
----- WHAT'S UP, DOC? -----

Vol. 3, No. 1; January 2003 -- Copyright 2003 by A. J. Schuler, Psy. D
"Creating Leadership Solutions for Profit and Growth"

CHANGE IN THE NEW YEAR

Lots of people make New Year's resolutions, but not as many do a genuine review of their lives, their goals and the important parts of living when taking the kind of personal inventory often prompted by the turning of the calendar. In this month's newsletter, you'll get two things: an approach to setting goals for yourself for the new year that can make the process easy and effective, and a few tips on how to manage the new twists that life is sure to bring you before the calendar turns once again.

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THIS MONTH'S QUOTES:

"Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony." - Mohandas K. Gandhi

"The art of living lies less in eliminating our troubles than in growing with them." - Bernard M. Baruch

1. HOW TO SET YOUR NEW YEAR'S GOALS

A great way to set New Years' resolutions would be to set one major goal for each of the categories listed in this section:

PERSONAL GOAL

This is the first – and sometimes the only - area people think about when they imagine making New years' resolutions. Typically, people talk about

losing weight or getting more exercise (by the way, living an active lifestyle is more important to personal health than actually cutting body fat – for details, click [here](#)). Personal goals can also include spiritual goals, however you may define spirituality in your life. There are two points to make here: because we are inundated with advertising and statistics to tell us that we are too fat, it can be easy to make a personal resolution to lose weight without much self-examination, and when we only view our personal goals at New Year's time in this context, we may be shortchanging ourselves. I'm the last to argue against consistent personal exercise – I need more myself. But I am advocating that we all take a more broad view of what may be our personal (even spiritual) goals, and then proceed accordingly.

FAMILY/RELATIONSHIP GOAL

We all have families, loved ones, significant others or close friends in our lives. Many of us even have others who depend on us to varying degrees. A second category of goals to set would include the things we would like to be, or improve upon, on behalf of those special people in our lives. For one person, that may take the form of cultivating the habit of listening completely to an exasperated spouse or partner before responding or acting defensively. For another person, that might mean planning a dedicated thirty minutes per week, one-on-one, with a daughter who is, say, just making the transition into preadolescence.

PROFESSIONAL GOAL

For many of us, work not only helps us provide for our own needs and the needs of those who depend on us, but it also creates for us an arena through which to learn, grow and have a positive impact on others. It is most effective, generally speaking, to set professional goals that have to do with learning more so we can achieve more for ourselves and others, rather than set goals that presume a zero sum game (for example, beating someone else out for a promotion . . . those who construct their careers as a series of skirmishes tend not to prosper as much in to long run as those who focus simply on getting better at what they do). Pick an area related to your own expertise that you would like to become more expert or practiced in this year, and try to interview or spend time with the people who possess that expertise. In a knowledge-based economy, careers are launched by expertise and by networks of relationships, so picking expert mentors kills two birds with one stone! (Shameless professional and commercial plug: I'm working to expand my impact in 2003 as an [organizational change consultant](#) and [professional speaker](#) for associations and corporate events. So this year, don't keep me a secret!)

SERVICE GOAL

It's a bit of a paradox: setting goals that place us in a position to serve the needs of others, without any immediate or foreseeable payoff to ourselves

tends to make us more successful in the end. Don't just focus on setting goals that involve yourself or your own needs, since in the end, we all rely on fortune or on others to help us get what we need in the end, directly or indirectly. If you live with the mentality that there is abundance around you, abundance will more likely tend to come to you. But if you focus only on yourself, and the meeting of your own wants and needs, as if there is a fixed or shrinking pie of resources out there that we all must access to survive, then less abundance will flow to you. Pick some way to have a positive impact on others, through tithing, donations of money or time, or simply by becoming knowledgeable about the needs of some of the neediest groups around us – raising awareness within our own circle of friends can have an important impact, if just 100 of us do it. The multiplier effects of raising awareness can be phenomenal, and can really make a difference.

2. HOW TO HANDLE SURPRISES ALONG THE WAY

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The New Year will bring with it some unexpected opportunities. Be prepared for them, in general. Surprises, by definition, are those things we do not anticipate, but if you do set the kinds of goals suggested in the above section, you will find that some new doors open up for you – some good ones. Taking advantage of them may require a bit of shifting of your schedules and priorities in midstream, and you'll have to decide which of those new opportunities are worthy of pursuit. Anyone can, for example, make a change when they are dissatisfied with the status quo: the really hard part is knowing which new opportunities to accept when things are going relatively well, when we feel generally satisfied. Be prepared for unexpected good fortune that may require new thinking and action: evaluate the circumstance, and have the courage to accept greater successes if they become possible.

SETBACKS AND MISFORTUNES

We usually think of the surprises of a New Year in these terms: everyone experiences loss, tragedy, setbacks and misfortunes in life. "That's life," as the famous Frank Sinatra song says. The important thing to remember is that setbacks are not permanent if we do not allow them to be (as my friend [Willie Jolley](#) wrote, "a setback is a setup for a comeback!"). The other thing to remember is that some circumstances are simply part of life, and we are defined not by those circumstances but by how we respond to them – indeed, how we even can convert them into opportunities for

growth, learning and the chance perhaps to help others who may endure similar trials.

STAY TRUE TO YOUR VALUES

In order to make the right decisions about what new opportunities to accept, and to get through the hard times, we all need simply to stay true to our core values. Make a list of the people in your life whom you would consult when you have life-changing decisions to make – parents, grandparents, teachers, coworkers, people living or dead – even historical figures or others whose lives you would seek to emulate in some way. Imagine them around one table in one room, with yourself at the head – this is your life’s “Board of Directors,” and you are the Chairperson. You have them at the table by your own choice, and they all stand for something in your life. Whatever you do, whatever choices or circumstances you face in the next year, if you respond in a way that you could explain and justify to your Board – even if not all would “vote” with you – then you’ll be doing the right thing, even in the face of uncertainty.

ACCEPT HELP . . . FROM THE RIGHT PEOPLE

I am a strong believer in individual initiative and innovation, in the power of the persistent and motivated “one,” but I consider myself an “enlightened individualist.” Even the most accomplished individual stands on the shoulders of giants. Everyone needs support and the counsel of others along the way. No matter what unexpected circumstances come your way, let yourself be helped by others, no matter how proud you may be – as long as they are well chosen as the kind of people who will actually provide assistance, not drama or confusion!

3. RECOMMENDED BOOKS AND FILMS

BOOK: "Mentoring: A Success Guide for Mentors and Protégés," by Floyd Wickman and Terri Sjodin, Irwin Professional Publishing, Chicago, 1997.

A nice overview of the topic, probably best read as a “buffet” rather than as one, cover-to-cover exercise. You can target the chapters most pertinent to your questions. For anyone who would like to become more adept either as a mentor (a critical aspect of effective leadership – the best executives are always building and evaluating people, even more than they do processes) or as a mentee, this is an excellent resource.

FILM: "Catch Me If You Can," in wide release.

The opening sequence begins with an animated, musical montage as the credits roll, and those of us above a certain age will immediately recall the classic Pink Panther movies. This is not an outright comedy the way those movies were, but a more sophisticated sort of real-life farce (the film is based on actual events) that is closer to the tone of the original Pink Panther film starring David Niven and Peter Sellers. Smart direction by Steven Spielberg, a terrific, understated score by John Williams and fine performances by leads Leonardo DiCaprio and Tom Hanks make for a fun ride in a terrific season of movies to be seen right now. For more reviews, click [here](#).

4. CHUCKLES

A brief lesson on how we tend to create our own opportunities. . .

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS:

An overweight business associate of mine decided it was time to shed some excess pounds. He took his new diet seriously, even changing his driving route to avoid his favorite bakery. One morning, however, he arrived at work carrying a gigantic coffeecake. We all scolded him, but his smile remained cherubic. "This is a very special coffeecake," he explained. "I accidentally drove by the bakery this morning and there in the window were a host of goodies. I felt this was no accident, so I prayed, 'Lord, if you want me to have one of those delicious coffeecakes, let me have a parking place directly in front of the bakery.' "And sure enough," he continued, "the eighth time around the block, there it was!"

5. BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT

Forthcoming Book:

ChangeRx: Prescriptions for Successful Change Planning and Implementation - A Practical Guide for Leaders, by A. J. Schuler, Psy. D.

Anticipated for publication in the Fall of 2003, "ChangeRx" will be the only practical guide of its kind to walk change leaders through the actual process of designing and implementing a successful change campaign. The book, designed and formatted as an easily accessible workbook, will

be an ideal resource for students of management, executives and leaders of organizations large and small, both in the profit and non-profit sectors.

To be placed on the notification list - to learn right away when ChangeRx" will become available - simply email me at AJ@SchulerSolutions.com with the subject heading, "ChangeRx." By doing so, you will have the opportunity to purchase "ChangeRx" at 20% off the retail price. You will also be able to receive free sample text online once the content becomes available. Don't miss this chance to get in on a good thing - "ChangeRx" is destined to become a "cult classic" among leaders of change and required reading for the executive teams of large organizations under transition.

6. ABOUT DR. SCHULER

A. J. Schuler, Psy. D. is a speaker, consultant and leadership coach who helps people and organizations become more effective, profitable, focused on their missions and able to maximize their opportunities that lead to growth. Dr. Schuler, President of Schuler Solutions, Inc., accomplishes this through speeches, seminars, consulting and one-on-one coaching focused on developing excellence in both leadership and team performance. He has served diverse organizations in the private and public sectors, including The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, Sony Development, Nomura Securities and the Executive Office for Immigration Review. A graduate of the Wharton School of Business, Dr. Schuler has successfully led the profitable growth of a dynamic, international consulting firm while serving as Operations Director, and has successfully coached over five hundred CEO's and corporate executives.

7. HOW TO SUBSCRIBE OR UNSUBSCRIBE

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“Make each day your masterpiece.” -- John Wooden

P.S. - Remember to send in your comments and successes, and to forward this newsletter to at least one friend. Happy New Year! -- AJS :-]