

ACE WOMEN'S Network™ Michigan

Mentoring Mondays
November 9, 2020

We are beginning to wrap-up our review of “*How Women Rise*” by Sally Helgensen and Marshall Goldsmith. This has been a must read for me and I have noticed several changes in my behavior as a result -- most noticeably in my communications by avoiding the use of language that has a minimizing effect. I am, in fact, making a conscious effort to break the habits reflected in the book. This week we will look at Habit #11.

Habit 11: Ruminating

Ruminating – reliving unfortunate things that happened – spending too much time and energy thinking about and trying to rewrite events instead of accepting them for what they were – mistakes – and moving on. Both men and women derail themselves by focusing on the past. In Marshall’s original book “*What Got You Here Won’t Get You There*,” he refers to this habit as “clinging to the past.” In his experience, “men who cling to the past tend to blame others for what they believe has gone wrong in their lives or careers, making excuses for themselves and turning their regret outward. The result is anger. . . . Women, by contrast, are more likely to turn regret inward, blaming themselves and dissecting their own mistakes.”

There is an interesting take on the definition of rumination that you must review in the book. Essentially, in ruminant animals such as cows, goats, sheep and deer that live exclusively on plant food, rumination is a process popularly known as “chewing the cud.” “It’s a brilliant evolutionary strategy for ruminants, but it does little for human beings.” You might view it as being reflective, but “what you’re really doing when you ruminate is berating yourself, engaging in a kind of self-talk that can border on abuse. . . . While men are more likely to say: *I made a mistake. We all do. It is time to move on.*”

“Rumination is counter-productive for two reasons: First, it always makes you feel worse. And second, it gets in the way of your ability to resolve your problems . . . it becomes your default mode.” When something goes wrong you tend to re-run these mental tapes: *Why did I say that? Will I never learn? What the hell is wrong with me?*” These self-accusatory scripts can lead to depression. You might think to yourself that this type of inward analysis will enable you to do things differently in the future. “Analysis equals paralysis” is a slogan made for ruminants.

Push back the negative thoughts when they pop up in your head. “In other words, heading down that rabbit hole can destroy you at the executive level. So, break free – move on. At the executive level you need to be confident and decisive because the men around you really know how to move on.

To secure your copy of “***How Women Rise***” by Sally Helgensen and Marshall Goldsmith, visit www.hatchettbooks.com.