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Mojo

How to Get It, How to Keep It, How to Get It Back If You Lose It

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

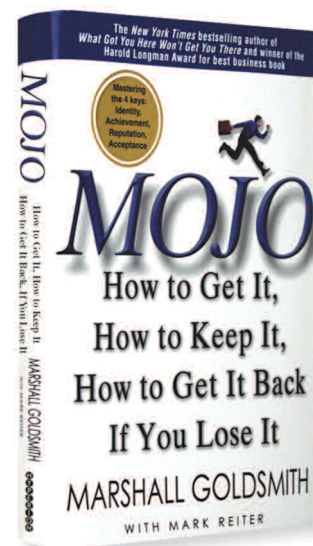
Mojo comes from the moment we do something that is purposeful, powerful and positive, and the rest of the world recognizes it. *Mojo* is about that moment — and how we can create it in our lives, maintain it and recapture it when we need it.

Top executive coach Marshall Goldsmith lays out the ways that we can get — and keep — our Mojo. He explains how our professional and personal Mojo is impacted by four key factors and the questions they ask: *identity* (Who do you think you are?), *achievement* (What have you done lately?), *reputation*, (Who do other people think you are — and what have you done lately?) and *acceptance* (What can you change — and when do you need to just “let it go”?).

Mojo is that positive spirit — toward what we are doing now — that starts from the inside and radiates to the outside. Mojo is at its peak when we are experiencing both happiness and meaning in what we are doing and communicating this experience to the world around us. This summary provides practical tools that can help anyone achieve both happiness and meaning, not only in business, but in life.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to integrate and focus your life and work.
- How to contribute to the world.
- How to find more meaning for your life through self-realization and self-actualization.
- How to deal with human behavior in your business and personal life.



by Marshall Goldsmith
with Mark Reiter

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THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: MOJO

by Marshall Goldsmith with Mark Reiter

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You and Your Mojo

The word “mojo” originally referred to a folk belief in the supernatural powers of a voodoo charm, often in the form of a piece of cloth or a small pouch.

Over time, the word has evolved to describe a sense of positive spirit and direction, especially in the shifting tides of sports, business and politics.

To other people, Mojo is a more elusive sense of personal advancement through the world. You're moving forward, making progress, achieving goals, clearing hurdles, passing the competition — and doing so with increasing ease. Sports people call this being “in the zone.” Others describe it under the umbrella term “flow.”

A new definition of Mojo spins off from the great value attached to finding happiness and meaning in life.

Mojo plays a vital role in our pursuit of happiness and meaning because it is about achieving two simple goals: loving what you do and showing it. These goals govern an operational definition: **Mojo is that positive spirit toward what we are doing now that starts from the inside and radiates to the outside.**

Our Mojo is apparent when the positive feelings toward what we are doing come from inside us and are evident for others to see.

Four vital ingredients need to be combined in order for you to have great Mojo: *identity, achievement, reputation* and *acceptance*.

Measuring Your Mojo

How much Mojo do you have? How can you measure your Mojo?

There are people, who by all external measures — money, respect, power, status — are “winning.” They are outpacing their peers and competition quite handily. And yet inside they derive little satisfaction or meaning from their job or achievements.

Mojo is not merely about the rush we feel when we're on a winning streak. It's not only about the direction we're heading in, nor is it about the pace of change we're creating around us. Mojo is an expression of the harmony — or lack of harmony — between what we feel inside about whatever we are doing and what we show on the outside. ●

The Mojo Paradox

As much as we all claim to want happiness and meaning in our lives, there's a paradoxical catch that thwarts us at every turn. It is called the Mojo Paradox and it states: *Our default response in life is not to experience happiness. Our default response in life is not to experience meaning. Our default response in life is to experience inertia.*

In other words, our most common, everyday process — the thing we do more often than anything else — is *continue to do what we're already doing*.

Once you appreciate the Mojo Paradox, you become aware of its paralyzing effect on every aspect of your life, not just the mindless routines of eating or watching TV, but also things that really matter — such as the level of happiness and meaning in your life — and you become more thoughtful about turning things around.

How do we break the cycle of inertia? All that's required is the use of a simple discipline.



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As you go through your day, evaluate every activity on a 1 to 10 scale (with 10 being the highest score) on two simple questions: How much long-term benefit or meaning did I experience from this activity? How much short-term satisfaction or happiness did I experience in this activity?

Simply record the activities that make up your day, both at work and at home, and then evaluate each activity by applying these two questions. At the end of the day you will have a chart that tracks your experience of happiness and meaning.

If you journey through life knowing that all of your activities will be evaluated on these two simple questions, you will tend to experience more happiness and meaning in each activity and, in the aggregate, you will have a happier and more meaningful life. ●

The Building Blocks of Mojo

Before you can assess your Mojo, you have to determine who “you” are. How do you define yourself?

The first building block is identity. Identity is a complicated subject, and we make it even more complicated when we’re not sure where to look for the best answer. Many people hurtle back to their past — to signal events, memorable triumphs, painful disasters — to define themselves. Some rely on the testimony of others — a boss or teacher’s good review — as a means of defining themselves. Still others project themselves into the future, defining themselves as who they would like to be rather than who they actually are.

How do we know who we are? Our identities are *remembered*, *reflected*, *programmed* and *created*. First, review the various components of your current identity. Where did they originate? If your present identity is fine with you, just work on becoming an even better version of who you are. If you want to make a change in your identity, be open to the fact you may be able to change more than you originally believed that you could.

Assuming that you do not have “incurable” or “unchangeable” limitations, you can create a new identity for your future without sacrificing your past.

Your Mojo is that positive spirit toward what you are doing now that starts on the inside and radiates to the outside. To understand how you are relating to any activity, you need to understand your identity — who you are. To change your Mojo, you may need to create a new identity for yourself. ●

Waiters and Mojo

What is interesting about waiters, at least in terms of Mojo, is the wide variety of attitudes that people bring to a narrowly defined job that ends with a monetary tip.

The best ones appreciate the process. They realize that the more engaging and positive they are, the bigger their tip. So no matter how they feel about their circumstances, they radiate a positive spirit (high Mojo).

The worst ones make it a point of honor to let you know that they find the job demeaning (low Mojo), that they are really more interesting in their other life (with more Mojo).

Finally, there are the career waiters. There’s a professional snap to how they do their job, and they never hint that they would rather be doing something else. They are committed to doing the task well and they are capable of mining personal satisfaction from it. If they have a bad day, they don’t take it out on their customers.

Achievement: What Have You Done Lately?

Our achievements are the second component in creating our Mojo.

We tend to gauge our achievements by using two differing criteria. On the one hand, there are the accomplishments that make others aware of our ability and result in their recognizing us. This is what most people think about when they discuss achievement. On the other hand, there are the accomplishments that only we are aware of, related to our own abilities, that make us feel good about ourselves. Both are legitimate in their own way.

In the “best of all worlds” the two types of achievement could be the same — what we do that impresses others makes us feel great about ourselves. But it doesn’t always work out that way. Sometimes we perform magnificently at work, to great acclaim, but it doesn’t elevate how we feel about ourselves. Sometimes we do something wonderful for the world and no one else is impressed.

False Assumptions

Chip away at the false assumptions that distort your achievements and you’ll get a much clearer picture of what you’ve done lately. Without it, you’ll never be

able to envision everything else you can do.

By increasing our understanding of achievement — what it means to us and what it means to the world — we can increase our Mojo. We can look at ourselves more objectively. We can determine what really matters in our lives. We can strive for achievement that really matters to us — and let go of achievement that does not create happiness and meaning in our lives. If we want to increase our Mojo, we can either change the degree of our achievement (how well we are doing) or change the definition of our achievement (what we are trying to do well). ●

Reputation: Who Do People Think You Are?

Reputation is the third element in establishing your Mojo. It's where you add up who you are (identity) and what you've done (achievement) and toss the combined sum out into the world to see how people respond. Your reputation is people's recognition — or rejection — of your identity and achievement. Sometimes you'll agree with the world's opinion. Sometimes you won't. But many times you may not even be aware of it. You cannot create your reputation by yourself (the rest of the world, by definition, always has something to say about it). But you can influence it.

How to Change Your Reputation

The truth is, reputation doesn't happen overnight. In the same way that *one event* can't form your reputation, *one corrective gesture* can't reform it either. You need a sequence of consistent, similar actions to begin the rebuilding process.

It's doable, but it requires personal insight and, most of all, discipline.

You have to be consistent in how you present yourself — to the point where you don't mind being “guilty of repeating yourself.” If you abandon that consistency, people will get confused. The reputation you're trying to form gets muddled by conflicting evidence and eventually loses its sharp focus.

By impacting our reputation we can impact our Mojo. Having a reputation that others find bothersome can make keeping your Mojo as easy as “pushing a big rock up a steep hill.” It is theoretically possible, but practically challenging. Having a great reputation — in an area that matters in your life — makes Mojo maintenance more of a joy than a chore. ●

Acceptance: When Can You Let Go?

Worrying about the past and being anxious about the future can easily destroy our Mojo. It upsets us emotionally; it clouds our judgment; it fills us with regret and it can lead to self-punishment.

When we cannot accept a situation for what it is and refuse to forgive people for causing that situation, who do we ultimately hurt? The answer is always the same: ourselves. By carrying around anger and negative baggage, we weigh ourselves down. We limit our opportunities to find meaning and happiness. We kill our Mojo.

That's what makes acceptance as important as identity, achievement and reputation in building our Mojo. It's the element that liberates us from toxic emotions. When everything around us seems confusing, acceptance reminds us what really matters.

Try it the next time you find yourself engaged with anger at someone who has disappointed or hurt you. Ask yourself who is making you feel upset, angry or crazy. Then set aside every thought, every argument and every image about the people who are upsetting you. Blank all of it out — and focus on these people as they are in your life now. Not for what they did in the past. Not on what you want to happen to them in the future. They're being who they are. (If you had their parents, their genes, their résumé, you might be them, too.) You don't have to like them, agree with them or even respect them. Just accept them for being who they are.

When you can do that, you can forgive them for being who they are — and forgive yourself for being who you are.

Change what you can and “let go” of what you cannot change. ●

Mojo Killers

When people lose their Mojo, it's usually because of a series of simple, hard-to-spot mistakes that lead up to the humiliating result — mistakes like these:

- 1. Over-Committing.** Before replying with an enthusiastic “yes” to that next request, think of the long-term impact on your Mojo.
- 2. Waiting for the Facts to Change.** When the facts are not to your liking, ask yourself, “What path would I take if I knew that the situation would not get better?” Then get ready to do that.
- 3. Looking for Logic in All the Wrong Places.** If you focus on making a positive difference, instead of just

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being satisfied with feeling “objective,” you will benefit both your company and your career.

4. Bashing the Boss. The next time you start to bash the boss, think about what you may be doing to your own Mojo and the Mojo of the people around you. If you really have a problem with bosses, *talk to them* about it. If you feel that you cannot talk with them, leave. If you cannot talk with them and cannot leave, accept them and make the best of it.

5. Refusing to Change Because of “Sunk Costs.” Are your decisions based on what you might lose or what you have to gain? If it’s the former, your devotion to sunk costs might be costing you more than you know. It may cost you your Mojo.

6. Confusing the Mode You’re In. If you look around your company, you’ll see that the executives you most admire tend to be those who, with consistent discipline, never drift out of professional mode. They have clear ideas about their identity, achievement and reputation. They have chosen a role for themselves and they rarely go off script. That’s why they have Mojo. ●

Four Pointless Arguments

Arguing can put our Mojo at risk by needlessly creating enemies that could have been allies. Many of our arguments fall into classic patterns that, if looked at from a distance, would seem silly and beneath our dignity.

It is worth arguing over true injustice in the workplace or the world. But it is pointless to argue about perceived injustices that usually say more about our own egos than the “cause” we are championing.

By recognizing classic argument traps, we can better determine which battles to fight — and which to avoid.

1. Let Me Keep Talking. When we keep “fighting after the bell has rung,” we can start damaging our reputation and, ultimately, our Mojo. In the end we will not win more arguments, we will win less. Our arguing will be viewed more as our own stubborn need to prove we are right than as a sincere commitment to help our organization.

2. I Had It Rougher Than You. You end up looking foolish when you try to glorify your past for all its deficiencies and all the suffering it brought upon you. All you’re doing is creating a contest of competing memories.

3. Why Did You Do That? We never really know other people’s motives for doing something that affects us. People do things that annoy or enrage us, and it’s almost impossible to get to the bottom of why they did them, yet we waste hours trying.

4. It’s Not Fair. Great influencers are like great salespeople. When the customers don’t buy, they don’t whine and blame the customers. They focus on what they can learn and do a better job next time. Great influencers keep their Mojo. Poor influencers lose it. ●

That Job Is Gone!

Many jobs don’t exist anymore. They’ve been exported beyond our borders. And even if they’ve stayed inside the United States, many of the long-term benefits that made them so attractive have been stripped out by cost-cutting and global competition. What’s even harder to accept is that those jobs are not coming back.

The forces that created this new high-stress environment are not mysterious.

The biggest factor is globalization. Westerners not only compete with other Americans and Europeans for the best jobs, they have to compete with a wave of smart, highly motivated candidates from India, China and Eastern Europe.

Another factor is the dramatically increased gap in compensation between the top people in an organization and everyone else.

A third factor is decreased job security. The shortage of mid-level jobs has only widened the gap between society’s economic winners and losers.

Another factor is the steady erosion in the past 20 years of company-funded guaranteed health care and retirement security. This affects professionals as well as wage earners, meaning that everyone worries more about long-term security.

A fifth factor is the global financial crisis that began in 2008. It has heightened the already-present fear in the workplace — fear of losing a job, or a home, or of ever finding high-quality professional work again.

The sixth and most lethal factor is new technology. New technology, hand in hand with globalization, has created a 24/7 world where work never seems to stop.

In this new world, Mojo is both harder to attain and more important to keep. When your competition is already responding to a tough new environment by working harder and longer, you need unique tools to separate yourself from the throng. ●

Your Mojo Tool Kit

If you step back, you’ll discover that you’re still in control of your life and destiny. You have the power to create significant positive change.

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What can you change? The answer is simple: You can change either You or It.

You is how you think, how you feel, what you say — basically everything about you that's under your control.

It, on the other hand, refers to any influencing forces in your life that are not you. It could be another individual, or a group of people, or a job, or a place, or a relationship, or the results of a choice you made in the past that needs undoing. It is everything that's not You.

Changing You is not inherently preferable or easier than changing It (and vice versa). The best approach depends on the situation.

Once you're aware of this "You or It" dichotomy, you begin to see manifestations everywhere and you begin to realize its impact on Mojo. You see that in all work and personal situations, Mojo is a function of the relationship between who you are (i.e., You) and your situation (i.e., It). If you cannot change You, Mojo is influenced by your relationship to It. If you cannot change It, Mojo is influenced by your relationship to You. It's your choice.

The following 14 actions can help you attack the challenge of changing You or It. Like tools, they don't work unless you grab them in your hands and use them.

These actions are organized into four parts, each corresponding to one of the four building blocks of Mojo: Identity, Achievement, Reputation and Acceptance. ●

Identity: Making Sense of Who You Are

The following four tools can help reshape or refine the "you" that you present to the world:

Tool #1: Establish Criteria That Matter to You. Before you can establish or regain your Mojo, you first have to imagine what it looks like and what it takes to get there. If you write it down, that's your criteria. It's a good place to start.

Tool #2: Find Out Where You're "Living." A great way to test your Mojo is to consider your life at work — then consider your life outside of work. Research shows that people who find happiness and meaning at work tend to be the same people that find happiness and meaning at home! In other words, our Mojo is coming from inside ourselves — as much as it is from what we are doing. For the majority of people, the only way to increase overall satisfaction with life is to increase *both* happiness and meaning.

Tool #3: Be the Optimist in the Room. If you can maintain your optimism in the face of negative

forces, you have an enormous advantage over most people. Optimism is not just a mind-set; it's a form of behavior that guides everything we do. It can be self-fulfilling. And it's contagious. The optimist in the room always has more influence than anyone else. People pick up on optimism and gravitate toward it.

Tool #4: Take Away One Thing. The untapped power of subtraction is within your grasp. It's as easy as saying to yourself, *My life might actually be better if I took away _____* and fill in the blank. Subtract something from your life that is a "big deal." There are so many things we can lose in our daily lives without harming our Mojo that it's inexcusable if we can't identify *one item* to toss away to increase our Mojo. ●

Achievement: Making It Easier to Get Things Done

The following tools offer courses of action that put our achievements in sharper relief:

Tool #5: Rebuild One Brick at a Time. Here are some rules to consider so you finish what you've started and people take note:

First rule: Stop trying to be an oracle. Stop waiting for more information or for better circumstances before you get started.

Second rule: Move quickly. You're constructing a sequence of successes, and you might as well do it quickly.

Third rule: Say two no's for every yes. Be more ruthless about saying no, especially when other people try to steer you off course.

Fourth rule: It pays to advertise. People have preconceptions about you. They not only filter everything you do through those preconceptions, but they are constantly looking for evidence that confirms them.

Tool #6: Live Your Mission in the Small Moments Too. Mission statements are now regarded as overbaked relics of the 1980s — a faddish buzzword of the same vintage as "excellence" and "quality." That may be true, but the fact that a concept is no longer the newest fad does not mean it doesn't have value. What turned mission statements into a corporate joke was how quickly companies broadcast their embrace of a concept and then didn't follow up on it with consistent action. You don't *write* a mission statement. You live it and breathe it. A lot of organizations never did that.

When you have a mission, you give yourself a purpose — and that adds clarity to all the actions and decisions that follow.

There's an underestimated value to articulating your mission: It focuses you, points you in a new direction, alters your behavior and, as a result, changes other people's perception of you.

Tool #7: Swim in the Blue Water. It's dangerous to extrapolate a personal strategy out of a corporate competitive strategy. We are human beings, not strategic business units. But there's some appeal in the idea that we can find a "blue water" alternative (the uncontested space) as we shape our personal aspirations. Our identities and reputations are made in small, incisive moments. We can't all be transformative geniuses who see the world in a paradigm-shifting light. But we can all find a way to differentiate ourselves, however minimally, from the thundering herd — and in doing so, we achieve a small slice of singularity in our world.

If you want to enhance your Mojo, you can do worse than pursue an achievement that has everyone wondering, *Why didn't I think of that?* ●

Reputation: Taking Control of Your 'Story'

The following tools operate in that space where our identity and achievements intersect with the world and shape our reputation:

Tool #8: When to Stay, When to Go. Can you find more happiness and meaning by changing the situation? Can you find more happiness and meaning by changing yourself? What are your real alternatives? Conduct a Mojo analysis that clarifies what you need to change — make your decision — accept the trade-offs — and get on with life.

Tool #9: Hello, Goodbye. No matter how you dress up a dismissal, you still have to deal with the perception that something went wrong, you came up short and you may not be all that you're cracked up to be.

But it doesn't have to be quite that bad, not if you have a pre-exit strategy; leave the company (on positive terms) — before the company leaves you (on negative terms); accept that your identification with your vanished job is pointless, and move quickly to transfer your affections to something else; and ask yourself: How solid is my reputation? And is it solid because of what I've done or who I work for?

Tool #10: Adopt a Metrics System. We all employ personal metrics to measure our progress during the day. If we're on a diet, our metric is stepping on the bathroom scale each morning. Applying personal metrics when the numbers may be depressing not only tells us

Why Blue Water?

The blue/red water metaphor comes from *Blue Ocean Strategy*, in which W. Chan Kim and Renee Mauborgne, two professors at INSEAD, France's leading business school, divided the marketing universe into Red Oceans (the known market space comprising all the markets in existence today), where companies outperform rivals by grabbing a greater share of existing demand, and Blue Oceans (the unknown market space, untainted by competition, comprising all the markets not in existence today), where demand is created rather than fought over and the growth potential is limited only by one's imagination.

where we're failing but how to change our luck.

Once you have your personal metric, no matter how alarming the data, you'll know what to do next.

Tool #11: Reduce This Number. How much of our interpersonal communication is spent on pointless, negative, nonproductive topics?

What percent of all interpersonal communication time is spent on people talking about how smart, special or wonderful they are — or listening while someone else does this, plus people talking about how stupid, inept or bad someone else is — or listening while someone else does this? Reducing this number costs nothing, it will save you time and it will make your work and home life more positive. ●

Acceptance: Change What You Can, Let Go of What You Can't

The following tools will help you deal with some elements of life that you may not be able to directly control:

Tool #12: Influence Up as Well as Down. Every decision in the world is made by the person who has the power to make that decision, and in most cases not you. If you influence the decision maker, you will make a positive difference. If you do not influence this person, you will not make a positive difference. Make peace with this. You will have a better life! And you will make more of a positive difference in your organization and you will be happier.

Tool #13: Name It, Frame It, Claim It. If you want to improve your understanding of a situation, give it a name.

Naming something lets us organize the action into a

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coherent shape. It lets us compare the action to what has gone before. It helps us retain it for future purposes, so that we may recognize — and respond to — the action more brilliantly the next time we face it. Naming helps us learn, make sense and take control.

Tool #14: Give Your Friends a Lifetime Pass.

When considering the actions of a friend who has offended you, ask one question: Am I better off or worse off because of having this person in my life?

If we can be that forgiving with family members, why can't we extend the same level of acceptance to people who, when all is said and done, have demonstrably made our lives better? ●

Connecting Inside to Outside

You should not feel obligated do any of this alone! If you want to improve your performance at almost anything, your odds of success improve considerably the moment you enlist someone else to help you.

Some of us already practice this instinctively, when we enlist a friend to attend yoga class with us or commit to training for a marathon (an inherently lonely sport) the moment a friend agrees to join us. We enjoy the companionship and support, but knowing we're answerable to someone else, even if it's only to schedule a time for a training run, is also motivating. That small obligation keeps us focused. At some point we reach a point of no return where we don't want to disappoint a friend or don't want to be the first to give up. Pairing up provides us with a discipline that we cannot summon as readily working solo.

This "power of two" thinking works well for overt personal objectives, such as quitting smoking or losing weight or athletic training, where we're relying more on moral support, rather than instructive coaching, to reach a clearly marked finish line.

But enlisting someone else to help us isn't our first impulse when we dive into a self-improvement campaign involving our professional lives. Whether it's upgrading the quality of our customer base, or landing a big promotion, or executing a career U-turn, our initial impulse is to do it on our own. After all, it's our goal, our effort, our accomplishment and our payoff if we succeed. How can we share the burden — and glory — with someone else?

Part of the reason behind this is psychic self-preservation on our part; if we fall short of our goal, we want to contain the failure to a circle of one: ourselves. If no one knows what we're striving for, then no one can criticize us for faltering.

Don't let your ego block you from your goals. Start seeing every challenge as a choice between (a) I can do it by myself and (b) I may be able to do it better with help.

Once you accept that you are judged more on the result than on how many hands played a part in achieving it, you'll make the right choice. ●

Coda: You Go First!

Do you want the people who love you at home to be happy? Do you want the people who respect you at work to be happy? You go first. You be happy. Mojo is that positive spirit toward what you are doing that starts on the inside and radiates to the outside.

Do you want the people that you love and respect to have Mojo? Show them yours! There are good people out there who look up to us. They respect us. They want to be like us. We are role models for them.

What message do we send to the people we love at home when we communicate that we are unhappy and that our lives at home are meaningless? *Being with you does not bring me joy and my life at home really doesn't matter that much to me.*

What message do we send to the people who we respect at work when we communicate that we are unhappy and that our jobs are meaningless? *I wish that I were not here today. I would rather be doing almost anything than working with you or in this company.*

On the other hand, what message do we send to the people — at work and home — when our Mojo is high? *I find joy in my life when I am with you. Being with you — in this home or in this workplace — matters to me. You are important and what I am doing with you is important.*

Is there any better message that we can communicate to the people who trust us, respect us and love us? Having a happier and more meaningful life will help the wonderful people in your life find more happiness and meaning. Don't just do it for you. Do it for them! ●

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Mojo*, you'll also like:

1. ***How the Best Leaders Lead* by Brian Tracy.** Management expert Tracy teaches you the secrets he's taught executives over his long career.
2. ***Derailed* by Tim Irwin.** Sometimes the best way to learn the right way is to learn what others have done wrong. This book profiles the tragic downfall of several notable executives.
3. ***Execution* by Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan.** This book sets out a five-step process for getting successful results. It advises leaders to get more involved in the details of execution to get the job done.