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

Vol. 3, No. 6; June, 2003 --- Copyright 2003 by A. J. Schuler, Psy. D

"Creating Leadership Solutions for Profit and Growth"

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## THIS MONTH'S THEME: LEADERSHIP BY EXAMPLE

Ok, we have a lot of great content this month, so let's get right to it. Please remember to forward this issue to at least one person who might share your interest in its content, so we can expand this learning community, and build more knowledge-based resources, through the combined power of "What's Up, Doc?" network.

How to Lead By Example: I hope you'll find "Dr. Schuler's Ten Rules for Working and Living" to be helpful – they amount to a set of guidelines that make life better, and make us into the kind of leaders who can "walk our talk." Ever wonder why some people are "natural leaders:" the ones who seem to be "people magnets?" Check out this section!

And as a bonus, I'll go through the differences between "data," "information," "knowledge" and "wisdom" – and how knowing these differences matters to you.

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### THIS MONTH'S QUOTES:

"The illusion that we are separate from one another is an optical delusion of our consciousness." - Albert Einstein

"There are two ways to slide easily through life: to believe everything or to doubt everything; both ways save us from thinking." - Theodore Rubin

"He that would be a leader must be a bridge." - Welsh Proverb

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## 1. HOW TO LEAD BY EXAMPLE: TEN RULES FOR WORKING AND LIVING

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My point with the following “Ten Rules for Working and Living” is that, by incorporating these attitudes and practices into our lives, we are not only improving our own lives, but we are fashioning ourselves into the kind of people that others will seek to follow and emulate: the very definition of leading by example.

### THE LIVES WE LIVE ARE THE LIVES WE CREATE

Yes, life is a creative art. Expectations are often self-fulfilling. If we expect life to be good, if we believe it is filled with opportunities and cause for celebration, then we will notice those things and live so as to promote them, even without conscious intent. If we believe life is a marathon of unremitting toil and scarcity, then toil and scarcity will be all that we find and experience, and we will inadvertently create the circumstances that promote them. You cannot expect to win the lottery and then win the lottery – that is magical thinking, the special realm of childhood (or of adult madness). But you can (and do) nurture a basic attitude toward living, and if you don’t take control of it, it most assuredly will take control of you.

### HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY GO HAND IN HAND

We talk a lot about the importance of “balance,” and surely everyone’s definition of balance is, well, different. In order to be productive and healthy, we all have to take care of our minds, bodies and spirits, but the reverse is also true – being productive is inherently healthy, and doing good, meaningful work that fits our talents can keep us alive and healthy a long time. How often do we see someone retire and then fall into poor health? Doing what you love to do, and doing it well, and especially helping other people learn and succeed, brings benefit back to you. In the end, it does not matter what it is you do, so long as it is not destructive to others and you feel you are making a contribution. No matter how menial or arcane the job, all work has inherent dignity and can become a medium through which a person can grow and make a contribution to others.

### AS WE TREAT OTHERS, SO SHALL WE BE TREATED

This is about the law of averages. Yes, there is injustice in the world, and yes, there is cruelty. Bad things happen to good people, and vice versa. But in general, we may sow what we reap. I once read a quote: “Make

your words sweet – you may have to eat them later!” People notice how we treat them, especially when we are in positions of leadership, and most especially when we think no one is looking. What goes around comes around.

#### DON'T WAIT FOR SOLUTIONS – CREATE THEM

Some people are experts in seeing what is wrong with a situation, system, organization or person. But what good is such expertise? What does it solve or create? I am forever baffled by people who see themselves as passive – unable to create a solution or work toward one. What does anyone get out of being a perpetual critic? A temporary feeling of power or superiority? What could be a more impoverished way to live than that? Two schools of thought here: the active and the passive. The passive and negative position waits for someone else to make a bad situation better, perhaps faulting others for their inaction (we see this in offices all the time). The positive and active position works to build a productive awareness among those who can influence a negative situation so that all can take collective action to make it better. Guess which type of person others naturally follow – and then imitate?

#### NEGATIVITY KILLS

Literally. What is violence but an extreme expression of negativity? But killer negativity does not require a physical manifestation to wreck its havoc. We know that negative thinking weakens the immune system and contributes to disease and to an increase in mortality. We also know that negativity is contagious – for example, when there is a high profile suicide in some community, health experts know to expect a new spate of imitative suicides or suicide attempts, even among those with no social connection to that first poor, despairing person. Suicide, and even severe negativity or depression, can spread like an epidemic, or like a cancer. Even in small doses, negativity contributes to illness and ultimately to death. This represents a universal truth of living, or “anti-living.” Why are people drawn to leaders? Because leaders, through their attitudes and abilities to resist or overcome negativity, function like antibodies in the world, fighting negativity and adding “life” to those around them. If negativity is a cancer, then good leaders, just in the way they carry themselves and approach the world, fight that cancer, all the time.

#### COMMUNICATION STARTS WITH LISTENING

Don't worry about trying to express yourself better (you don't have to be talkative to be a leader). Think instead about asking better questions, and then repeat back your best understanding of what you've just heard. Resist the temptation to think about what you want to say in response when carrying on a conversation. You'll be amazed at how much you learn, and how much better you understand people you thought you understood before. People rightly see leaders as those who understand

them, or who make the effort to try to understand them. Only once you've listened will you have earned the right to speak your own point of view – based on a more complete understanding of the people and circumstances around them. That's what makes a person an effective leader. By setting a tone of listening, others will follow suit.

#### BETWEEN TWO POSITIONS ALWAYS LIES A THIRD OPTION

Leaders know that dilemmas that come pre-packaged as “either-or” propositions are usually preset for failure. There is always at least one other way to view a situation, either by expanding the issue, finding a third alternative or creating a negotiated compromise. There are certainly times not to compromise, but even that decision should only come after a creative examination of many possible approaches has been completed. But what makes leaders effective is their ability to generate those options, either through imagination or consultation, before making any final decisions. While most people get trapped into defining conflicts as either/or, win/lose propositions, they end up following those who prove they can craft better solutions, creating value and advantage for all involved.

#### LAUGHTER CURES

You gotta laugh. You just gotta! Life presents too much that is just fun and funny, even absurd. That's the beauty of it. If you keep that attitude about you, and nurture it, then you add the power, not only of avoiding negativity, but of adding joy and positivity to your life, and to the lives of others. Laughter is even more infectious than negativity, and at least as powerful a force for health. If the laughter comes at no one's expense, but comes rather from a shared sense of the beauty and absurdity that we see all around us (especially in ourselves!), then people can be drawn to you, and your playfulness will catch on.

#### DO GREAT WORK, HAVE FUN AND LEND A HAND ALONG THE WAY

Good work is, well, good. Great work is inherently rewarding. Do it with fun and style, and you are not a prisoner of your labor, but rather a master of your craft. If you help others along the way, either by teaching them or just by setting them up for their own success, then both life and work acquire greater meaning. None of us live forever, and we should all leave a little something behind for the good. This “rule” is one of my favorites; it's one worth repeating and spreading around.

#### IN THE END, WE ARE ALL MORE OR LESS HUMAN

. . . And that's a good thing. We are imperfect. We have bad moods and bad moments. We make mistakes; we have parts of our character that may be less than forever admirable. That just makes us human. Keeping this in mind helps us refrain from taking ourselves too seriously when we

succeed or when we fail, and it also gives us some humility and perspective through which to understand the inescapable frailties of others – especially when they fail to see the wisdom of our obviously superior points of view (wink wink, nudge nudge)! In the end, the pursuit of near-perfection is more important than its achievement, even if it is good to be competitive and dedicated to excellence in order to bring out the best in ourselves and others.

**F\_R\_E\_E GIVEAWAY:** To receive up to ten F\_R\_E\_E, two-color, hard plastic Reminder Cards listing “Dr. Schuler’s Ten Rules for Working and Living” for your wallet or desktop, just click [here](#) and include 1) your mailing address and 2) requested quantity in the body of your email. Each card represents a \$1.19 value when sold separately, and I’ll even bear the cost of shipping. Get yours now!

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## 2. THE WISDOM LADDER – AND WHY IT MATTERS

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You always hear it said that we live in an “information age.” But what does that mean, and how should we understand the challenges of the so-called “information age?” Read on!

### BOTTOM STEP ON THE WISDOM LADDER: DATA

“Data” means raw counts of things. Data can be useful or not useful. In and of itself, data has no meaning. If I count the number of cars that stop at the stop sign on my block per hour for a week, that’s data. It may be useful or not, depending on the context. It has no meaning until it is placed in a context. Data can be accurate or inaccurate. It can also be reliable or unreliable, valid or invalid. What’s the difference? Imagine a target at which I shoot arrows using some machine. If I shoot ten arrows and they all cluster around one spot in the lower left corner of the target, I have a reliable machine, but not a very accurate (“valid”) one. If I shoot ten arrows that scatter all over the target, but whose hit points all average out to the middle, I have a pretty accurate (“valid”) machine, but it’s not very reliable. When we collect data, we want to use instruments that are both reliable (they get consistent results within a reasonable spread of error) and valid (they really measure what we intend them to measure). The differences are subtle, but important for anyone who collects – and seeks to interpret – data. Data is only as good as the measurement device we use to collect it – and if I fall asleep watching my street corner, I’m not a very good data collector!

### SECOND STEP ON THE WISDOM LADDER: INFORMATION

When you put a whole lot of data together that is related to one subject, it can be collected to yield information. In other words, sets of data + collection of related data sets = information. Let's say I want to buy a car. I can collect a lot of data about makes of cars, performance ratings, prices and so on. Once I do that, I have a lot of information about cars and the auto market. Until I think about this collection of data – this information - and put it in context, it is “dumb.” By that I mean it has no meaning. This is what we are flooded with every day. On the Internet, we can find lots and lots of information – dumb collections of data. Some of that information may be useful, and some of it may be accurate. But living in an “information age” means we are flooded all the time with access to more information than we can possibly have time to put in context. We don't have time to decide what it means, and it comes at us so fast! The amount of information available to anyone in the world today is absolutely staggering, given historical standards. It is truly mind-boggling.

### THIRD STEP ON THE WISDOM LADDER: KNOWLEDGE

Once you spend some time interpreting and understanding a body of information, then you have knowledge. This takes time. While technology has greatly reduced the cost involved in assembling and storing data, and in transferring and storing information, technology has not done anything to make the process of creating knowledge any quicker or cheaper. Creating knowledge still takes brains, thought and time – especially today when there is so much more information available to wade through. People can become knowledge experts for a given subject, which, in an information age, means they really are just advanced, perpetual students for a given subject. We rely on these people to help us bypass the costly process of wading through large bodies of information ourselves. As a result, the credibility of knowledge experts is that much more important (and often hard to assess). On the one hand, we have to be able to trust them to give us honest, valid and reliable knowledge, and on the other, we lack the subject specific knowledge to know whether or not they are really as reliable and credible as we need them to be. It's a catch-22: if we had the knowledge with which to judge them, we would not need them in the first place! So what's the solution?

### TOP STEP ON THE WISDOM LADDER: WISDOM

Wisdom is precious. It comes from the ability to synthesize various streams of knowledge – even seemingly unrelated bodies of knowledge – enough to be able to make informed judgments about various ideas and propositions that may lie outside of our own direct areas of expertise. Certain patterns in nature repeat themselves, no matter where they may be found. Wisdom entails having enough experience and perspective to spot such patterns and trends so that various bodies of knowledge can be put in context, combined and applied appropriately. Inevitably, wisdom requires a deep, perhaps intuitive understanding of human nature – of ambition,

styles of intelligence, human motivations, etc. – enough to allow the possessor of wisdom to make judgments about representations of knowledge that lie outside of his or her own expertise. This is how we can escape from the dilemma of the need to make judgments about experts who possess bodies of knowledge that we lack. Wisdom amounts to something more than “street smarts,” but the sharpness of judgment implied by the phrase “street smarts” is encompassed by wisdom.

Your grandparents may have been short on book smarts (“knowledge”) but long on wisdom. In an “information age,” technology cannot confer wisdom: wisdom takes more time to develop and cultivate than even knowledge does (how many people do you know with advanced degrees who lack wisdom or wise judgment?). For this reason, wisdom is at an even higher premium, perhaps, than it has ever been, and when you find a good, credible source of wisdom (a person) who can help you make good judgments and grow your own store of wisdom, that’s a relationship to build and hold firm. This is why really good mentoring is so valuable, and why the most effective executives and leaders are extremely adept at understanding other people. Wisdom combines the seasoned experience of connecting and reviewing bodies of knowledge, together with a genuine grasp of human nature and the ways of the world, to allow for the proper use of data, information and knowledge. Wise people, therefore, cultivate connections with other wise people or good knowledge experts, because this is the most effective way to leverage and benefit from vast stores of knowledge in this “information age.”

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### 3. RECOMMENDED BOOKS AND FILMS

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BOOK: "Moneyball: The Art of Winning an Unfair Game," by Michael Lewis, W. W. Norton, New York, 2003.

This one is getting a lot of attention these days – especially from American men who grew up with baseball, like me. Michael Lewis has been a bankable storyteller of contrarian fare within the business world for a while, and his last book (entitled “Next: The Future Just Happened”) was itself an entertaining, albeit light, read. Lewis is an amusing writer who can capture a story, though he seems to go for more enjoyment and flash than nuance or depth of understanding as a business writer, at least for my money. This book is a light case study of one man’s fight to bring a new approach to performance evaluation into an established industry ripe for fresh, iconoclastic approaches: professional baseball. I’m not sure if it’s a genuinely valuable case study for questioning the prevailing

wisdom of a stodgy industry, or if it's just an ESPN-viewer's idea of one . . . but since I just read it and liked it, I'll leave it to you to decide. If you want to wait until it's available in soft-cover, I surely won't blame you. Add a rating star-and-a-half if you know what an "on base percentage" is, and have ever used those words together in a sentence. More opinions of "Moneyball" can be found [here](#).

FILM: "Finding Nemo," in wide release

I saw two movies this last month (after a longish drought), and the one I'm recommending is one I have not yet seen, other than in previews. I saw "The Matrix: Reloaded," and was underwhelmed. It was fun and fast, kind of like a runway fashion show on methamphetamines, but since I would probably look silly in Keanu Reeves' sunglasses and long coat, I left the theater feeling less than wowed. I also saw, um . . . the new X-Men movie, because it was there, and, well . . . put it this way: it took me four minutes just now to remember what the other movie was I saw last month. I did appreciate Ian McKellen's suave comic book villain though – a welcome relief after Willem Dafoe's excessive cackling in that Spider Man movie a while back. But ultimately, I'm recommending "Finding Nemo" because: a) it looked fun in previews, like one of those animated films even an adult could love; b) it's gaining universal critical acclaim for young and old audiences alike; and c) it contains no credits that include the names Stallone, Madonna, Schwarzenegger, Streisand or Costner (my apologies to you Costner fans out there). Reviews of Finding Nemo can be found [here](#).

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#### 4. CHUCKLES

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Two young engineers applied for a single position at a computer company. They both had the same qualifications. In order to determine which individual to hire, the applicants were asked to take a test by the Department manager.

Upon completion of the test, both men missed only one of the questions. The manager went to the first applicant and said, "Thank you for your interest, but we've decided to give the job to the other applicant."

"But why? We both got 9 questions correct," asked the rejected applicant.

"We have based our decision not on the correct answers, but on the question you missed," said the manager. "Your fellow applicant put down

for question #5, 'I don't know the answer.' And you put down, 'Neither do I.'"

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## 5. BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT

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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](mailto: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.

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## 6. ABOUT DR. SCHULER

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

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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## 7. HOW TO SUBSCRIBE OR UNSUBSCRIBE

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