Book Summary: What Got You Here Won't Get You There, by Marshall Goldsmith

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Contents

1-Page Summary

Introduction

Exercise: Take Stock of Your Bad Habits

Part 1: The Bad Habits | Chapter 1: Flaunting Your Apparent Superiority

Chapter 2: Expressing Negativity and Withholding Positivity

Chapter 3: Avoiding Accountability

Chapter 4: Refusing to Express Gratitude or Listen to Others

Chapter 5: Miscellaneous Bad Behaviors

Part 2: Overcoming Your Bad Habits | Chapter 6: Identifying Your Bad Habits

Exercise: Identify a Bad Habit

Exercise: Ask for Feedback

Chapter 7: Starting the Process of Change

Exercise: Identify a Neutral Behavior

Exercise: Develop a Willingness to Change
1-Page Book Summary of *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*

Many professionals get stuck at a certain level of success. For instance, they manage to climb to a middle-management position at their organization, but always get passed over for promotion to the executive level.

Author and business coach Marshall Goldsmith believes that many professionals’ careers stall in this way because they slip into bad behavioral habits. In other words, they start to treat their colleagues poorly. For instance, they may become so self-important that they refuse to listen to anyone else’s ideas, instead dismissing them outright.

Ultimately, to climb to the top of the corporate ladder, you need to have good people skills. If you’re constantly irritating everyone around you with your bad behavior, your superiors won’t have confidence in your interpersonal skills. Therefore, you won’t get picked for top-flight roles.

In *What Got You Here, Won’t Get You There*, Goldsmith explains how you can reach your full potential by eliminating 21 harmful work behaviors. He argues that while engaging in these behaviors may not have stopped you from getting “here”—to your current level of success—they won’t get you “there”—to the heights of success that you ultimately aspire to.

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### The Bad Habits of Successful People

(Shortform note: We’ve split the 21 habits into five categories to clarify themes and make the habits easier to recall.)

#### Flaunting Your Apparent Superiority

These five habits are rooted in not only believing that you’re “better” than all of your colleagues, but also feeling the need to demonstrate your apparent superiority at every opportunity.

**Bad Habit #1: Constantly Needing to Win.** This habit becomes problematic when you try to “win” at things that don’t really matter—for example, when you need to win an argument with a colleague about something as trivial as which coffee brand is best. This combative attitude will quickly irritate and alienate your coworkers.

**The Healthier Behavior:** Evaluate whether “winning” a certain situation will provide any long-term benefits to you or your company. If it won’t, consider whether pursuing this win is really worth the damage you may do to your reputation.

**Bad Habit #2: Compulsively “Adding Value” to People’s Ideas.** This means trying to improve every idea that’s presented to you because you’re certain you know a better way forward. It’s a sure-fire way to make the person who presented the idea feel inferior—like they’re not good enough to come up with strong ideas on their own.

**The Healthier Behavior:** Instead of trying to add value, simply thank people for their ideas or suggestions and move on.

**Bad Habit #3: Passing Judgment on People’s Ideas and Opinions.** Constantly passing either positive or negative judgment on your colleagues’ ideas makes them feel like you’re always grading them on the quality of their input. This puts them under a lot of pressure.

**The Healthier Behavior:** When people make suggestions or give their opinions, don’t pass either a negative or positive judgment. Just thank the person for their input.

**Bad Habit #4: Overusing the Words “No,” “But,” and “However.”** Responding to someone’s idea with these words sends them the message, “You’re wrong, I’m right, and I’m about to tell you why.” When you tell people they’re wrong, their first instinct is to fight back and prove they’re right. A bitter argument ensues, which isn’t conducive to a healthy working environment.

**The Healthier Behavior:** Consider whether the criticism or challenge you want to make is really important enough to risk starting an argument. If it’s not, keep it to yourself.

**Bad Habit #5: Letting People Know How Smart You Are.** This habit often manifests when someone tries to tell you something
you've heard before. You may reply, "I already knew that" or "I'm way ahead of you," the implication being "I had this idea before you did, meaning I'm smarter than you." This belittles the other person and makes you seem arrogant.

**The Healthier Behavior:** If someone tells you something you've heard before, just say thank you and move on. There's no need to humiliate them by making your prior knowledge clear.

### Expressing Negativity and Withholding Positivity

The next five bad habits all involve either expressing negativity (for example, through anger or criticism) or withholding positivity (for instance, by refusing to praise people).

**Bad Habit #6: Making Harmful or Hurtful Comments**—for example, telling someone who's made a sub-par suggestion in a meeting that they're a waste of space. Making such comments will give you a reputation for being unkind and turn many people against you.

**The Healthier Behavior:** Keep your hurtful comments to yourself. Remember that being rude to a slacking employee won't improve their performance—it'll just make you look like a jerk.

**Bad Habit #7: Expressing Anger Towards Others.** If you regularly get angry at your colleagues, people will see you as volatile and out of control. You'll appear too emotionally fragile to be trusted with further responsibilities.

**The Healthier Behavior:** Quickly remove yourself from any situations that start to make you angry. If that's not possible, take deep breaths and pause before you react.

**Bad Habit #8: Shooting the Messenger.** Getting angry at the person who has to tell you something negative, such as bad news, is a sure-fire way to gain a reputation for being an unjust leader. After all, you're directing your rage at someone who isn't at fault. The messenger didn't create the bad situation—they're just telling you about it.

**The Healthier Behavior:** When someone brings you bad news or criticism, simply thank them for telling you and move on. If you're too upset or angry to do that, just say nothing at all.

**Bad Habit #9: Expressing Relentless Negativity**—for instance, whenever someone presents you with an idea, immediately listing all the reasons why it won't work. Unless you temper critical comments with positive ones, people are going to get sick of you and your negativity.

**The Healthier Behavior:** Stop before you express your negativity and consider whether it's actually necessary. If you conclude it's absolutely imperative to say something negative, temper your criticism with positive comments.

**Bad Habit #10: Refusing to Praise or Recognize People.** Failing to recognize your colleagues for their hard work sows resentment. You're going to develop a reputation as an unjust and ungrateful leader who's unwilling to give others the credit they deserve.

**The Healthier Behavior:** Set time aside every week to consider your team's recent achievements and pass on praise accordingly.

### Avoiding Accountability

These five bad habits all relate to avoiding accountability: in other words, making excuses for your poor behavior and refusing to take responsibility for your actions.

**Bad Habit #11: Blaming Others for Your Mistakes**—for example, trying to blame the loss of a sale on a colleague, even though you were in charge of that account. Blaming others for your missteps loses you the respect of your colleagues. You'll seem disloyal, devious, and willing to sacrifice others for your own gain.

**The Healthier Behavior:** Fully accept the blame for things that are your fault and tell your team members that you're doing so. Show them that you're willing to be accountable for your actions.

**Bad Habit #12: Blaming Your Past Struggles for Your Current Bad Behavior.** While your colleagues may be sympathetic towards your past struggles, they'll still question why you think it's appropriate to take them out on other people in the form of bad behavior. If you continue to do so, they'll lose respect for you.

**The Healthier Behavior:** Try to develop a healthier relationship with your past and lessen its impact on your present behavior. For instance, you could talk to a therapist about what you've been through and how you can move past it.

**Bad Habit #13: Making Your Personality the Excuse for Your Bad Behavior.** Some people genuinely believe that their poor
behavior is an unshakeable part of their personality. However, in most cases, this isn't true. It is possible to unlearn your bad habits, and if you keep claiming that you can’t, people are going to lose respect for you.

The Healthier Behavior: Consider whether you’re really unable to change your bad behavior, or if you’re just unwilling to try. If the latter is the case, make a commitment to changing. It won’t be easy, but people will respect you for it.

Bad Habit #14: Refusing to Change Under the Guise of “Authenticity.” Some professionals believe that their harmful habits should be celebrated, not changed, because those habits are a part of their “authentic self.” This attitude selfishly disregards the behavior's impact on other people and consequently harms the professional's reputation.

The Healthier Behavior: Remember that your feelings aren't the only ones that matter. Ask yourself, “Is prioritizing feeling authentic worth the damage that I'm currently doing to both other people and my own reputation?”

Bad Habit #15: Never Apologizing. Many professionals find saying sorry painful and humiliating, because they think it makes them look weak. However, if you don't apologize for your wrongdoings, the people who've suffered because of your actions will become bitter. You'll gain a reputation for being callous, unfeeling, and arrogant.

The Healthier Behavior: When you've done something wrong, apologize to the person or people affected by your behavior. Don't let your pride get in the way of making amends.

Refusing to Express Gratitude or Listen to Others

Goldsmith identifies the next two bad habits, not saying thank you and refusing to listen to other people, as crucial elements of becoming a good colleague and leader.

Bad Habit #16: Not Saying Thank You. Many leaders avoid expressing gratitude because they see it as a form of weakness. They don't like acknowledging that they sometimes need other people's help. However, when you fail to thank others, you appear arrogant and unappreciative.

The Healthier Behavior: Swallow your pride and say thank you whenever people help you.

Bad Habit #17: Refusing to Listen to Other People. Often, successful people feel so confident in their abilities that they think listening to others is a waste of time. Why should they sit around listening to ideas they've probably already thought of? However, failing to listen destroys the speaker's confidence, makes them feel unimportant, and makes them resent you.

The Healthier Behavior: Respectfully listen to any ideas that people put forward to you.

Miscellaneous Bad Behaviors

The final four habits don’t really fit into any of the above categories. However, they still negatively impact the people around you and are therefore important to eradicate.

Bad Habit #18: Withholding Information From Your Colleagues. People often do this accidentally—they're so busy that they forget to pass on important information to their coworkers. However, whether it's accidental or not, withholding information makes people distrust you. They start to wonder what else you're hiding from them.

The Healthier Behavior: Take a set amount of time each day to share information with the people who need to know it, either by email, over the phone, or in person.

Bad Habit #19: Taking Undeserved Credit for Other People's Successes. When you claim that you were responsible for an achievement that you actually had very little part in, you generate rage and bitterness on the part of the person whose credit you've stolen. If they tell others about what you've done, your reputation will undoubtedly suffer.

The Healthier Behavior: When you're congratulated for an achievement, consider how others might have contributed to your success. If someone else did help you,...

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What Got You Here Won’t Get You There Summary Introduction

Are you a professional who’s already seen a lot of success in your working life, but is struggling to progress any further? For instance, are you a middle manager who always seems to get passed over for promotion to the executive level? Are you a top executive who can’t seem to make the jump to becoming a CEO?

Many people get stuck at a certain level of success. This isn’t because of a lack of direction—lots of these professionals know exactly where they want to be. Likewise, it’s not because of a lack of self-esteem. Many successful people have excessive self-esteem and are arrogant. According to business coach and author Marshall Goldsmith, the problem lies in successful people’s bad behavior.

Goldsmith believes that as high-fliers chase and ultimately achieve success, they become so obsessed with gaining results and so convinced of their importance that they slip into harmful behavioral habits. In short, they start to treat other people badly. For instance, they become so focused on closing sales that they put extreme pressure on their team. They become so self-important that they refuse to listen to anyone else’s ideas and dismiss them outright.

Compounding this issue is the fact that many people don’t even realize that their behavior is bad. Instead, they see their flaws as the secrets to their success. For instance, they think that constantly interrupting people’s presentations is simply a way to give helpful feedback. Meanwhile, everyone else sees this behavior as rude and patronizing.

Ultimately, to climb to the top of the corporate ladder, you need to have good people skills. Executives and CEOs need to be able to lead and inspire people. They also need to be able to respectfully interact with their subordinates, important clients, and stakeholders. If you’re constantly irritating everyone with your bad behavior,...

Shortform Exercise: Take Stock of Your Bad Habits

Do you want to get from “here” to “there”? Reflect on the habits holding you back and what you hope to gain from this book.

What are your career goals? Be as specific as possible.

What Got You Here Won’t Get You There Summary Part 1: The Bad Habits | Chapter 1: Flaunting Your Apparent Superiority

In this section, we’re going to explore the 21 bad habits that successful people often slip into. These habits aren’t deep personality flaws that would take extensive psychiatry to change. Instead, they’re the everyday annoying traits that many successful people—especially those in leadership positions—tend to develop.

Most of these bad behaviors harm others at our own expense. Some professionals wouldn’t characterize harming others for personal gain as a bad thing. Instead, they might see these bad habits as a useful way to gain an advantage over their rivals. However, Goldsmith argues that the key to becoming successful isn’t pushing other people down on your way to the top. Instead, it’s gaining allies who will back you and help to lift you up to further success. Therefore, it’s important to overcome these harmful
behaviors.

Before we get started on exploring these habits, there are two important points to address:

- First, it's very unlikely that you'll have developed all 21 bad habits. In Goldsmith's experience, most people only develop one or two. So don't feel overwhelmed by the sheer number of bad behaviors we're about to discuss. You won't need to overcome them all!

Second, don't be too hard on yourself if you start to recognize yourself in any of the behaviors outlined below. Having these bad habits doesn't make you a bad person. You just have the opportunity to become an even better person by addressing and fixing your bad behavior and making a commitment to personal growth.

The first five behaviors we're going to look at fall under the category of flaunting your apparent superiority: in other words, not only believing that you're "better" than all of your colleagues, but feeling the need to demonstrate how much better you are at every opportunity.

### Bad Habit #1: Constantly Needing to Win

In the context of this bad habit, "winning" could mean a lot of things. For instance, it could mean being right about something. It could mean your idea being selected over a colleague's. Or it could mean meeting a goal...

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**What Our Readers Say**

This is the best summary of What Got You Here Won't Get You There I've ever read. I learned all the main points in just 20 minutes.

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### What Got You Here Won't Get You There Summary Chapter 2: Expressing Negativity and Withholding Positivity

The next five bad habits center on either expressing negativity (for example, through anger, criticism, or hurtful comments) or withholding positivity (for instance, by refusing to praise people).

### Bad Habit #6: Making Harmful or Hurtful Comments

Making harmful or hurtful comments to your colleagues means insulting or belittling them in some way. For example, you might tell someone who's made a sub-par suggestion in a meeting that they're stupid and a waste of space, or humiliate someone by publicly mocking a time when they failed or made a mistake.

Many leaders think harmful comments serve a purpose. For instance, they believe that being rude or harsh to an underperforming employee will shock them into finally improving. Likewise, they may think that putting other people down is an effective way to build themselves up and gain more power as a leader.

But any possible “benefits” of being rude pale in comparison to the harm it does. If you're hurtful to the people around you, they'll quickly lose respect for you. You'll gain a reputation for being unkind—a reputation that won't serve you well when you look to progress in your career. This reputation will persist even if you apologize to the people you've hurt. Ultimately, these colleagues will never see you in the same way again, permanently damaging your working relationship.

**The Healthier Behavior:** If you find yourself tempted to make a hurtful or harsh comment, consider what the benefits of doing so will be versus the costs. For example, will being incredibly rude to a slacking employee actually improve their performance? Probably not. It's more likely that the employee will get upset and you'll look like a jerk. Therefore, being rude to this person probably isn't worth it.

### Bad Habit #7: Expressing Anger Towards Others

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All of us get angry in the workplace from time to time—for instance, when a decision doesn't go our way, or when a colleague negatively interferes with our work. However, you'll create problems if you regularly express this anger—especially if you...

What Got You Here Won't Get You There Summary Chapter 3: Avoiding Accountability

These five bad habits all relate to avoiding accountability: in other words, making excuses for your poor behavior and refusing to take responsibility for your actions.

**Bad Habit #11: Blaming Others for Your Mistakes**

This bad habit is also known as “passing the buck.” If you're a leader, “passing the buck” may mean trying to entirely blame your subordinates for their poor performance when, as the person in charge, you should be taking responsibility for at least a part of the failure.

Often, leaders are drawn to blaming others for their mistakes because they can't bear the thought of appearing flawed. They think admitting they're imperfect and mess up from time to time will make them look weak.

In reality, the opposite is true. Admitting that you've made a mistake takes strength and courage. It's a humbling gesture that people generally respect. In contrast, if you blame others for your missteps, you'll lose the respect of those around you. You'll seem disloyal, devious, and willing to sacrifice others for your own gain.

**The Healthier Behavior:** Fully accept the blame for things that are your fault and tell your team members that you're doing so. Show them that you're willing to be accountable for your actions. You'll gain respect in the process.

**Bad Habit #12: Blaming Your Past Struggles for Your Current Bad Behavior**

Things from our past undeniably affect who we are today. For example, if you have low self-esteem, it may be because your parents didn't praise you enough. If you struggle to interact with or respect authority figures, it may be because your parents were overly controlling.

However, you can't use the troubles of your past to absolve yourself of responsibility for bad behavior in the present. Although people may be sympathetic towards your past struggles, they'll still question why you think it's appropriate to take them out on other people in the form of bad behavior. If you continue to do so, they'll lose respect for you.

For example, imagine you get criticized by a superior for being overly...

What Got You Here Won't Get You There Summary Chapter 4: Refusing to Express Gratitude or Listen to Others

The next two bad habits we're going to discuss are not saying thank you and refusing to listen to other people.

(Shortform note: We've given these two bad habits their own chapter because Goldsmith discusses them in great detail and gives them great importance. He identifies the processes of learning to listen and learning to express gratitude as crucial elements of becoming a good colleague and leader. Even if you don't think that these bad habits are issues for you, it's important to at least consider how you might build upon and improve your already strong listening and gratitude skills.)

**Bad Habit #16: Not Saying Thank You**

One of the simplest tenets of good etiquette is saying thank you when people compliment you or give you a helpful suggestion. Yet
when it comes to putting politeness into practice, many leaders fall short. They fall into the bad habit of not expressing gratitude for other people's help.

People may refrain from saying thank you for a number of reasons. First, they may do so because they've fallen into one of the other bad habits we've covered. While these leaders know that saying thank you is important, their compulsion to engage in their bad habit trumps their need to be polite. For instance, imagine you're someone who feels the need to "add value" to people's suggestions. If you've fallen into this bad practice, you're automatically going to respond to people's ideas with a suggestion of improvement, not a simple thank you.

Second, some leaders avoid gratitude because they see it as a form of weakness. When we thank someone, we acknowledge that they've helped us in some way. Many leaders would prefer to appear self-sufficient and "good enough" without needing others’ help. They think that cultivating this image will give them an air of superiority and help them to maintain power over their subordinates. In reality, it'll only make them appear ungrateful, arrogant, and unappreciative of other people's efforts.

Third, some leaders rarely express their gratitude because they feel they have to wait until the...
We've discussed the 21 bad habits that many successful people adopt. Now, it's time to explore how to overcome these bad habits and improve your reputation in the wake of the damage you've caused.

**Overcoming your bad habits is a process consisting of three steps:**

1. Identifying which bad habits you've adopted and which habit needs changing first
2. Devising and implementing a “plan of action”—a framework for exactly how you're going to break your habit
3. Discussing your plan to change your behavior—and, eventually, your progress—with others

Following this process and overcoming your habits isn't going to be quick or easy. It could take a year or more for you to totally cut out your bad behaviors, and doing so will require a lot of work. Likewise, it may take a long time for your reputation to fully recover from the damage your bad habits have inflicted.

However, this process is well worth the time and effort it demands. If you pursue it to its conclusion, you'll develop the people skills and the good reputation required to progress to the top of the corporate ladder.

### How to Identify Your Bad Habits

The first step in changing your bad habits is identifying which of the 21 bad behaviors you've actually adopted. Goldsmith argues that the easiest way to do this is to solicit feedback from your colleagues. Actively approach the people you work with and ask them which elements of your behavior they're unhappy with and would like to see improved. If many colleagues say that they're unhappy with the same two or three behaviors, you'll know that these are the major bad habits you've slipped into.

You might think that you don't need to ask your colleagues what your bad habits are, because you've already identified them yourself. Even if this is the case, it's still helpful to ask your colleagues for their views on your behavior. **Ultimately, even the most self-aware of people can be totally blind to some of their flaws.** Your colleagues may help you to identify a bad behavior that you weren't aware of.

### How to Solicit...

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**Shortform Exercise: Identify a Bad Habit**

Consider which of the 21 bad habits of successful people you might have adopted, and identify a healthier way to behave.

Identify one of the bad habits of successful people that you think you might have adopted. Why do you think you engage in this bad behavior?

**Shortform Exercise: Ask for Feedback**

Even if you think you've identified your bad habits, asking your colleagues for feedback on your behavior may highlight a bad behavior you hadn't noticed before. Consider who you could ask for feedback and how you might do so.

List 3 to 5 colleagues who you think you could ask for feedback on your behavior, including a sentence explaining why you picked them. (Remember: Ideal candidates for giving feedback are honest, supportive, willing to let go of the past, and committed to changing their own behavior, too.)

**What Got You Here Won't Get You There Summary Chapter 7: Starting the Process of Change**

You've gathered feedback from your colleagues. You've used that feedback to identify which bad habit you're going to try to overcome. Now, it's time to actually **start the process of change**: to begin to cut your bad habit out of your life.

It's important that you **start the process of change as soon as possible** after deciding which behavior you're going to tackle. For example, don't fall into the trap of putting change off until a time when you're "less busy." As an already successful person, you're always going to be busy. Bite the bullet and start to cut out your bad behavior **now**. The sooner you start, the sooner you'll begin to make progress.

**Shortform Note: The Practicalities of Change**

Goldsmith doesn't provide much information on the practicalities of making a behavioral change: for example, the steps you can take each day to reduce your temptation to engage in your bad habits and replace bad behaviors with healthier ones. Here are some practical tips we've devised to help you with this process:

- Each day, **make a conscious effort to acknowledge and analyze each time you engage in your bad behavior**. Record all of the details about the circumstances that preceded you slipping into your bad habit—for example, who you were with, what you were working on or talking about, and how you were feeling. This will help you to identify the triggers and patterns of your bad behavior. For instance, you might find that you're at particular risk of acting harmfully when you're stressed or starting to get tired at the end of the day.

- Once you've discerned the various triggers for your bad behavior, you can begin the work of **actively stopping yourself from engaging in it**. If you know that you're about to enter a situation that, in the past, has led to you behaving badly, you can mentally prepare for this and consciously try to implement the alternative "healthier" behavior that corresponds to your bad habit.
Successfully cutting out your bad behavior may be difficult at first. Habits are hard to break. But over time, behaving in a...

Shortform Exercise: Identify a Neutral Behavior

Sometimes, the idea of switching straight from a “bad” behavior to a “good” one can seem too difficult to achieve. Identifying a neutral behavior to practice instead can stop you from becoming overwhelmed.

Think of a bad habit that you've adopted. Describe the two behavioral extremes of this habit: the bad behavior you're engaging in and its "good" alternative.

Shortform Exercise: Develop a Willingness to Change

A major barrier to self-improvement is resistance to change. Learn how to overcome this obstacle and develop a willingness to change your bad behavior.

Think of a bad habit that you're currently struggling with. What factors might make you resistant to changing this harmful behavior? (For example, do you believe that your bad behavior benefits you in some way? Are you superstitious that if you cut out the bad behavior, you won't be as successful in the future?)

What Got You Here Won't Get You There Summary Chapter 8: Discussing Your Behavioral Change With Your Colleagues

Once you've decided how you're going to change your bad habit and kick-started the process of self-improvement, your next move is to frequently and repeatedly discuss your behavioral change with your colleagues. Specifically, you need to:

1. Apologize for your past behavior.
2. Announce your intention to change your bad habit.
3. Follow up with your colleagues and request “feedforward” about how you can improve further in the future.

Apologizing for Your Past Behavior

The first conversation you need to have with your colleagues regarding changing your bad habit is an apology for your previous bad behavior. Say you're sorry to everyone who your actions negatively impacted.

Apologizing is an important step because it's the easiest way to make clear to your colleagues that you know you've messed up and that you're going to do better in the future. It shows them that you're willing to take responsibility for your actions, and they're likely to respect you for doing so.

Likewise, apologizing gives people closure about the bad behavior you've inflicted upon them. It indicates that this behavior is in the past now and won't be repeated. Once people have closure, they can begin to move on—and they might even start to forgive you. You'll have gained a small amount of ground in your mission to recover people's goodwill and restore your reputation.

The Perfect Apology
When you say sorry to your colleagues for your past misdemeanors, it's important that your apology be sincere and meaningful. The best way to achieve this is to keep your apology simple. Just say "I'm sorry. I'll try to behave in a better way in the future."

If you start to qualify or overcomplicate your apology—for example, if you try to justify why you acted in the way you did, or make a long speech about all of the events in your life that led up to you behaving badly—it'll sound like you're trying to explain away your behavior, not actually express regret and move on from it. Your apology will no longer feel sincere, and people will be less likely to accept it.

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**Shortform Exercise: Communicate With Your Colleagues**

Learn how to effectively communicate with your colleagues about the process of cutting out your bad habit.

When you start the process of changing your bad habits, it's important to apologize to your colleagues for your previous bad behavior. Identify 3 to 5 colleagues who you think it's particularly important for you to apologize to, and describe why you've chosen each colleague.

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**What Got You Here Won't Get You There Summary Chapter 9: Miscellaneous Advice on Improving as a Leader**

*(Shortform note: In the final chapter of *What Got You Here, Won't Get You There*, Marshall Goldsmith provides various pieces of miscellaneous advice on how to improve as a leader. Most of these ideas don't link to the book's overall premise of identifying and addressing your bad habits. However, we've included them here for completeness.)*

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**Give Your Colleagues Advice on How to Handle You**

As we've already mentioned, the process of ending your bad habits will likely take a while to complete—months, or possibly even years. While you're still in the process of trying to change—and are therefore still engaging in your bad habits, even if only occasionally—you should help your colleagues by **directly and honestly telling them about the possible poor behavior they can expect from you**, and apologizing for it in advance.

For example, if you know you have a problem with anger, warn the people around you about your short temper. Reassure them that if you do snap at them, it's nothing personal, and preemptively apologize for doing so. Let them know that this is an issue you're working on, and that you understand that it's not acceptable behavior.

Forewarning your colleagues about your bad behavior will benefit you because your honesty will earn you at least a degree of respect. Your colleagues will appreciate that it takes courage and humility to admit that you're behaving badly, and will think better of you for doing so. They won't be completely happy with you—after all, you still haven't fully shaken off your bad habit—but their opinion of you may improve a little.

It's important to note that **warning people about your bad behavior in this way shouldn't be used as a substitute for actually changing the behavior in question**. You still need to work to overcome your bad habits. This is simply a technique you can use to try to mitigate the damage to your reputation while you still haven't quite gotten out of the habit of behaving badly.

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**Don't Make Your Staff Too Dependent on You**

As a leader or manager, it's important that you give your subordinates...
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