we are health conscious and set a goal of eating healthily at least 80 percent of the time and working out 5 days a week.

When we fail to maintain our healthy lifestyle, we get down on ourselves, blaming our lack of willpower and discipline. But there may be another explanation.

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### Competing Values

We have competing selves and competing commitments. On the one hand, we may truly be health conscious and want to maintain a set of healthy standards. On the other hand, we may also be committed to having fun and enjoying life. These two values may compete for attention, and usually the goal of immediate pleasure will win out over delayed satisfaction.

We may value family and life, and work hard to give our family things that provide pleasure and comfort. But what happens when our commitment to work and financial success interferes with spending time with children and spouses?

What about our sense of orderliness and priorities? What happens when the focus on getting things done overrides getting *the most important things done*? Or the focus on getting things done means neglecting to taking care of our people - *our most important asset*?

### Lifelong Learning

Increasing our own effectiveness is a lifelong undertaking. A curiosity, and thirst to improve are the necessary incentives. You are well on your way.

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## Delegation

Delegation is a critical skill for managers and for anyone who needs to accomplish work through others. When asked in workshops, participants readily can identify the value of delegation to both parties.

Value of Delegating -- For the One Delegating

- Reduces own workload
- Gets more work done
- Allows focus on more strategic issues
- Empowers people
- Spreads knowledge and experience

Value of Delegating -- For the One Being Delegated to:

- Demonstrates trust
- Builds confidence
- Provides opportunity to learn and grow
- Provides challenge
- Adds interest to work

With delegation providing such clear value, one would think that people would delegate as often as possible.

However, when asked, most people reveal that they don't delegate as much as they could and should. Some of the key reasons include:

- "I can do it faster myself"
- "I've been burned when I've delegated in the past"
- "If they do it wrong, I have to fix it at the last minute"
- "They might miss the deadline"
- "My boss asks my status, so it's better if I do the work so I can respond to my boss"

You may have additional reasons. We contend that the problem is often one of doing an inadequate job of delegating. An example of how many people delegate is: "Joe, here's a project I need you to do. It's due next Thursday. Let me know if you have any questions!"

The delegator tends to use the time between now and Thursday in one of two ways:

1) When next Thursday arrives, Joe has either completed the project or not, and if done, the project is either acceptable or not. No communication about the project happens between now and Thursday.

2) A few days after delegating the projects, when you haven't heard anything from Joe, you ask him how he's coming on the project. To him it feels like you are "checking up" on him. This reduces his perception of your trust in him, reduces his self-confidence and therefore his motivation, and it feels like you are micro-managing him.

An alternative to either of these that has proven to be very effective is the following approach:

- 1) Assign
  - 2) Clarify
  - 3) Check-In
  - 4) Assess
- 1) Assign – When you give the assignment, give the information you have. Say "I may have missed some information. Please read this over, and bring your questions to me tomorrow." Set a specific time to meet to discuss their questions.

## Susan Gerke

is the president of Gerke Consulting & Development and “helps people work better, together.” Susan's focus since 1989 has been in designing, customizing and implementing leadership and teamwork programs meeting the needs of executives, managers, and employees in a wide number of companies and industries.

Application of her skill and knowledge has been in facilitation, consulting, curriculum development, and coaching. Susan has developed and delivered experiential programs in the areas of *group dynamics, team basics, mentoring, and facilitation skills*. She has worked with global teams and has certified facilitators around the world to deliver management, leadership, and team offerings.



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As a consultant and coach he focuses on *helping people work together more effectively*. He is an expert in team building, organizational & leadership development.

A graduate of the United States Naval Academy, Dave is a retired Navy Captain. As a Navy pilot he was shot down and spent 5 & 1/2 years as a POW in North Vietnam. His book *The Ways We Choose: Lessons For Life From A POW's Experience* is in it's third printing.



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## Delegation

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- 2) Clarify – When you meet to go over the assignment, he or she will have prepared for your meeting, and you can both identify any concerns early in the process.
- 3) Check-In – Before you end your clarifying meeting, say “It would help me to know the status of the project along the way. Let’s schedule a time to check-in on your progress.”

Now when you meet to check on the progress, you are not “checking up” you are “checking in.” You are meeting a commitment to meet and providing support. There is a huge difference in perception between the two concepts.

- 4) Assess – After the project is complete, take time to meet with the person to assess the work and the process. Ask them to share what worked well and what they would do differently next time. By having them speak first, it reinforces their ownership of the work. They are likely to note most of the key issues.

You can share any additional observations after they have shared. Be sure you discuss how the delegation and check-in process worked for the two of you, so you can make it better the next time. Try this approach to delegating on your next task or project. We think you’ll be very pleased with the results!

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