

# MARSHALL GOLDSMITH //

Co-founder, Marshall Goldsmith Partners  
Fairbanks Ranch, California

Marshall Goldsmith specializes in helping successful leaders achieve positive, lasting, measurable behavioral change through keynotes, seminars, workshops, and one-on-one executive coaching. He is also an adjunct professor of executive education at Dartmouth's Tuck School of Business, and frequently speaks at many other leading business schools. He was voted one of 2007's Thinkers 50, *Forbes* called him one of the top five executive coaches, and *The Wall Street Journal* ranked him as one of the top 10 executive educators. He has 22 books to his credit, including his most recent, *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*.



## QI WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB, AND WHAT LESSON DID YOU TAKE AWAY FROM IT?

My first job was pumping gas in Valley Station, Kentucky, when I was 10. My dad had a gas station, and that is where I learned the importance of dealing with customers and establishing positive long-term relationships. I learned a lot about business.

## QI DO YOU HAVE ANY INSPIRING STORIES FROM YOUR WORK AS AN EXECUTIVE COACH?

One of my favorite clients I ever worked with was a man named Alan Mulally, who's now the CEO of Ford. Alan is and was a fantastic leader, and he just wanted to improve on playing a larger leadership role at Boeing. He did a fantastic job of reaching out across the organization and involving all of his team members. His whole team got better. Of all the clients I worked with, I'd say I spent the least amount of time with him. He was great to start with, and still improved the most. I learned from Alan that my job should be working with very successful people, and helping them get better.

## QI HOW ARE THE TRAITS OF A GREAT LEADER GOING TO BE DIFFERENT IN THE FUTURE THAN THEY WERE IN THE PAST?

I collaborated on a book called *Global Leadership: The Next Generation*, in which we interviewed 200 high-potential leaders from around the world, and these were the future leaders. We asked them, "How are leaders going to be different in the future?" Many of the variables for being a great leader were the same as in the past—integrity, customer commitment, vision, and other standard behaviors. But five different qualities came out as much more important for leaders of the future: global leadership, cross-cultural appreciation, technology savvy, building alliances and partnerships, and sharing leadership.

## QI WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE SOME OF THE BENEFITS OF THE 360-DEGREE FEEDBACK TOOL AND THE CONCEPT OF FEEDFORWARD?

For the 360-degree feedback tool, if you don't do any follow-up, there's almost no benefit. People ask, "Do leaders get better because they get 360-degree feedback?" That's like asking the question, "Do people get in shape because they get physical exams?" No. They get in shape when they work out. Physical exams just tell you where you are. 360-degree feedback is parallel to the physical exam. You don't get better because you get 360-degree feedback. The feedback should give you a map of where you're doing well and where you need to improve.

After that, feedforward is designed to help you get there. You learn to ask for ideas for areas of improvement. You're not promising to do everything people say but promising to listen, hear everything, do what you can, and follow up on a regular basis. Feedforward is not focused on where you are now, but where you want to go in the future.

## QI IS VOLUNTEERING HOW YOU SPEND MOST OF YOUR FREE TIME?

Basically I teach, I do executive coaching, and then I write and edit books, articles, and ongoing blogs with *Harvard Business Online* and *BusinessWeek.com*. These three things take up most of my time.

My volunteer work is really no different than my work for pay; I just don't charge people for it. I've worked with admirals in the U.S. Navy, generals in the Army, and leaders in the Girl Scouts and Red Cross.



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