
----- WHAT'S UP, DOC? -----
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"Creating Leadership Solutions for Profit and Growth"

THIS MONTH'S THEME: CAREER SELF-CHECK

This month's issue is pretty straightforward. I'm switching back to individual development mode in this edition, and will swing back toward business and organizational development mode again, probably next month. Keep your questions and topic suggestions coming. This month, I've put together ten questions you should ask yourself to help you sort out where you are and what you should be doing with your career.

SUBSCRIPTIONS INCREASE SINCE JAN 1, 2005: 20%

NEW SUBSCRIPTIONS GOAL FOR 2005: 300%

Thank you for your recommendations!

IN THIS ISSUE:

1. CAREER SELF-CHECK
2. RECOMMENDED BOOKS AND ENTERTAINMENTS
3. CHUCKLES
4. PROMOTE YOUR OWN GROWTH
5. ABOUT DR. SCHULER
6. HOW TO SUBSCRIBE OR UNSUBSCRIBE
7. NEWSLETTER STATEMENT OF ETHICS

THIS MONTH'S QUOTES:

"If we begin with certainties, we shall end in doubts; but if we begin with doubts, and we are patient in them, we shall end in certainties." -- Sir Francis Bacon

"People often grudge others what they cannot enjoy themselves."
-- Aesop

"Getting ahead in a difficult profession requires avid faith in yourself. That is why some people with mediocre talent, but with great inner drive, go much further than people with vastly superior talent." -- Sophia Loren

1. CAREER SELF-CHECK

1. DO I ENJOY WHAT I DO?

In the long run, you will probably only do with excellence what you enjoy doing, and excellence in performance is your surest road to working security and future wealth. You will also probably only enjoy doing that which you are naturally suited to do, though I have come across people whose passions did not quite match their talents: this is particularly true of younger people who have not learned enough about themselves yet to really know their talents well. If you do not enjoy what you are doing in your current work, then this is a good sign that you need to take an active approach to career management and development. Your disillusionment will show through and make you a less attractive person for any offers of new opportunities. Negativity is never to your advantage.

2. DO I WANT TO BE DOING THIS IN FIVE YEARS?

If you don't want to be doing what you are doing today in five years, then you have to take active steps to create the new reality you desire. In today's world and economy, your job may not even exist in five years, so you have to plan accordingly. If you want to make a radical career change, then that will take a lot of active work, akin to taking on another part time job just to prepare and lay the foundations. If you want to progress on your current path so that five years from now you've moved ahead but are no longer doing what you do today, then you should also take appropriate steps.

3. AM I LEARNING WHAT I'D LIKE TO LEARN?

In today's rapidly changing world economy, learning is not optional. If you want to be doing something new in five years, or you simply want to progress, you have to learn new things. You can do this by taking on novel projects that are outside your zone of comfort or past accomplishment, through classes and structured learning experiences or certifications, or through self-directed study and interviewing people who know more about what you seek to learn. But if you're not learning, you're not growing. If you let someone else define for you what you should be learning, how do you know if you're getting good direction? Take control of your growth, and be sure you're learning things that will help you achieve your goals. If you are not learning, the cold hard fact is you are planning for your eventual obsolescence.

4. HAVE I SETTLED INTO A COMFORT ZONE?

This is common. I have known a number of people who, if they are honest with themselves, have begun to coast on past achievements.

This is tempting to do: after all, we all have other things we like to do with our time, such as family time, hobbies, volunteer work, etc. I'm all for those things, and actively pursue them myself, but if you stay for very long in a career comfort zone, you risk becoming a passive player in your own future, to your own detriment. Comfort zones are very dangerous. Once or twice in a career, it may even be a good idea to "wreck" all you have achieved so you can make a fresh start on a new path, especially if it can eventually complement your past work. In my case, I had developed as a business person before earning a doctorate in psychology, and so what seemed like a career diversion has allowed me to put uncommon areas of expertise together in ways that are novel for my clients and interesting to me. I'm not saying others should do what I've done, but the principle holds: staying comfortable can be dangerous. I've come across people who express nothing but regret when they find their organizations restructure their jobs out of existence, and those who feel the pinch realize that they have allowed themselves to become stale with just one set of skills that are not longer so highly valued.

Want to improve your career growth and personal effectiveness?

"99 Negotiation Nuggets for Winners," my new book, offers quick shots of wisdom designed to help you get what you want and need in your life, work and career. This is not a book of theory. It's a book of best practices distilled from many years of experience and from many experts in the field. The information is conveyed in quick bits, the way you might find in any edition of USA Today.

To purchase your copy of "99 Negotiation Nuggets for Winners" at a 10% Discount for "What's Up, Doc?" subscribers, just click [here](#).

5. WHO ARE THE PEOPLE WHO CAN TEACH ME WHAT I'D LIKE TO LEARN?

If you don't have mentors in your life, or people who in some way will help take your call when you have a question related to your future goals and learning needs, then you need to recruit some. It's that simple. Some people have opportunities more or less handed to them, and some people are lucky enough to receive active interest from those who wish to help them grow, but they are the fortunate ones. I've heard it said that in life, if you want to be successful, you have to be good at what you do, but you also have to be a little lucky. That's true, but you can also start to generate your own luck by picking out people you are aware of, whom you may know even know personally,

whose knowledge base or expertise base may be helpful to you. These are people who are further along in the career path you wish to grow toward. Figure out who a few of them are: make a list. Then approach them to become your growth allies. I've written two past newsletters about how to do this, which you can find [here](#) and [here](#).

6. DO I HELP OTHER PEOPLE BECOME MORE EFFECTIVE?

This is big. Opportunities come from social circumstances: someone has to notice you, and someone has to think of you when an opportunity arises. If you are in the habit of helping other people become more effective, you will come to mind when the time and opportunity are right. If you are a pain in the neck for other people to deal with, you'll be left behind. Even if you don't like everyone around you, it will be to your benefit to help other people in your working environment accomplish their own goals. And if you get in the habit of helping new people learn the ropes, you will enhance your own social standing over time, even if it is not in your specific job description to provide that kind of support.

7. DO I KEEP TRACK OF PEOPLE AND CONTACTS?

Financial advisors tell you to diversify your investment portfolio. Career advisers tell you to expand and diversify your contacts portfolio. One strategy is designed to help you build your wealth and financial capital. The other is designed to help you grow your social health and social capital. Does this sound crass to you? To some, it will, but then again, the only way to build up your contacts list is to be helpful and memorable to other people, so it's not as if you'll be exploiting anybody. The key here is to have some system that you actually use, to keep track of people you meet, and to record basic information about them their interests, etc. If you can become known as someone who is known to have a number of diverse and interesting contacts, that will have value for you, even beyond the value of having the contacts themselves, defined as people who will return your call or email message. Anyone who is receiving this newsletter can use a basic personal contact management program on a computer: the key is to use it. I have not yet purchased one myself, but I understand the new business card scanners available now make it very easy to capture people's data and input their information into their database, without doing it by hand. If any subscriber's have experience with these scanners, please email me and tell me what you've learned.

8. ARE SOCIAL SKILLS OR TECHNICAL PROFICIENCY MOST IMPORTANT FOR THE NEXT PHASE OF MY CAREER?

This is a diagnostic question for you at whatever stage you find yourself in your career. The answer to that question should guide you in finding or recruiting the right mentors to help you grow. To some

degree, technical expertise can be bought through traditional educational programs, but social skills cannot be developed through a seminar. You can only broaden your ability to work with, influence and make a difference for others through continuous guidance and review with someone who can help you review your approaches, help you understand other people and help you understand the impact you have on others. If you wish to exercise leadership, sales ability or higher level managerial authority, then your advancement will hinge more and more on your social ability, and your ability to surround yourself with the right experts who possess technical expertise.

9. DO I WAIT FOR CHANGE TO OVERTAKE ME OR DO I INITIATE STRATEGIC CHANGES?

This question is the natural follow-up to question number 4 above. Career growth is a paradox: we work constantly to bring ourselves to a more comfortable, enjoyable and rewarding place, and once we reach a desirable plateau, we have to be willing to wreck it for the sake of future growth! Be proactive and accept that change is inevitable. If you initiate changes based on a strategic review of the world around you and an assessment of your own goals and strengths, then you can have a hand in shaping your future and whatever inevitable changes come. If you do not take initiative, you will be at the passive whim of uncontrollable and unforeseen events.

10. WHAT QUIET, NEGATIVE BELIEFS DO I HOLD INSIDE THAT MAY BE HOLDING ME BACK?

This is a pretty big topic, and perhaps worthy of a future newsletter edition. From my experience, many people fail to grow, not because they lack the talent for growth, but because they lack the strength to confront the hidden voices inside them that hold them back. As a result, I have seen individuals defensively cling to a weaker or failed notion of who they are and what talents they possess, persisting in an approach to work that does not do their full talents justice. Everyone has talent; everyone has something they can do better than most other people can. But I have seen people devalue the thing they are best suited to do in favor of some other view of who they think they should be, and this works to their detriment. And in other cases, fear of failure prevents us from taking chances, or fear of success does the same. With success comes change, and new expectations and situations that can take us out of our comfort zones. Many people unconsciously avoid their own personal growth to avoid the novelty and stress that may come from genuine success. So, ask yourself, what do you believe about your own potential? If you have nagging doubts that hold you back, then get some help to work them out with someone you can trust (this is another reason why mentors can be so helpful). The greatest limits we face can be the ones we set for

ourselves.

2. RECOMMENDED BOOKS AND ENTERTAINMENT

BOOK: “The Known World,” by Edward P. Jones, HarperCollins, New York, 2004

This is the first time I’ve recommended a work of fiction in this newsletter. I read mostly non-fiction, and have little time for fiction. But I heard some people discussing the book on a radio station as I was driving to a client’s office, and I got sucked in. The book has won a number of awards, and is essentially a complex examination of human nature and they way injustice shapes and contaminates the people affected by it. The book is set in the Virginia, in this United States, prior to the American Civil War, and involves men and women living with and in slavery. The book gets past many of the known narrative clichés that one usually finds in such stories and brings that whole world to a new level of understanding – with a knowledgeable eye on human nature that resonates for the world today. I’m still reading it, but I recommend it. You can check out the book at this [link](#).

ENTERTAINMENT: Film: “Hero,” in DVD and video release for home viewing, 2004

Ok, this is a recommendation with a great, big caveat: I actually did not like this movie. However, my better half and virtually all the critics did like it. So I’ll let you decide. First of all, if you want to know what the critics said, go [here](#). Now, here’s what I liked about the film: the visuals and storytelling structure were pure poetry. Very interesting, stylized and a delight to the eye. On the other hand, here’s what I did not like: the underlying message of the film, the moral of the hero’s story, seems to be one that supported the idea of totalitarian conquest in the name of some “greater good.” Bah! How many dictators and mass murderers have we seen in history who have claimed the mantle of some type of reform, only to expand their own power and fill the land and the sea with flowing blood for the sake of brutal conquest? The film made me angry, in spite of its beauty, and in some sense, because of it. But you can decide for yourself. The film is in Chinese (Mandarin Chinese? I don’t know) and can be viewed with subtitles.

3. CHUCKLES

This business joke may be a little dated, and a little specific with its U. S. based references, but I still thought it was cute, if you understand a little about the business hype machine/echo chamber of the American business media:

Three beggars are begging in New York City.

The first one wrote "beg" on his broken steel cup and he received ten bucks after one day.

The second one wrote "beg.com" on his cup and after one day he received hundreds of thousand dollars. Someone even wanted to take him to NASDAQ.

The third one wrote "ebeg" on his cup. Both IBM and HP sent vice-presidents to talk to him about a strategic alliance and offered him free Hardware and professional consulting while Larry Ellison claimed on CNBC that ebeg uses 95% Oracle technology and i2 announced begTradeMatrix, a b2b industry portal to offer supply chain integration in the beggar community.

4. 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.

5. ABOUT DR. SCHULER

A. J. Schuler, Psy. D., an expert on leadership, negotiation 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.

6. HOW TO SUBSCRIBE OR UNSUBSCRIBE

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7. 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. (An attorney friend recently pointed out that, technically, I'd have to give up my list if compelled to do so by a court of law. He's technically right, of course, but let's face it: that won't happen!)

Have a great month. . .

A. J. Schuler, Psy. D.
Schuler Solutions, Inc.

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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! Thanks . . . AJS