



## Change and focus at the heart of success

[By Michael Kinsman]

Marshall Goldsmith had just completed his daily weigh-in, which registered four-tenths of a pound less than the weight he wants to maintain.

There is no magic involved in this act, the executive coach just wants to know where he stands. His weight is a touchstone for how he's doing in life.

"Most Americans know they are not supposed to be grossly overweight," he says. "It's not that they don't understand that. But why are they still overweight?"

This is the kind of question that cuts to the core of Goldsmith's philosophy. He is in the business of helping successful people overcome the minor stumbling blocks that impede their ability to get further ahead.

And, he contends, it is those nagging, little things that executives don't recognize, ignore or don't know how to deal with that can temper their success in life.

"It's not about understanding leadership for these people," he says. "It's about understanding how to lead."

Goldsmith, who takes on only executives who truly want to change and gives them a money-back guarantee on his six-figure fee if they aren't satisfied with his counseling, has elaborated on his technique in the new book "What Got You Here Won't Get You There: How Successful People Become Even More Successful" (Hyperion, \$23.95). Within

days of its release, the book had climbed to the best-seller list on [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com).

Goldsmith professes that he offers no wisdom to those he coaches. Instead, he tries to determine how the actions of those individuals affect those around them and how the individuals might choose to change their personal style to be more effective in their jobs.

He's actually looking for blind spots, convinced that everyone has them.

But he also knows that most of us can't assess our own deficiencies too well. That's why he interviews a wide range of co-workers to identify issues that may be hampering executives being more successful.

"Look at an executive who is 50 years old," Goldsmith says. "If that person was going to make a change on their own, don't you think they would have done it already? That's why you need others to point out these things."

Gradually, he says, executives can change their behavior, but that behavior might have been developed over years - periods in which these executives had been very successful - and it often is difficult to get them to acknowledge that it may be holding them back.

And, as if to reinforce his belief, Goldsmith has his own daily counseling session with longtime friend Jim Moore. They connect every day, with Moore asking Goldsmith the same two dozen questions about Goldsmith's personal health, work and family relationships and behavior.

"It only takes three minutes, but it reminds me of what I need to work on," he says. "We have a tendency to only address what is in front of us. This keeps those issues right in front of me. It won't stop you from failing, but it will make you aware of it.

"I frequently fail, but at least I know I failed."

Goldsmith believes there are very few people, even the most successful executives, who can't improve their effectiveness. He also knows that the wisdom they need probably is not going to come from him.

"Most of the help my clients get, they don't get from me," he says. "They get it from the people around them."

All they have to do is listen to what others say about them.