

Bad Habits That Can Hold You Back

Longing for a corner office? Here are some peccadilloes that could block your entrance to the executive suite. When people reach a certain level of success, they are less likely to be hurt by lack of skill, intelligence, or even personality than by other problems. What hinders these aspiring managers from moving higher are weaknesses in leadership behavior--usually acted out with others. Here's a list of 20 common ones compiled by executive coach Marshall Goldsmith:

TIPSHEET: Best-Practices

Winning Too Much The need to win at all costs and in all situations—when it matters, when it doesn't, and when it's totally beside the point.

Adding Too Much Value The overwhelming desire to add our two cents to every discussion.

Passing Judgment The need to rate others and impose our standards on them.

Making Destructive Comments The needless sarcasms and cutting remarks that we think make us sound sharp and witty.

Starting with "No," "But," or "However" The overuse of these qualifiers, which secretly say to everyone, "I'm right. You're wrong."

Telling the World How Smart We Are The need to show people we're smarter than they think we are.

Speaking When Angry Using emotional volatility as a management tool.

Negativity The need to share our negative thoughts, even when we weren't asked.

Withholding Information The refusal to share information in order to maintain an advantage over others.

Failing to Give Proper Recognition The inability to praise and reward.

Claiming Credit We Don't Deserve The most annoying way to overestimate our contribution to any success.

Making Excuses The need to reposition our annoying behavior as a permanent fixture so people excuse us for it.

Clinging to the Past The need to deflect blame away from ourselves and onto events and people from our past; a subset of blaming everyone else.

Playing Favorites Failing to see that we are treating someone unfairly.

Refusing to Express Regret The inability to take responsibility for our actions, admit we're wrong, or recognize how our actions affect others.

Not Listening The most passive-aggressive form of disrespect for colleagues.

Failing to Express Gratitude The most basic form of bad manners.

Punishing the Messenger The misguided need to attack the innocent, who are usually only trying to protect us.

Passing the Buck The need to blame everyone but ourselves.

An Excessive Need to Be "Me" Exalting our faults as virtues simply because they exemplify who we are.