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

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"Creating Leadership Solutions for Profit and Growth"

THIS MONTH'S THEME: HOW TO THRIVE IN AN AGE OF DISLOCATION

Last month I gave a keynote for a technology company. Preparing for the presentation prompted me to think about the ways technology is transforming all our lives across the globe. The Internet has truly made the world a smaller place, and has made it possible for geography to matter less in the construction of companies and markets. Whole industries seem to change overnight, leaving many people confused and jobless, while lifting the spirits and opportunities of others someplace else. We are exposed to more ideas and ways of living and thinking today than at any other time in our history, as communication technology gives us access to diverse ideas from around the world. The pace of change we experience today, brought about by technology, affects us all in so many ways. I thought I'd take the time with this newsletter to summarize some of the ways I see all of this change affecting us, from my point of view as a psychologist. And more than that, I wanted to use this newsletter to identify some of the key strategies that I think help people thrive in this age of rapid technological transformation – what I've labeled an "Age of Dislocation." The style and focus of this month's edition are a little different from other editions, and I hope you enjoy it. If you don't, of course, just let me know! And if you find any of these ideas of value, please forward this month's edition to a friend.

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THIS MONTH'S QUOTES:

"What you are thunders so that I cannot hear what you say to the contrary." -- Ralph Waldo Emerson

"The greatest way to live with honor in this world is to be what we pretend to be." – Socrates

"Make it a rule of life never to regret and never to look back. Regret is an appalling waste of energy; you can't build on it; it's only for wallowing in." -- Katherine Mansfield

1. THE GLOBAL CONTEXT: AN AGE OF DISLOCATION

AN UNPRECEDENTED TIME OF CHANGE

We live at an amazing time in human history. There has never been another time to rival ours for the very pace of technological transformation. At other times in the history of our species, we have seen great changes, but those changes seem to have evolved across greater time frames than what we experience today. For example, the shift toward agriculture from hunting and gathering took more time. Even more modern transformations brought about by technology – like the advent of the printing press, the move toward rail travel and the industrial revolution, and the introduction of the combustion engine – all tended to percolate in pockets of society before moving further outward. But because communication technology has truly transformed us into a global village, innovations that gain traction anywhere in the world truly affect all of us rather quickly. Furthermore, the advent of the silicon chip for computing, and related technologies, have brought with them such broad based transformation that change comes to us today at an almost dizzying pace. And while adaptability has always been a hallmark of our species, never before has our ability to reinvent our societies and ourselves been so challenged on so many fronts.

CONTEMPORARY CHANGE BRINGS STRESS ON MULTIPLE FRONTS

The changes we face today challenge all of us on multiple fronts. Technologies change economics and whole industries, making work life always a little unstable. We never know when we may find our own company or even industry somehow obsolete. Since we may have to move to be where the jobs and opportunities are, technological change challenges us socially and challenges the ways we organize families. We may have to move where we don't know people and have no community

ties, and uprooting families can make it difficult to maintain ties of kinship, especially outside of immediate family members. On perhaps an even more profound level, the process of becoming dislocated from our social groups and places of origin can have profound effects on how we see and define ourselves. The process can affect our very identities as people of a particular place, cultural or religious community, or as a person of a particular profession. For example, if I have always seen myself as a farmer, but due to economic changes that favor large agribusinesses, I can no longer farm and survive, I am no longer a farmer in fact, even if I continue to see myself as a farmer who now does something else, like work at a restaurant. The challenge, however, is that by continuing to define myself as a farmer, I limit the degree to which I can adapt to and take advantage of new circumstances and opportunities to learn in my new place of work, or in my new industry.

FREEDOM COMES AT A COST

The combination of generally free markets and political and civil freedom tends to raise the standard of living, materially speaking, of those who live in such societies. Health care improves and there is greater freedom from disease. Conveniences and various forms of personal expression abound, like air conditioning and all kinds of music and entertainment. In such societies, we often consume various forms of entertainment (in part) as tools to help us define and understand who we are during changing times, as well as to express ourselves and identify aspects of ourselves to our neighbors . . . whom we may only recently have met, if we have moved to follow a job. But all of this freedom of expression and consumption comes at a cost, and part of that cost is the challenge of accepting that others share the same freedom of expression that we share, and others may define themselves and express themselves in ways that offend us. The things that others say may even make it harder for us by questioning our own preferred ways to identify ourselves, or our chosen modes of religious faith or expression. One man's speech (or one woman's clothing!) is another man's blasphemy. In the swirling mix of change, and the many varying responses that people may have to it, "culture wars" abound in an age of dislocation, and this is one of the costs of freedom. In the United States, we see these "culture wars" reflected in our domestic politics, but the same challenges of adjusting to freedom play themselves out on the global stage. We need only read the morning news to see just how.

THE CHALLENGES WE ALL FACE

Through all of this, we are all faced with the following very personal challenges: how do we live lives of integrity and fulfillment in the face of all this? How can we keep our families together and support the growth of our children when we become less able to rely on members of our extended families for support, guidance and child rearing? How do we raise children to succeed and thrive in the world when the rules we learned

to help us in the world may require refinement, and we're still figuring out some new rules for ourselves? How do we redefine ourselves as people (from farmers, for example, to service professionals, as in the example above), without losing the very values that we hold most dear? How do we know what to hold on to from the traditions that have served us in the past, and reinvent them to help us in the present and the future? How do we learn to understand our neighbors – who may answer these questions for themselves very differently from the ways we answer them – and live with them in a pluralistic society when their choices may offend us, personally or even religiously? As societies, how do we hang on to the best of our former cultures and values systems while adapting them to our current circumstances?

IMPLICATIONS FOR BUSINESS LEADERS

Since business leaders make (hopefully!) rational decisions to maximize profits and the success of their businesses, they are in a position to perpetuate the very changes that strain our societies across the globe. Whether these business leaders see themselves as passengers on the moving train of economic trends, or as engineers driving the train, is not important to the following: business leaders will, rightly or wrongly, bear much of the brunt of resentment that people feel as their lives become disrupted. As business leaders increasingly look across the globe in order to tap markets for talent and resources, and function more and more as supranational entities, anger and protests – even violence – may result. Business leaders should first of all understand the cultural context in which they operate so as to navigate the crosswinds of change and cultural anxiety with wisdom, and sometimes perhaps with cushioning restraint. Such cushioning restraint can take the effect of helping dislocated people find new communities of association, or efforts to educate people about change and how to navigate it. Business leaders must also help politicians and governments understand the trends outlined in this discussion, recognizing that politicians may sometimes understand and yet feel constrained by their constituencies to slow the pace of change (we see this in the United States now with the election year rebellion against outsourcing some services to India, with its associated net loss of jobs in the short term domestically). Furthermore, business leaders must recognize that, as they become supranational entities, they must find ways to regulate themselves and their ethical standards more rigorously, as they become less beholden to the laws of any one government. History has shown us that human nature requires accountability, and this is no less true of the business community. For businesses to continue to thrive without debilitating restraints on freedom taken by governments, international businesses should experiment with and adopt practices that will minimize the most disruptive effects of social change, if only based on their own self-interests. Political and social instability and disruption are never good for business!

2. SEVEN WAYS TO THRIVE IN AN AGE OF DISLOCATION

PROMOTE AND OBTAIN EDUCATION

You can adapt best during times of social and economic transformation if you can keep getting more training and education. Training is skill specific, and getting more training of different kinds helps to insulate a person from becoming economically redundant. Education, in theory, is more broad than training and helps people acquire the wisdom to know what to do with and how to apply various kinds of training. While the line separating the two is not impermeable, both kinds of personal investment are worthwhile in current times. Successful people in today's world understand that they are, economically speaking, "products," or bundles of talents and skills that need to remain current to remain marketable and viable. Education, in the broadest sense, further helps people navigate changing social worlds of values and meaning so that they can adjust in personal ways to the changing environment, finding relationships and social networks that promote growth and family health, conserving what must be conserved and abandoning outdated modes of thought and action that outlive their utility.

PROMOTE ADAPTABILITY AS A CORE COMPETENCY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

As far as anyone can tell, the pace of change we experience today is the "new normal" for the foreseeable future. Technological change continues apace. Silicon chip sizes continue to shrink at amazing rates, and the mapping of the human genome will likely yield new discoveries and innovations across the next decade or more. As a result, your ability to adapt – as an individual – to change will continue to be a key talent that will help you thrive, rather than lag behind. You would do well, also, to teach this to children, for no matter where they begin in our working lives and careers, they are likely to make significant shifts in direction more than once before we stop working. For those with whom you work, and for members of your families, you should promote the skills of adaptability, and openness to new learning, as a core competency for the 21st century.

EMBRACE TOLERANCE OF THOUGHT, RELIGIOUS BELIEF AND DIVERSITY OF SPEECH

While the phrase "global village" may be clichéd, like it or not, modern telecommunications have brought us all together in ways that are virtually

irreversible. So now, it's a lot harder for us to avoid awareness of and contact with people whose worldviews, theologies (or lack thereof), values, beliefs and entertainments are far different from our own. Not everyone is a member of your (or my) "tribe," whatever our "tribe" (primary group providing a sense of personal identity) may be. Historically, we humans respond to contact with other "tribes" with either assimilation, mutual accommodation, tolerance or murder. Certainly, we can all see murder in the news today, though it serves no one but the totalitarian's purpose. Therefore, if freedom is to remain and even grow, providing more people the opportunity to discover and cultivate their own potentials, and more children the opportunity to eat, you and I must embrace an active tolerance of divergent modes of thought, faith and speech as a positive value, even as we defend and protect those who may be exploited by others. This does not require, as some would argue, an absolute moral relativism. Nevertheless, it is possible, and even, I would argue, admirable, to refrain from actions that would impose our own modes of thought or faith on others. Persuasion (speech) is not coercion, and while efforts at persuasion may certainly be defended (and even be helpful), coercion ultimately backfires, as we humans are wont to think for ourselves. It's just human nature. Those who can grit their teeth and tolerate, or even accept, the rights of others to self determination are also those who thrive most in these changing times.

CREATE COMMUNITIES AND FAMILIES OF CHOICE

As we move to be where the jobs are, and find new communities, we may become less connected to members of our extended families. Those who are successful making these transitions are the people who manage to find and create new communities of friends in their new cities and towns. Networks of new friends and close friends – who can become like family members – help to keep us healthy after a move, since they protect us from isolation and thereby give us the psychological and immune system benefits that come from being socially connected, rather than isolated. On a more practical level, they also help us to find resources we may need to navigate life in our new communities (who to go to for what), and can also help us watch out for and raise our kids, just the way kinship networks traditionally do in more stable villages and communities. It helps to be a bit extroverted to do this well, but even more introverted people can join neighborhood associations, church/temple/mosque communities, etc. to help tap into new networks after they move to new places. Since many of the people we encounter will likely differ from us in many ways, creating these communities can help us find some people with whom we may be more comfortable, while at the same time giving us a chance to practice the values of tolerance and understanding for those who may be very different from ourselves culturally.

IDENTIFY THOSE WHO CAN HELP YOU CREATE MEANING

One of the stresses of modern life is that it brings so much information, science and diversity of belief to us all that our traditional religious systems can feel challenged. Some people tolerate ambiguity in this area rather well, but some find it very uncomfortable. Those who find it most stressful tend either to oppose modernity and science in a defensive stance, or, at the other extreme, to abandon all spiritual life altogether. Since religious traditions often function to give us a sense of meaning and purpose in the world, and since both of these attitudes function as important bulwarks against depression and dysfunction, the erosion of the security of belief is for many people a real challenge, from a psychological point of view. It is a challenge, in my view, that will not go away, since information technology and the flood of information and ideas that confront us daily are all here to stay. As a result, from what I can tell, the people who navigate these challenges best are the ones who are able to define for themselves their own systems of meaning, or at least connect with people – authors, friends, congregation leaders, mentors, communities of faith, etc. – who can help them find and create a sense of hope and purpose to sustain them through changing times. Finding the people or resources that help you make those connections may be one of the skills needed to support your success and well being in today's world.

BECOME IMMERSSED IN ACTIVITIES THAT SERVE OTHERS

One of the great ways to connect with others, and to unleash your own talents, is to serve other people. This service can take the form of commercial activity and non-commercial activity. In fact, the people I know who are most able to thrive in these changing times are the ones whose life of service transcends, but also includes, their working lives. The activities that most support health and balance in changing times are those activities that tend to take us out of ourselves. Exercise, when it rises to the level of play or brings about a kind of personal experience of “flow,” can do this. So can artistic activity or any other creative activity that promotes the psychological experience described by others as “flow” (the state of almost supra-rational experience that gives the sensation of a connection to energy that “flows” through us, an energy that feels like it is larger than ourselves). Service can also provide us with this experience, and it has the added benefit of connecting us most directly to other people. Since the paradox of the communication age is that it can leave us less connected to others (becoming a member of a “global village” is far less personal than being a member of a smaller community), activities that reconnect you to others can help you thrive in the face of modern changes, both personally and commercially.

TAKE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR SURVIVAL AND SUCCESS

Finally, some of us tend to blame others – institutions, groups of people, politicians, business leaders – for the dislocation we experience in this age

of technological transformation and change. While it is certainly important to make our voices heard, and to hold various people in our societies accountable to the law and to the common good, blame becomes an obstacle when it helps us refuse to adapt. The very forces that bring us dislocation bring us greater material health and security, freedom from disease, SUV's and flat screen TV's, strategies to eliminate hunger, freedom of expression and speech, freedom of association, etc. As you adapt to the changing world, and as you assist others in making their transitions, avoid easy blame targets that function only to protect us from taking personal responsibility for our own survival and success in navigating the changing world. Adaptability has always been the hallmark of the human race, from the origins of our species on the plains of sub-Saharan Africa (most likely), to farming communities, through expansion across all continents and climates, and on through history until today. The transitions we face today are not so different from the ones we've faced in the past, though the pace of technological transformation we face today is greater than at any other time we've known. For you, and for those within your sphere of influence, the best thing you can do is take personal responsibility for adapting, and encourage others to do the same.

3. NOTICE OF COMING PUBLIC EVENTS

I will be speaking on the topic, "Negotiating Your Way to Success," at the Spring Conference of the Women's Leadership Alliance of Baltimore. I'm including a little bit of conference information below, or you can [click here to learn more and to register](#).

WLA Presents its Spring Conference: "Fast Forward: Leading and Succeeding in the 21st Century"

April 27, 2004; 7:00 a.m. to Noon
Holiday Inn Select, Baltimore North
Timonium, MD

Event Purpose: Explore ways to accelerate your success by attending this year's spring conference-an educational event that aims to help you build your leadership skills and energize your spirit for the important work ahead in your personal and professional life.

3. RECOMMENDED BOOKS AND FILMS

BOOK: “Constantine’s Sword: The Church and the Jews,” by James Carroll; Mariner Books; New York; 2001.

This book is a lengthy but well written popular history, examining the history of anti-Semitism in Western Civilization, especially from the point of view of the Roman Catholic Church. It gives a lot of information they did not teach me in Catholic school as a boy! While it is written by a Catholic, and functions as a kind of Catholic examination of conscience for the ways Christianity has fostered anti-Semitism throughout history, it also functions for me as a case study in human nature, and of the ways religious sentiment can appeal not only to the better angels of our nature, but function to channel our basest instincts. Humans are humans; people are people. It shows me how, at other times in our history, great social change has helped to leave people uneasy – and then, people make choices about whether or not to adapt or to seek to impose a reactionary social order by force on others, often with the sword. I found the book very interesting. But whether this subject interests you or not, I offer this book for two reasons. First, its content fits generally with the subject matter of this newsletter, in a tangential way. Second, I generally recommend that people read popular histories or well written biographies as a general practice: as much as we can learn from our own experiences, we can accelerate our learning by thinking through the experiences of others. So even if this recommendation does not appeal to you, consider finding some well written popular history or biography that appeals to you. That’s something I would always recommend. Final note on this book: it is a former New York Times Bestseller and Winner of the National Book Award.

FILM: “Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind,” in limited release

I saw this a few weeks ago. A few points: 1) I usually don’t like Jim Carrey. It’s not that I don’t like dumb humor – I do (and am very often a gleeful practitioner!). I just never liked him for some reason. But he did not bother me in this one. In fact, he was just fine. 2) I always liked Kate Winslet. And having grown up on Long Island, and I can say she does the home town accent flawlessly. 3) Speaking of home town, the story was set mostly in Rockville Centre, New York, just next to my town of origin, Baldwin. That made me happy. I like seeing a story from the old neighborhood (even if I can tell it was not actually filmed there). 4) The film was. . . clever. It presents a new twist on the gimmick of lost memory as a plot device in films, and does it in a way that a silly shrink like me can appreciate. Well done. 5) The movie makes a case for mature

romance that is modestly sentimental, but also quite realistic (the people we love will somehow disappoint us – and so what?). Not many movies that pass as romantic comedies do that anymore. Today's romantic comedies have the emotional sophistication of an infatuated teenager – and none of the adult sensibility that, say, Hepburn & Tracey movies did of yore. I would not equate this movie with a Hepburn & Tracey classic, but nevertheless, it was worth seeing. Find out more about the film [here](#).

4. CHUCKLES

Okay, today is opening day in the baseball season for my beloved, and much maligned, New York Mets. Now, some would say that just mentioning them is the equivalent of telling a joke nowadays, but I remain impervious to such slander! But I did want to include a baseball theme to this month's "Chuckles," so I'm going to give you a listing of the many quotes attributed to that baseball sage, Yogi Berra. Here they are:

"This is like deja vu all over again."

"You can observe a lot just by watching."

"He must have made that before he died." -- Referring to a Steve McQueen movie.

"I want to thank you for making this day necessary." -- On Yogi Berra Appreciation Day in St. Louis in 1947.

"I'd find the fellow who lost it, and, if he was poor, I'd return it." -- When asked what he would do if he found a million dollars.

"Think! How the hell are you gonna think and hit at the same time?"

"You've got to be very careful if you don't know where you're going, because you might not get there."

"I knew I was going to take the wrong train, so I left early."

"If you don't know where you are going, you will wind up somewhere else."

"If you can't imitate him, don't copy him."

"You better cut the pizza in four pieces because I'm not hungry enough to eat six."

"Baseball is 90% mental -- the other half is physical."

"It was impossible to get a conversation going; everybody was talking too much."

"Slump? I ain't in no slump. I just ain't hitting."

"A nickel isn't worth a dime today."

"Nobody goes there anymore; it's too crowded."

"It gets late early out there." -- Referring to the bad sun conditions in left field at the stadium.

"Glen Cove." -- Referring to Glenn Close on a movie review television show. (Glen Cove is also the name of the Long Island, New York town where I was born – AJS)

Once, Yogi's wife Carmen asked, "Yogi, you are from St. Louis, we live in New Jersey, and you played ball in New York. If you go before I do, where would you like me to have you buried?" Yogi replied, "Surprise me."

"Do you mean now?" -- When asked for the time.

"I take a two hour nap, from one o'clock to four."

"If you come to a fork in the road, take it."

"You give 100 percent in the first half of the game, and if that isn't enough in the second half you give what's left."

"90% of the putts that are short don't go in."

"I made a wrong mistake."

"Texas has a lot of electrical votes." -- During an election campaign, after George Bush stated that Texas was important to the election.

"Thanks, you don't look so hot yourself." -- After being told he looked cool.

"I always thought that record would stand until it was broken."

"Yeah, but we're making great time!" -- In reply to "Hey Yogi, I think we're lost."

"If the fans don't come out to the ball park, you can't stop them."

"Why buy good luggage? You only use it when you travel."

"It's never happened in the World Series competition, and it still hasn't."

"How long have you known me, Jack? And you still don't know how to spell my name." -- Upon receiving a check from Jack Buck made out to "bearer."

"I'd say he's done more than that." -- When asked if first baseman Don Mattingly had exceeded expectations for the current season.

"The other teams could make trouble for us if they win."

"He can run anytime he wants. I'm giving him the red light." -- On the acquisition of fleet Ricky Henderson.

"I never blame myself when I'm not hitting. I just blame the bat, and if it keeps up, I change bats. After all, if I know it isn't my fault that I'm not hitting, how can I get mad at myself?"

"It ain't the heat; it's the humility."

"The towels were so thick there I could hardly close my suitcase."

"You should always go to other people's funerals; otherwise, they won't come to yours."

"I didn't really say everything I said."

5. PROMOTE YOUR OWN GROWTH

You don't have to live near the Schuler Solutions main office in Alexandria, Virginia to benefit from my coaching services. Great work can be done for your own growth and development over the phone and through document review via email. To find out more about your coaching

options and available coaching plans, just click [here](#) now.

6. ABOUT DR. SCHULER

A. J. Schuler, Psy. D., an expert on leadership and organizational change, provides consulting services, keynote presentations and seminars for client companies. His trademark is highly personalized service that leads to measurable increases in productivity, profit and growth. He also provides personalized leadership education and coaching for highly motivated clients.

Dr. Schuler, President of Schuler Solutions, Inc., 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.

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A. J. Schuler, Psy. D.
Speaker, Consultant & Leadership Coach
Schuler Solutions, Inc.
6300 Stevenson Avenue, Suite 916
Alexandria, VA 22304
Phone 703.370.6545
Fax 703.783.0232
Email: AJ@SchulerSolutions.com
Website: www.SchulerSolutions.com

“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! Thanks . . . AJS