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

Vol. 2, No. 12, December, 2002--Copyright 2002 by A. J. Schuler, Psy. D
"Creating Leadership Solutions for Profit and Growth"

THIS MONTH'S THEME: GRATITUDE

'Tis the Season" . . . for lots of things: commercials, family events, holiday parties, office parties, shopping, credit card debt (!), sending out cards (or not!), and so on. But it's also a good time of year to take stock of the past twelve months, from a position of gratitude - no matter what we have endured or enjoyed during that time. This month's newsletter presents a series of thoughts about gratitude - why it's important and what it does for you. And during this holiday season, why not tell the people who mean a lot to you what they mean, and why? Why not reach out to those you care about and thank them for the wonderful things they bring to you in your life - why not even list a few? That's a great gift to give.

And in that spirit - thank you, subscribers, for making this a terrific growth year for "What's Up Doc?," for your comments, your feedback, your dedication to learning, and for your help in expanding this learning community by sending this newsletter to your friends. Thank you for another wonderful year! - AJS

IN THIS ISSUE:

1. GRATITUDE - WHY IT'S IMPORTANT
2. GRATITUDE - HOW TO PROMOTE IT
3. RECOMMENDED BOOKS AND FILMS
4. CHUCKLES
5. BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT
6. ABOUT DR. SCHULER
7. HOW TO SUBSCRIBE OR UNSUBSCRIBE
8. NEWSLETTER STATEMENT OF ETHICS

THIS MONTH'S QUOTES:

"To love and be loved is to feel the sun from both sides." -- David Viscott

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

1. GRATITUDE - WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

IT MAKES THINGS EASIER, PART ONE

Okay, let's just start with a pragmatic, make-life-easier point of view. Your mother was right: say "thank you!" Why? Because you look like a jerk if you don't? Maybe. Because it's socially appropriate? Maybe. Because people will like you better and appreciate you more if they feel you notice and appreciate them? Well, that's true. Because if they react to you this way they are more likely to help you with the things that are important to you? That's true, too. . . No matter how you slice it, simple gratitude makes life go more smoothly. Think of it as a preventive measure, like brushing your teeth: people may not pay attention when you say "thank you" in the most ordinary of circumstances, but they sure will notice when you don't!

IT MAKES THINGS EASIER, PART TWO

But there's another aspect of all this, aside from how people react to you when you make ordinary expressions of gratitude. When you cultivate a habit of gratitude, which become a way of thinking and looking at the world, life just becomes more enjoyable. It gets a lot easier to keep perspective about the things we dislike or that we suffer when we can also keep an eye on all the things we possess, enjoy, all the people we care for and who care for us, the elements of our health that we maintain, the well being of our children or other family members, etc.

IT'S GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH

The research is getting stronger and more pervasive - the habit of the grateful mind prevents depression and supports physical outcomes as diverse as a healthy immune system and more resilient hippocampus, supporting more effective memory and recall.

IT'S CONTAGIOUS

You can have a positive impact on others - helping them to enjoy the same benefits that gratitude brings as they learn from you how to enjoy and appreciate the big and not-so-big things in life more consistently. You can a lasting, life-enhancing impact on your children, your spouse/life partner, your coworkers, your employees, your students and even your boss. The habits of the grateful mind are insidious in a positive way - when people begin to notice that you have a more satisfied, even quietly joyful disposition, over time, they want to understand why and how. Then it's not a matter of "preaching" to anyone: they get answers to their questions in the time when they are curious. The grateful person does not seek to change

anyone - the essence of gratitude is appreciation for what one has, not an agenda to reengineer anyone or anything - but the grateful person does hope, altruistically, to have a helpful impact on others - and is of course thankful for the opportunity, when it comes!

IT PROMOTES REALISTIC PERSPECTIVES

People who focus on the negative are sometimes thought of as being more realistic, but that's just silly: all that happens, all that we experience and enjoy, all that we build, all that we share together is not bad. And most people I know are not in danger of becoming "Pollyanna's," naively seeing or imagining only the best, in a childish way, in spite of unwelcome events. So, keeping an inventory of what is going well, and what we can gratefully appreciate is often the best way to gain a more realistic perspective. People often admire leaders because they are able to see squarely when troubles must be met squarely - think of Rudy Giuliani after 9/11 - but they also admire leaders for their calm during the most dire circumstances. How do such leaders remain calm? They can see whole picture. They are more realistic - more able to see the good things that may be momentarily occluded by unwelcome events and time of fear or passion.

2. GRATITUDE - HOW TO PROMOTE IT

JUST FIVE MINUTES AT NIGHT

That's all it takes.

That's all it takes to write down five things in a notebook by your bed.

Five things you are happy about, or grateful for, or that you enjoyed that day. They may be times you laughed, or time you had with someone you love, or something as simple as a nice meal. But once you get in the habit, it really is easy to list five things. There's no rule against repeat entries from one day to the next - you can be grateful for the same thing on more than one day!

It may feel funny at first. Your mind may not be in the habit of thinking gratefully. No matter. Start with a couple of things, and try to get five per night. Try this as a two week experiment, and if you like what it begins to do for you, keep at it. Like money that earns compound interest, the benefits you will derive from developing a habitually grateful mind will snowball over time.

I got this tip from a speaker who had been shot at point-blank range in the back of the head and left for dead on the tarmac after being thrown from the cockpit of a hijacked plane (Jackie Pflug). I figured, if this woman can have the kind of positive energy she beamed from the stage, with her vision impairments and all she had been through, then finding five things should be easy for me, and it would help me have a better impact on others through my work. So I've been keeping my little nightly list for six months now, and I highly recommend it.

What have you got to lose? Five minutes of time? Those five minutes per night may be the best investment you can make, in yourself and on behalf of those you love.

Happy Holidays!

3. RECOMMENDED BOOKS AND FILMS

BOOK: "How The Grinch Stole Christmas," by Dr. Seuss.

So sue me - I couldn't help it. I highly recommend, for those of you who don't currently have the opportunity or who may be out of practice, that you read to a child sometime soon. See if a friend will let you borrow one! If you do, this book, this month, is a decent place to start for children whose families honor a Christian tradition (though the book is not essentially religious or even sectarian). The television version, with the voice of Boris Karloff, is terrific, of course, but the book is fun, too. A friend recently told me that Little Cindyloo Hoo was her favorite, but the puppy always grabbed my attention the most.

FILM: "Far From Heaven"

Well, I did have time to see a movie this past month. Got shut out of Harry Potter and have not seen the new James Bond yet, but this more adult, almost art house movie was interesting and thought-provoking - not to mention sumptuously shot. This one is sure to garner some Academy Award nominations, and maybe a couple of wins.

Check out the reviews here:

<http://www.metacritic.com/film/titles/farfromheaven>

4. CHUCKLES

This month's chuckle brought to you by. . . Jenny Craig!:

'Twas the week after Christmas, and all through the house
Nothing would fit me, not even a blouse.

The cookies I'd nibbled, the eggnog I'd taste
At the holiday parties had gone to my waist.

When I got on the scales there arose such a number!
When I walked to the store (less a walk than a lumber).

I'd remember the marvelous meals I'd prepared;
The gravies and sauces and beef nicely rared,

The wine and the rum balls, the bread and the cheese
And the way I'd never said, "No thank you, please."

As I dressed myself in my husband's old shirt
And prepared once again to do battle with dirt---

I said to myself, as I only can
"You can't spend a winter disguised as a man!"

So--away with the last of the sour cream dip,
Get rid of the fruit cake, every cracker and chip

Every last bit of food that I like must be banished
"Till all the additional ounces have vanished.

I won't have a cookie--not even a lick.
I'll want only to chew on a long celery stick.

I won't have hot biscuits, or corn bread, or pie,
I'll munch on a carrot and quietly cry.

I'm hungry, I'm lonesome, and life is a bore---
But isn't that what January is for?

Unable to giggle, no longer a riot.
Happy New Year to all and to all a good diet!

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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8. NEWSLETTER STATEMENT OF ETHICS

NEWSLETTER ETHICS: This e-Newsletter will be sent to subscribers only upon REQUEST, though subscribers may forward this letter to anyone they wish. Subscriber identities or contact information will NOT BE DISCLOSED to any other persons or entities under any circumstances.

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

