

# What Got You Here Won't Get You There Summary

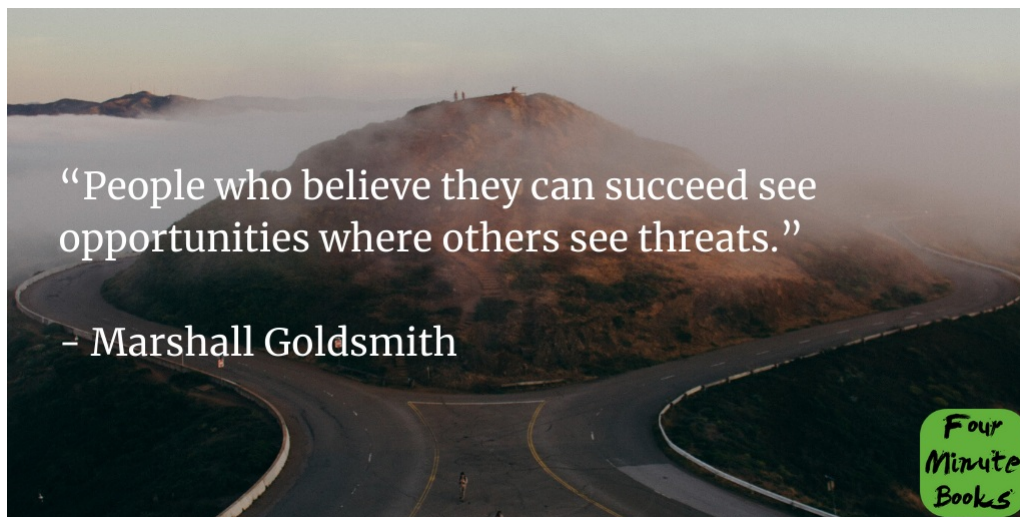
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**1-Sentence-Summary:** *What Got You Here Won't Get You There* helps you overcome your personality traits and behaviors that stop you from achieving even more success.

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



Marshall Goldsmith has been coaching some of America's most influential leaders and CEOs for over 30 years. He's earned himself a reputation of being the best in his field. Fast Company announced him as "America's preeminent executive coach."

His one-on-one coaching comes with a hefty price tag – up to six-figures, according to Amazon! But with *What Got You Here Won't Get You There: How Successful People Become Even More Successful*, his knowledge and expertise are available to anyone for the price of the book.

Goldsmith recognizes that plenty of leaders hold on to awful character traits and unhelpful behaviors. This is additionally reinforced by the common opinions about successful people as being competitive, self-obsessed and even obnoxious. But at some point, these characteristics usually get in the way of leaders and executives having even more success.

This book is a much-needed reality check for those high up on the corporate ladder. If you already are a successful leader, such a paradigm shift may be precisely what you need.

Here are 3 lessons that can help top leaders see through the blind spots in their perception:

1. People often succeed *despite* their flaws – but believe that they did *because* of them.

2. Avoiding mistakes should be celebrated as an important part of growth.
3. At the top, it is all about helping others shine.

If you are ready to open your eyes to what's holding you back – this book is just right for you. Shall we?

## Lesson 1: **Successful leaders often mistakenly attribute their wins to their flaws.**

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Goldsmith's 30 years of experience in the corporate environment brought about an important observation: successful people are often full of bad character traits. **But because they are so successful, they often confuse their advantages with their shortcomings.**

A great example was one executive with whom Goldsmith worked. The man delivered truly outstanding results for his company, but had one big weakness: he was a terrible listener. He knew this, but, interestingly, considered it to be the very driver of his success!

How so? He simply thought that by not giving his attention to other people, he was protecting himself from distractions and preserving his own creativity. It never occurred to him that he succeeded *despite*, not *because of* this behavior.

Such bias, when overlooked, may hold high-level leaders from advancing further. That's because the higher you are in the corporate hierarchy, the more important your people skills become. It is, therefore crucial to remain open to improvement – especially in those areas where you may see no need for improvement at all!

That's the real meaning of "what got you here, won't get you there." You might have succeeded despite your various flaws. But to really level up your performance, you should be prepared to turn your whole approach upside down!

## Lesson 2: **Abandoning destructive behavior should be celebrated and encouraged from the top.**

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Corporations can sometimes be a weird place to be. It is partially because the rules we instinctively follow in our personal lives seem not to apply at work! But Goldsmith points out that the workplace and personal pursuits are not all that different. Hence, we could often improve corporate culture by simply consulting common sense.

One example is that we should praise avoiding bad decisions and behaviors at work as much as we do in personal life. Just think about it. If your friend manages to quit smoking, you surely will congratulate them. But when your employee calls off a deal that would harm the company? You probably won't acknowledge it in the same way as you would if they *closed a good deal*.

**However, being able to recognize destructive behavior and skipping it is a major part of any success.** This applies at the workplace, just like it does in health or relationships. And it is important for the executives and leaders to acknowledge this and to give a good example from the top.

One problem with abandoning unhelpful behaviors, though, is that many people believe them to simply be part of their personality. Take another leader Goldsmith worked with. That person never complimented his employees – but not because he didn't think they did a good job. He simply considered himself “not much of a phony guy,” and hence didn't want to excessively praise people.

Once he managed to separate his *behavior* from his *personality*, he started giving more positive feedback to those who earned it. Soon enough, he saw company's results getting higher than ever!

## Lesson 3: The success of top leaders is defined by empowering others.

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People who succeed in corporate settings are often those who want to win. It is hardly surprising – being competitive surely helps at some point in your career. However, once you reach a certain threshold of success, wanting to win *too much* can get in your way.

Again – what got you here, won't get you there.

**Goldsmith explains that high on the corporate ladder, your success isn't about your personal victory.** Rather, it should be focused on allowing others to shine.

This requires the leader to step down from the pedestal of their personal achievements and look at the big picture. It is not about “being right” anymore. The point is to use your position to empower others and build a collective vision with them.

One actionable step to achieve this is listening to ideas of others without trying to improve upon them. Goldsmith says that if someone comes to you with a great idea, but you still try to suggest improvements – you may be doing this person a disservice. By creating an impression that what they came up with is not good enough, you are taking away from their enthusiasm and agency over the project.

For a high-level leader who wants to become even more successful, it is – maybe paradoxically – crucial to step out of their self-absorption. Once you direct your efforts to wholeheartedly empower others, they will reward you with ever-more respect, trust and willingness to cooperate.

And isn't this a great definition of success?

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## **What Got You Here Won't Get You There Review**

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*What Got You Here Won't Get You There* may be a challenging read for those who are defensive about their own abilities and skills. But we all know that in order to level up your game it always takes the ability to evaluate your current habits and ways of conduct. Marshall Goldsmith empowers you to do exactly that. If you are ready, the ride will be eye-opening!

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## **Who would I recommend the What Got You Here Won't Get You There summary to?**

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The 52-year old seasoned executive who struggles to communicate with his employees, the 33-year old assistant who struggles to communicate with her boss, and to anyone who plans their career within a corporate environment.