

- He is guilty of Habit #2: Adding too much value.
- Sharon is guilty of Habit #14: Playing favorites.
- Martin is guilty of Habit #20: An excessive need to be 'me.'
- Why does this happen? More often than not, it's because people's inner compass of correct behavior has gone out of whack—and they become clueless about their position among their coworkers.
- The problems we'll be looking at in this book are not life-threatening diseases (although ignored for too long they can destroy a career). They're not deep-seated neuroses that require years of therapy or tons of medication to erase. More often than not, they are simple behavioral tics—bad habits that we repeat dozens of times a day in the workplace—which can be cured by (a) pointing them out, (b) showing the havoc they cause among the people surrounding us, and (c) demonstrating that with a slight behavioral tweak we can achieve a much more appealing effect.
- That's what we're talking about here in the workplace: People who do one annoying thing repeatedly on the job—and don't realize that this small flaw may sabotage their otherwise golden career. And, worse, they do not realize that (a) it's happening and (b) they can fix it.
- My job is to help them—to identify a personal habit that's annoying their coworkers and to help them eliminate it—so that they retain their value to the organization. My job is to make them see that the skills and habits that have taken them this far might not be the right skills and habits to take them further.
- First, I solicit '360-degree feedback' from their colleagues—as many as I can talk to up, down, and sideways in the chain of command, often including family members—for a comprehensive assessment of their strengths and weaknesses. Then I confront them with what everybody really thinks about them. Assuming that they accept this information, agree that they have room to improve, and commit to changing that behavior, then I show them how to do it. I help them apologize to everyone affected by their flawed behavior (because it's the only way to erase the negative baggage associated with our prior actions) and ask the same people for help in getting better. I help them advertise their efforts to get better because you have to tell people that you're trying to change; they won't notice it on their own. Then I help them follow up religiously every month or so with their colleagues because it's the only honest way to find out how you're doing and it also reminds people that you're still trying. As an integral part of this follow-up process, I teach people to listen without prejudice to what their colleagues, family members, and friends are saying—that is, listen without interrupting or arguing. I also show them that the only proper response to whatever they hear is gratitude. That is, I teach them how to say 'Thank you' without ruining the gesture or embellishing it. I am a huge apostle for thanking. Finally, I teach them the miracle of feedforward, which is my 'special sauce' methodology for eliciting advice from people on what they can do to get better in the future.
- After all, the most realistic people in our society are the chronically depressed.

- If you ask successful professionals to rate themselves against their peers (as I have done with more than 50,000 people in my training programs), 80 to 85 percent of them will rate themselves in the top 20 percent of their peer group—and 70 percent will rate themselves in the top 10 percent.

- This is the classic definition of self-efficacy, and it may be the most central belief driving individual success. People who believe they can succeed see opportunities where others see threats. They're not afraid of uncertainty or ambiguity. They embrace it. They want to take greater risks and achieve greater returns. Given the choice, they will always bet on themselves.

- Successful people, however, believe there is always a link between what they have done and how far they have come—even when no link exists. It's delusional, but it is also empowering.

- One of the greatest mistakes of successful people is the assumption, 'I am successful. I behave this way. Therefore, I must be successful because I behave this way!' The challenge is to make them see that sometimes they are successful in spite of this behavior.

- If 'I have succeeded' refers to the past, and 'I can succeed' to the present, then 'I will succeed' refers to the future.

- When the 'do-nothings' are asked, 'Why didn't you implement the behavioral change that you said you would?' by far the most common response is, 'I meant to, but I just didn't have time to get to it.' In other words, they were overcommitted. It's not that they didn't want to change, or didn't agree with the value of changing. They just ran out of hours in the day. They thought that they would 'get to it later'—and 'later' never arrived. Overcommitment can be as serious an obstacle to change as believing that you don't need fixing or that your flaws are part of the reason you're successful.

- Successful people believe that they are doing what they choose to do, because they choose to do it. They have a high need for self-determination. The more successful a person is, the more likely this is to be true. When we do what we choose to do, we are committed. When we do what we have to do, we are compliant.

- I have now made peace with the fact that I cannot make people change. I can only help them get better at what they choose to change.

- cognitive dissonance. It refers to the disconnect between what we believe in our minds and what we experience or see in reality. The underlying theory is simple. The more we are committed to believing that something is true, the less likely we are to believe that its opposite is true, even in the face of clear evidence that shows we are wrong.

- Psychologically speaking, superstitious behavior comes from the mistaken belief that a specific activity that is followed by positive reinforcement is actually the cause of that positive reinforcement. The activity may be functional or not—that is, it may affect someone or something else, or it may be self-contained and pointless—but if something good happens after we do it, then we make a connection and seek to repeat the activity.

- Superstition is merely the confusion of correlation and causality.

- That's where superstition kicks in. It creates the core fallacy necessitating this book, the reason that 'what got us here won't get us there.' I'm talking about the difference between success that happens because of our behavior and the success that comes in spite of our behavior.

- Now let's turn the spotlight on you, because few of us are immune to superstition. Pick a quirky or unattractive behavior that you habitually do, something that you know is annoying to friends or family or coworkers. Now ask yourself: Do you continue to do it because you think it is somehow associated with the good things that have happened to you?

- People will do something—including changing their behavior—only if it can be demonstrated that doing so is in their own best interests as defined by their own values. I'm not being cynical here, or implying that the only motive in life is selfishness. Plenty of people perform selfless acts of goodness of their own volition every day with no obvious tit-for-tat payback to themselves.

- In order for me to get you to do what I want, I have to prove that doing so will benefit you in some way, immediately or somewhere down the road. This is natural law.

- Most people's resistance to change can be overcome by invoking natural law. Everyone, even the biggest ego in the room, has a hot button that can be pushed—and that button is self-interest. All we have to do is find it. It's not the same thing in all people.

- If there's any art to what I do (and believe me, there isn't much), maybe it happens here—at the decisive moment when I discover someone's hot button.

- button. If you press people to identify the motives behind their self-interest it usually boils down to four items: money, power, status, and popularity. These are the standard payoffs for success. It's why we will claw and scratch for a raise (money), for a promotion (power), for a bigger title and office (status). It's why so many of us have a burning need to be liked by everyone (popularity).

- My personal coaching clients have money, power, and status—and most are popular. Having achieved these goals, they turn to higher-level goals, such as 'leaving a legacy' or 'being an inspiring role model' or 'creating a great company.' If you look for the hot button of self-interest, it's there.

- Take a look around you at work. Why are you there? What keeps you coming back day after day? Is it any of the big four—money, power, status, popularity—or is it something deeper and more subtle that has developed over time? If you know what matters to you, it's easier to commit to change. If you can't identify what matters to you, you won't know when it's being threatened. And in my experience, people only change their ways when what they truly value is threatened.

- Peter Drucker say, the wisest was, 'We spend a lot of time teaching leaders what to do. We don't spend enough time teaching leaders what to stop. Half the leaders I have met don't need to learn what to do. They need to learn what to stop.'

- That's the funny thing about stopping some behavior. It gets no attention, but it can be as crucial as everything else we do combined.

- When someone offers a less-than-brilliant idea in a meeting, don't criticize it. Say nothing. When someone challenges one of your decisions, don't argue with them or make excuses. Quietly consider it and say nothing. When someone makes a helpful suggestion, don't remind them that you already knew that. Thank them and say nothing. This is not a semantic game. The beauty of knowing what to stop—of achieving this state of inspired neutrality—is that it is so easy to do.

- What we're dealing with here are challenges in interpersonal behavior, often leadership behavior. They are the egregious everyday annoyances that make your workplace substantially more noxious than it needs to be. They don't happen in a vacuum. They are transactional flaws performed by one person against others. They are:

- Passing judgment:

- Telling the world how smart we are:

- Making excuses:

- When people ask me if the leaders I coach can really change their behavior, my answer is this: As we advance in our careers, behavioral changes are often the only significant changes we can make.

- to, I don't want readers to think that the people I work with are bad people. To the contrary, they're not. They are outstanding people, invariably in the top two percent of their organization. But they may be held back by a personal failing or two that they either (a) do not recognize, (b) have not been told about, or (c) are aware of but refuse to change.

- ourselves. You're not ready to change yet. For one thing, I'm a little skeptical of self-diagnosis. Just as people tend to overestimate their strengths, they also tend to overrate their weaknesses.

- Habit #1 Winning too much

- Habit #2 Adding too much value

- Ordinarily I keep quiet in these situations. But Jon was a friend exhibiting classic destructive smart-person behavior. I said, 'Jon, will you please be quiet and let Niko talk. Stop trying to add value to the discussion.'

- But the higher up you go in the organization, the more you need to make other people winners and not make it about winning yourself.

- One of my clients, who's now the CEO of a major pharmaceutical, said that once he got into the habit of taking a breath before he talked, he realized that at least half of what he was going to say wasn't worth saying. Even though he believed he could add value, he realized he had more to gain by not winning.

- One of the awkward situations in my line of work is clients being concerned about whether I approve or disapprove of their behavior—and by extension how I feel about the change they're trying to make. I try to disabuse them of this thinking immediately. I tell them that in any campaign for effecting long-term positive change, we have a choice. We can view the campaign in an approving light, a disapproving light, or with complete neutrality. Mission Positive. Mission Negative. Or Mission Neutral. I assure them that I am mission neutral. I don't deal in approval or disapproval. I don't judge. It's not my job to weigh in on whether you're a good person or bad because you've decided to change A rather than B.

- Try this: For one week treat every idea that comes your way from another person with complete neutrality. Think of yourself as a human Switzerland. Don't take sides. Don't express an opinion. Don't judge the comment. If you find yourself constitutionally incapable of just saying 'Thank you,' make it an innocuous, 'Thanks, I hadn't considered that.' Or, 'Thanks. You've given me something to think about.'

- The feedback I've collected says that 'avoids destructive comments' is one of the two items with the lowest correlation between how we see ourselves and how others see us. In other words, we don't think we make destructive comments, but the people who know us disagree.

- People permit themselves to issue destructive comments under the excuse that they are true. The fact that a destructive comment is true is irrelevant. The question is not, 'Is it true?' but rather, 'Is it worth it?'

- We know the difference between honesty and full disclosure. We may think our boss is a complete ass, but we are under no moral or ethical obligation to express that—to the boss's face or to anyone else for that matter.

- The first time I met with the COO to go through his direct reports' feedback, his reaction was, 'But Marshall, I don't do that.' 'That one is free,' I said. 'Next time I hear 'no,' 'but,' or 'however' it's going to cost you \$20.' 'But,' he replied, 'that's not . . .' 'That's \$20!' 'No, I don't . . .' he refuted. 'That's \$40!' 'No, no, no,' he protested. 'That's 60, 80, 100 dollars,' I said. Within an hour, he was down \$420. It took another two hours before he finally understood and said, 'Thank you.'

- When you start a sentence with 'no,' 'but,' 'however,' or any variation thereof, no matter how friendly your tone or how many cute mollifying phrases you throw in to acknowledge the other person's feelings, the message to the other person is You are wrong.

- For one week monitor your coworkers' use of 'no,' 'but,' and 'however': Keep a scorecard of how many times each individual uses these three words to start a sentence.

- Being smart turns people on. Announcing how smart you are turns them off.

- It's the same in the workplace. We save a special place in our minds for our chronically angry colleagues.

- But there's a difference between being an achiever and a leader. Successful people become great leaders when they learn to shift the focus from themselves to others.

- One of my clients taught me a wonderful technique for improving in the area of providing recognition. 1. He first made a list of all of the important groups of people in his life (friends, family, direct reports, customers, etc.). 2. He then wrote down the names of every important person in each group. 3. Twice a week, on Wednesday morning and Friday afternoon, he would review the list of names and ask himself, 'Did someone on this page do something that I should recognize?' 4. If the answer was 'yes' he gave them some very quick recognition, either by phone, e-mail, voice mail, or a note. If the answer was 'no' he did nothing. He didn't want

- When someone you work with steals the credit for a success that you created, they're committing the most rage-inducing interpersonal 'crime' in the workplace. (This is the interpersonal flaw that generates more negative emotion than any other in my feedback interviews.) And it creates a bitterness that's hard to forget.

- When you hear yourself saying, 'I'm sorry I'm late but the traffic was murder,' stop talking at the word 'sorry.' Blaming the traffic is a lame excuse—and doesn't excuse the fact that you kept people waiting. You should have started earlier. What's the worst that could happen? You arrive ahead of schedule and have to wait a few minutes in the lobby? Are you really worried about having to say, 'I'm sorry I'm early but I left too soon and the traffic was nowhere near as bad as I anticipated.'

- It's amazing how often I hear otherwise brilliant, successful people make willfully self-deprecating comments about themselves. It's a subtle art because, in effect, they are stereotyping themselves—as impatient, or hot-tempered, or disorganized—and using that stereotype to excuse otherwise inexcusable behavior.

- The next time you hear yourself saying, 'I'm just no good at . . . ,' ask yourself, 'Why not?'

- If we can stop excusing ourselves, we can get better at almost anything we choose.

- I don't have much patience with 'therapy' that clings to the past—because going backwards is not about creating change. It's about understanding.

- Don't get me wrong. There's nothing wrong with understanding. Understanding the past is perfectly admissible if your issue is accepting the past. But if your issue is changing the future, understanding will not take you there. My experience tells me that the only effective approach is looking people in the eye and saying, 'If you want to change, do this.'

- Stop blaming others for the choices you made—and that goes with double emphasis for the choices that turned out well.

- Their replies all sound the same: 'The dog is always happy to see me.' 'The dog never talks back.' 'The dog gives me unconditional love, no matter what I do.' In other words, the dog is a suck-up.

- 'Would you please bring me the best one-hundred-dollar meal you have,' I asked. I am convinced that the meal I was served that night—not only the extra courses, the cheese tray, and the constant refills of my wine glass, but also the ridiculously solicitous service—was

worth at least 50% more than my hundred-dollar budget. I admitted I was a rube, and the staff responded by treating me like the Sun King.

- This experience instilled in me the conviction that if you put all your cards in someone else's hands that person will treat you better than if you kept the cards to yourself. I'm sure this is what Benjamin Franklin believed when he said, 'To gain a friend, let him do you a favor.'

- Apologizing is one of the most powerful and resonant gestures in the human arsenal—almost as powerful as a declaration of love. It's 'I love you' flipped on its head. If love means, 'I care about you and I'm happy about it,' then an apology means, 'I hurt you and I'm sorry about it.'

- Either way, it's seductive and irresistible; it irrevocably changes the relationship between two people. It compels them to move forward into something new and, perhaps, wonderful together.

- That's the magic in this process. When you declare your dependence on others, they usually agree to help. And during the course of making you a better person, they inevitably try to become better people themselves. This is how individuals change, how teams improve, how divisions grow, and how companies become world-beaters.

- The reality for leaders of the past and leaders in the future is that in the past very bright people would put up with disrespectful behavior, but in the future they will leave!

- No matter what someone tells him, he accepts it by reminding himself, 'I won't learn less.' What that means is when somebody makes a suggestion or gives you ideas, you're either going to learn more or learn nothing. But you're not going to learn less. Hearing people out does not make you dumber. So, thank them for trying to help.

- 'Boss, have you ever considered . . . ?' The boss looks at you and says, 'I'm confused by what you're telling me.' The boss doesn't mean he's confused. He's saying you're confused—which is another way of saying, 'You're wrong.'

- The critical issue is that saying 'thank you' keeps people talking to you. Failing to say 'thank you' shuts them down.

- That was the moment when change became possible—when he realized that this stern allegiance to his definition of himself was pointless vanity.

- Keep this in mind when you find yourself resisting change because you're clinging to a false—or pointless—notion of 'me.' It's not about you. It's about what other people think of you.

- These are the classic conditions that can lead to goal obsession. Great follow through. Terrific discipline. Awesome goal obsession. Short-sighted goal.

- If you step back and look at most of these interpersonal flaws, they revolve around two familiar factors: information and emotion.

- The journalist/novelist Tom Wolfe has a theory he calls information compulsion. He says that people have an overwhelming need to tell you something that you don't know, even when it's not in their best interest.

- Sharing or withholding. They're two sides of the same tarnished coin.
- Information and emotion. We either share them or withhold them.
- When dealing with information or emotion, we have to consider if what we're sharing is appropriate. Appropriate information is anything that unequivocally helps the other person. But it veers into inappropriate when we go too far or risk hurting someone.
- Is it appropriate? How much should I convey? You can do a lot worse than pause and pose these questions as guidelines for anything you do or say as you follow the instructions in this section's seven chapters.
- Successful people only have two problems dealing with negative feedback. However, they are big problems: (a) they don't want to hear it from us and (b) we don't want to give it to them.
- Basically, we accept feedback that is consistent with our self-image and reject feedback that is inconsistent.
- Feedback can be employed by others to reinforce our feelings of failure, or at least remind us of them—and our reaction is rarely positive.
- My average is about fifteen. The number of interviewees depends upon the company's size and the executive's job. Before I begin these interviews, I involve my client in determining who should be interviewed. Each interview lasts about an hour and focuses on the basics: What is my client doing right, what does my client need to change, and how my (already successful) client can get even better!
- 'I'm going to be working with my client for the next year or so. I don't get paid if he doesn't get better. 'Better' is not defined by me. It's not defined by my client. 'Better' is defined by you and the other coworkers who will be involved in this process.'
- I then present these coworkers with four requests. I call them The Four Commitments. I need them to commit to: 1. Let go of the past. 2. Tell the truth. 3. Be supportive and helpful—not cynical or negative. 4. Pick something to improve yourself—so everyone is focused more on 'improving' than 'judging.'
- 'Forgiveness means letting go of the hope for a better past!'
- change is not a one-way street. It involves two parties: the person who's changing and the people who notice it. As you begin your personal self-reclamation
- It's my contention—and it's the bedrock thesis of this book—that interpersonal behavior is the difference-maker between being great and near-great, between getting the gold and settling for the bronze. (The higher you go, the more your 'issues' are behavioral.)
- Basically, feedback comes to us in three forms: Solicited, unsolicited, and observation. Each of them works well, but not for everyone.
- When you think about it, these 'what do you think of me?' encounter group questions are actually irrelevant. In the workplace you don't have to like me; we don't have to be buddies

who hang out together after work. All we have to do is work well together. How we really 'feel' about each other is practically moot.

- In soliciting feedback for yourself, the only question that works—the only one!—must be phrased like this: 'How can I do better?'

- Pure unadulterated issue-free feedback that makes change possible has to (a) solicit advice rather than criticism, (b) be directed towards the future rather than obsessed with the negative past, and (c) be couched in a way that suggests you will act on it; that in fact you are trying to do better.

- This was a blindside event for me not only because it exposed my shallow self-involvement, but it taught me two great lessons that have literally shaped my professional work. 1. It is a whole lot easier to see our problems in others than it is to see them in ourselves. 2. Even though we may be able to deny our problems to ourselves, they may be very obvious to the people who are observing us.

- Make a list of people's casual remarks about you.

- Turn the sound off.

- Complete the sentence.

- By the sixth sentence, I could see tears in his eyes. 'If I become less judgmental,' he said, 'maybe my children will talk to me again.'

- Listen to your self-aggrandizing remarks.

- Mike thought a minute, and then said, 'I'm going to change, and the reason I'm going to change has nothing to do with money and it has nothing to do with this firm. I'm going to change because I have two sons, and if they were receiving this same feedback from you in twenty years, I'd be ashamed.'

- The lesson: Your flaws at work don't vanish when you walk through the front door at home.

- The moral: Anybody can change, but they have to want to change—and sometimes you can deliver that message by reaching people where they live, not where they work.

- if by magic.' Well, apologizing is my 'magic move.' It's a seemingly simple tactic. But like admitting you were wrong, or saying, 'Thank you,' it's tough for some people to do—but brilliant for those who can.

- Clarke was doing something that both parties needed. In effect, he was saying, 'We can't redo the past. But the worst is behind us, and I am still so sorry.' The apology gave him and the people he was addressing a sense of closure, however faint and bittersweet. Closure lets you move forward.

- That said, what I remember is not the point. It's what you felt that matters, and this is especially pertinent when the issue is hospitality extended or withheld.

- it is impossible to resist a heartfelt apology.

- That may be a compelling reason to learn the magic move of apology, but the most compelling is this: It is so easy to do. All you have to do is repeat these words: 'I'm sorry. I'll try to do better.' Try it sometime. It costs you nothing—not even your illusory pride—but the return on investment would make Warren Buffett green with envy. And it will change your life, as if by magic.

- You can't wink while you're apologizing. You can only say you're sorry and keep quiet.

- If you do something wonderful and saintly, I will regard it as the exception to the rule; you're still an arrogant jerk. Within that framework it's almost impossible for us to be perceived as improving, no matter how hard we try. However, the odds improve considerably if you tell people that you are trying to change. Suddenly, your efforts are on their radar screen. You're beginning to chip away at their preconceptions.

- Unfortunately, a lot of people don't pay close attention to phases four, five, and six—the vital period when you approach your coworkers to secure the all-important political buy-in to your plans. In each phase you must target a different constituency. In phase 4, you woo up—to get your superiors to approve. In phase 5, you woo laterally—to get your peers to agree. In phase 6, you woo down—to get your direct reports to accept. These three phases are the sine qua non of getting things done. You cannot skip or skim over them. You have to give them as much, if not more, attention, as you do phases one, two, three, and seven. If you don't, you may as well be working alone in a locked room where no one sees you, hears you, or knows you exist. That's the guaranteed result of committing 'one, two, three, seven.'

- If there's one thing we've learned in this noisy media age, it's that simple, un-nuanced messages break through the clutter and hit home with high impact.

- Whereas most people think of listening as something we do during those moments when we are not talking, Frances Hesselbine knows that listening is a two-part maneuver. There's the part where we actually listen. And there's the part where we speak.

- Bill Clinton was the absolute master at this. My wife and I had several opportunities see the President in action in public forums. It didn't matter if you were a head of state or a bell clerk, when you were talking with Bill Clinton he acted as if you were the only person in the room. Every fiber of his being, from his eyes to his body language, communicated that he was locked into what you were saying. He conveyed how important you were, not how important he was.

- Listening also requires us to answer a difficult question before we speak: 'Is it worth it?'

- Boies was simply being himself, practicing the one skill that has made him an inarguably great success. The ability to make a person feel that, when you're with that person, he or she is the most important (and the only) person in the room is the skill that separates the great from the near-great.

- But when my acquaintance asked one woman why she was so enthralled with this man, she answered, 'He never takes his eyes off me. Even if the Queen walked in, he wouldn't be distracted. He would still be devoting his full attention to me. That's hard to resist.'

- Bill Clinton has this skill in spades. Whether you were meeting him for the first time in a receiving line, or dealing with him one-on-one in a private session, Clinton made a point of knowing something positive about you and, without making a big show of it, saying something to let you know he knew it.

- Listen. Don't interrupt. Don't finish the other person's sentences. Don't say 'I knew that.' Don't even agree with the other person (even if he praises you, just say, 'Thank you'). Don't use the words 'no,' 'but,' and 'however.' Don't be distracted. Don't let your eyes or attention wander elsewhere while the other person is talking. Maintain your end of the dialogue by asking intelligent questions that (a) show you're paying attention, (b) move the conversation forward, and (c) require the other person to talk (while you listen). Eliminate any striving to impress

- The more you subsume your desire to shine, the more you will shine in the other person's eyes.

- Give Yourself an A+ in Gratitude

- No matter how far along you are in life, think about your career. Who are the people most responsible for your success? Write down the first 25 names that come to mind. Ask yourself, 'Have I ever told them how grateful I am for their help?' If you're like the rest of us, you probably have fallen short in this area.

- Once you master the subtle arts of apologizing, advertising, listening, and thanking, you must follow up—relentlessly. Or everything else is just a 'program of the month.'

- For example, that first client who had a problem sharing and including his peers went to each colleague and said the following: 'Last month I told you that I would try to get better at being more inclusive. You gave me some ideas and I would like to know if you think I have effectively put them into practice.' That question forces his colleagues to stop what they're doing and, once again, think about his efforts to change, mentally gauge his progress, and keep him focused on continued improvement. If you do this every month, your colleagues

- Follow-up is the most protracted part of the process of changing for the better. It goes on for 12 to 18 months. Fittingly, it's the difference-maker in the process. Follow-up is how you measure your progress.

- People don't get better without follow-up. That was lesson three.

- that pretty much sums up the value of executive development without follow-up. Nobody ever changed for the better by going to a training session. They got better by doing what they learned in the program. And that 'doing,' by definition, involves follow-up.

- I have a coach. His name is Jim Moore, a longtime friend who is a coaching professional. Every night wherever I am in the world, it's Jim's job as my coach to call me and ask me questions. They focus largely on my physical well-being and fitness. They're the same questions each night—and knowing that Jim will call and that I will have to answer the questions honestly is my method of following up on my goal of becoming a healthier individual.

- The first question is always, 'How happy are you?' Because for me it's most important to be happy. Otherwise, everything else is irrelevant. After that, the questions are: 1. How much walking did you do? 2. How many push-ups? 3. How many sit-ups? 4. Did you eat any high-fat foods? 5. How much alcohol did you drink? 6. How many hours of sleep did you get? 7. How much time did you spend watching TV or surfing the Internet? 8. How much time did you spend writing? 9. Did you do or say something nice for Lyda (my wife)? 10. Did you do or say something nice for Kelly and Bryan (my children)? 11. How many times did you try to prove you were right when it wasn't worth it? 12. How many minutes did you spend on topics that didn't matter or that you could not control?

- Yet some of the simplest ideas are also the most effective. Since they're so easy to do, you have no excuse not to try them.

- For example, you say, I want to be a better listener. Would you suggest two ideas that I can implement in the future that will help me become a better listener? The other person suggests, First, focus all your attention on the other person. Get in a physical position, the 'listening position,' such as sitting on the edge of your seat or leaning forward toward the individual. Second, don't interrupt, no matter how much you disagree with what you're hearing. These two ideas represent feedforward. 4. Listen attentively to the suggestions. Take notes if you like. Your only ground rule: You are not allowed to judge, rate, or critique the suggestions in any way. You can't even say something positive, such as, 'That's a good idea.' The only response you're permitted is, Thank you.

- That's it. Ask for two ideas. Listen. Say thank you. Then repeat the process with someone else.

- If feedback, both positive and negative, reports on how you functioned in the past, then feedforward comes in the form of ideas that you can put into practice in the future. If feedback is past tense, then feedforward is future perfect.

- I don't establish what you need to do to change for the better. You don't establish it either. They do. Who are they? Everyone around you. Everyone who knows you, cares about you, thinks about you, has you pegged.

- Let's say you want to do a better job of listening. It's possible that a coach can explain to you how to be a better listener. The advice will be true, supportable, and impossible to dispute. But it will be generic. It's much better to ask the people around you, 'What are some ways I can do a better job of listening to you?' They'll give you specific, concrete ideas that relate to them—how they perceive you as a listener—not the vague ideas a coach would give. They may not be experts on the topic of listening, but at that moment in time, they actually know more about how you listen, or don't, than anyone else in the world.

- Successful people love getting ideas for the future.

- It works because we can change the future but not the past. It doesn't deal in wishes, dreams, and conquering the impossible. It works because helping people be 'right' is more productive than proving them 'wrong.'

- feedforward focuses on solutions, not problems.
- Feedforward forces us to ask—and in doing so, we enlarge our universe of people with useful ideas. Asking, of course, gives the other person a license to answer.
- If you're giving me two ideas that I've asked for, you will only receive my gratitude. Not resentment. Not an argument. Not punishment. On top of that, you don't even have to be right. You don't have to prove that your suggestions are good ideas—because I'm not judging them. All I can do is accept them or ignore them.
- I make it easy on myself. I don't place sucker bets. I only work with clients who have an extremely high potential of succeeding. Why would anyone want to operate any other way?
- Miswanting occurs when we discover that what we wanted did not make us happy.
- One of my first tasks is helping them distinguish between what they want in life and how they choose to reach that goal. Again, the difference is one of wanting and choosing.
- To weigh in with an opinion on some individual's goal in life would mean passing a value judgment on his or her reason for living. I won't do that. (And in turn I wouldn't want them passing judgment on my goals.) That's what I mean by being mission neutral. However, I do have strong opinions about how people choose to reach their goals. There I'm not neutral. After all, if they make the wrong choice, they'll fail—which means I'm a failure too, and that is decidedly not my mission in life. (See above.)
- When people commit to getting better, they are doing something difficult and heroic. In truth, I applaud my clients when they begin the process of fixing their flaws, not at the end. If they commit and follow my advice, their success is a foregone conclusion. I don't need to applaud a fait accompli.
- Sometimes the desire for 'perfect' can drive away 'better.'
- I take great comfort in the fact that Michael Jordan, to many the best basketball player to ever play the game, was a mediocre baseball player in the minor leagues and, as a golfer, would have a tough time keeping up with at least twenty golfers who live within an 800 yard radius of my home in San Diego. If Michael Jordan, a preternaturally superb athlete and competitor—in fact, the benchmark for other basketball players—could only excel at one sport, what makes you think you can do better?
- Even in my narrow profession of executive coaching, I've further narrowed my ambition to one thing: Helping people achieve long-term positive behavioral change. I don't do strategy. I don't do innovation. I don't coach information technology or media relations or industrial psychology. The list of what I don't do could fill several dozen books. I can live with that, because I've chosen to try to be the best I can be in my admittedly narrow corner of the coaching fiefdom.
- Once you see the beauty of measuring the soft values in your life, other variables kick in, such as the fact that setting numerical targets makes you more likely to achieve them.
- I found that if I measured the activity I was much more likely to do it.

- You can monetize the punishment and end the problem. Or you can monetize the result and create a solution. Either way, it works.

- 'No matter how terrific your idea and how thoroughly you've thought it out, I'm going to add my two cents to it in order to improve it. Your first impulse will be to listen to me and act on my suggestion. Please don't. Just nod your head and pretend you're listening. If you're as smart as I thought you were when I hired you, you'll ignore me and do it your way.'

- I asked the executive to imagine the feedback I would have gotten from all his departed assistants. What would they say good and bad about him? Then I asked him to write it down as if it were a memo to his next prospective assistant titled 'How to Handle Me.'

- What's interesting (and reassuring) about this story is that it's an example of a boss accurately assessing his shortcomings and his employee agreeing with him. That isn't always the case. Sometimes the gap between what a boss says about himself and what the staff believes is wide, very wide.

- writing a memo to staff on 'How to Handle Me' is not only an admirable exercise in self-examination, but a surefire method for stimulating dialogue with the troops. But be careful. Your memo has to be brutally honest. Your employees have to believe it is accurate. And most important, they must believe it matters. Anything less on all three counts and you may as well keep your instructions to yourself.

- Remember this the next time you find yourself trapped by a needy, demanding staff. If they need too much of your time, you can't just tell them to stop bothering you. You have to wean them away and make it seem like it's their idea. Let them figure out what they should be doing on their own. Let them tell you where you're not needed.

- If you manage your people the way you'd want to be managed, you're forgetting one thing: You're not managing you.

- most egregious source of corporate dysfunction: the failure of managers to see the enormous disconnect between understanding and doing. Most leadership development revolves around one huge false assumption—that if people understand then they will do. That's not true. Most of us understand, we just don't do. As I said in Chapter 11, we all understand that being grossly overweight is bad for our health, but not all of us actually do anything to change our condition.

- The good news here for every manager, including my CEO client, is that this false belief has a simple cure. It's called follow-up. Once you send out a message, you ask people the next day if they heard it. Then you ask if they understood it. Then a few days later, you ask if they did something about it. Believe me, if the first follow-up question doesn't get their attention, the next one will, and so will the final one.

- Only when the boss resorted to deducting \$3000 from the writer's paycheck did he change his ways. Economists would call this 'loss aversion'—the phenomenon that we hate losing something more than we enjoy gaining its equivalent. I would call this prejudice—a failure to

understand what motivates an employee. The writer did indeed meet his deadlines for a few months, but he left the company within six months.

- The bonus didn't motivate him. The deduction, though, insulted him. The
- Peter Drucker said that the manager of the future will know how to ask rather than how to tell is because Drucker understood that knowledge workers would know more than any manager does.
- Managers at smart companies are catching on. They're beginning to see that their relationship with top talent resembles a strategic alliance rather than a traditional employment contract. They know free agents can leave anytime.
- When I work one-on-one with a manager, it's often because he or she has done something to tick off his direct reports. Some are so annoyed that they leave the company. In effect, the departing employees are voting with their feet. At some point, if enough of them cast similar votes, the free agent workers' response to the manager registers as a serious problem.
- Stop trying to change people who don't think they have a problem.
- Stop trying to change people who are pursuing the wrong strategy for the organization.
- Stop trying to change people who should not be in their job.
- Finally, stop trying to help people who think everyone else is the problem.
- Imagine that you're 95 years old and ready to die. Before taking your last breath, you're given a great gift: The ability to travel back in time—the ability to talk to the person who is reading this page, the ability to help this person be a better professional and lead a better life. The 95-year-old you understands what was really important and what wasn't, what mattered and what didn't. What advice would this wise 'old you' have for the 'you' who is reading this page? Take your time and answer the question on two levels: personal advice and professional advice. Jot down a few words that capture what the old you would be saying to the younger you. Once you've written these words down, the rest is simple: Just do whatever you wrote down.
- I conducted a research project for Accenture involving more than 200 high-potential leaders from 120 companies around the world. Each company could nominate only two future leaders, the very brightest of its young stars. These are the kinds of people who could jump at a moment's notice to better-paying positions elsewhere. We asked each of these young stars a simple question: 'If you stay in this company, why are you going to stay?' The three top answers were: 1. 'I am finding meaning and happiness now. The work is exciting and I love what I am doing.' 2. 'I like the people. They are my friends. This feels like a team. It feels like a family. I could make more money working with other people, but I don't want to leave the people here.' 3. 'I can follow my dreams. This organization is giving me a chance to do what I really want to do in life.'
- The answers were never about money. They were always about happiness, relationships, following dreams, and meaning. When my friend asked people on their deathbeds what was

important to them, they gave exactly the same answers as the high-potential leaders I interviewed.

- Global Leadership Inventory

Check as material for leadership surveys