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

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"Creating Leadership Solutions for Profit and Growth"

THIS MONTH'S THEME: THE TEAMWORK "PLEDGE"

Wow! I should have asked you all for more topic suggestions ages ago! What a smart and thoughtful bunch you are. I've always invited input and questions, but have not pushed it much. I'm glad I primed the pump last week. You are all great. Please keep the questions and suggestions coming: this is your newsletter at least as much as it is mine. I really do see this as a community, or at least as the seed of one, and will consider a blog and forum posting feature so that you can all share ideas and ask questions of each other if you like. Do you think this is a good idea? [Email me and let me know.](#)

For all of you who emailed me questions and suggestions, I will respond to you all individually, but have not yet had time. But I digress: I'm supposed to introduce this month's topic. Many of you had variations on a request for codes of conduct among team members. So for you, I've created the Teamwork "PLEDGE." See details below. This is meant to serve as a kind of communal compact that members of any team can commit to, sign and implement together. You can find a pdf of the PLEDGE here. Feel free to download it, print it and use it. The content of the PLEDGE is here in this newsletter, but the pdf is formatted for actual team-based use and implementation.

There are many more good ideas and suggestions that you gave me which I will cover in future editions. Thank you for pushing me to dig into these topics. At the same time, I'm far from being the font of all knowledge (my innate hubris aside!), so in the future, I will be adding content from other subject area experts I trust (this is also where a blog-based community might be helpful), so all of you can get input directly from each other. And now, back to our show. . .

To see this month's newsletter as a pdf, click [here](#).

IN THIS ISSUE:

1. THE TEAM MEMBER'S "PLEDGE"
2. RECOMMENDED BOOKS AND ENTERTAINMENT
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:

"The voice of conscience is so delicate that it is easy to stifle it; but it is also so clear that it is impossible to mistake it." -- Germaine De Stael

"Life affords no higher pleasure than that of surmounting difficulties, passing from one step of success to another, forming new wishes and seeing them gratified." -- Samuel Johnson

"Peace, like charity, begins at home." -- Franklin Delano Roosevelt

1. TEAM MEMBER'S "PLEDGE"

P IS FOR "PEOPLE"

People come in all different shapes, sizes and colors. They come from different religious perspectives, political affiliations and lifestyles. I pledge to regard my fellow team members based on how they contribute to our mission here and how they treat and respect others. I recognize that any personal disagreements I may have about another person's opinions, backgrounds or life choices are irrelevant to the workplace. In order to merit respect, I will respect the freedom and various backgrounds of others here at work.

Commentary:

I'm trying to make this language as broadly applicable across the globe as possible. All personal differences that may be cause for discussion and conflict in the political arena belong outside the workplace, whether you are a Jew working with a Moslem or a Pakistani working with an Indian or whatever. We all have our biases, many of which may remain hidden even to ourselves, me included. But at work, what matters is another's conduct and ability to contribute to the organization's mission. Other differences of race, color, creed, political affiliation, etc., are just not important. That principle should be universal, and universally acknowledged.

L IS FOR "LAUGHTER"

Laughter is necessary for all human life and growth, but not all laughter is the same. Some laughter tears people down. Other laughter builds people up, cements common experiences and contributes to a positive team spirit.

I pledge that I will promote the right kind of laughter, in public and in private, to help build our team community. I may not be the funniest person, or always be in the best mood, but I'll do what I can to promote and sustain a loose, fun team environment.

Commentary:

I once knew a man who was teased by his family members constantly as a child, and when he objected, was told, "Oh, don't be so serious! We're just kidding around!" It stayed with him all his life. Not all humor is "just kidding around." Face it: you know the difference. Granted, there are some people who are hypersensitive, or who don't know how to laugh at themselves, but if that's the case, it's not your job to change them. Use humor and laughter to build people up. Quiet character assassination often takes the form of humor, especially when the target of the attack is not around. Human foibles, which we all possess, are fun and funny, but most people know the difference between mean-spirited laughter and acceptance. Know where the line is, and act accordingly.

E IS FOR "EFFORT"

I have a responsibility to pull my weight and to do my work well. I'll do my best to meet all of my deadlines and not let my team members down. I pledge to my teammates to make a steady, significant contribution, to make their work lives better and to help our organization accomplish its mission.

Commentary:

This one is pretty self-explanatory. At the very least, in order to expect respect in the workplace, we have to do our jobs, and do them well, and even exceed others' expectations whenever we can. It's not just about what the boss thinks. It's also about how others rely on us. We'll all have some days that are better than others, and some days when we'll need team members to help pick up our slack, but everyone has to pitch in for that to work. This is the very heart of teamwork.

D IS FOR "DIRECT COMMUNICATION"

If I have anything at all sensitive to say to a person, I pledge to say it directly to that person, in private. I will avoid, to the best of my ability, negative gossip, and I will resist the formation of rival cliques or coalitions that destroy morale and productivity. I will also give my teammates direct compliments and say "thank you" whenever I can. I pledge to respect the confidentiality of private conversations.

Commentary:

This is a big one. If people would just communicate directly, much pain in working life could be removed! Now, sometimes people lack the ability or confidence to conduct sensitive conversations in a positive,

productive way, but in that case, they need to learn new communication skills. Nothing gets resolved, and problems only multiply, when those who may disagree recruit rival factions for their point of view, rather than work out their differences. A big part of doing this right comes later in this Pledge, when we talk about Empathy.

And now, a brief word on behalf of my new book, before returning to our discussion of the Team Members' Pledge:

Want to improve your ability to operate as a productive team member? "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](#).

G IS FOR "GUIDANCE"

I pledge to share information. When new people come on board, or when anyone needs a little help in mastering information or skills that I possess, I'll do what I can to help them learn. I pledge to support the growth and development of my teammates, just as I would like them to support my own growth and development.

Commentary:

I used to work with a colleague who always said, "One of the best ways to sabotage an organization is to hoard information." What's more, mentoring others is a critical part of healthy organizational life. Not everyone is cut out to be a mentor, but a lot of people are, and even a little bit of mentoring and support can be very rewarding and educational. . . for the mentor! Without a commitment to support the growth of other team members, any organization can stagnate, wither and die, or descend into factionalism and misery for all concerned.

E IS FOR "EMPATHY"

I pledge that I will really work to understand my coworkers. That means I will make an effort to know how they think, what they need, what they want and what makes them happy. I pledge to walk a mile in their shoes before rushing to judgment or presenting areas of disagreement. To get

that kind of consideration from others, I know I have to give it back, and of course . . . I know I am far from perfect!

Commentary:

It's not always easy or convenient to walk a mile in someone else's shoes. Some of us are better at it than others. Sometimes, our own friends in the workplace can help us understand people who leave us frustrated or feeling puzzled. But the best cure for destructive conflict is a genuine effort at mutual understanding. That does not mean that all conflict is bad, or that everyone always has to be wishy-washy about taking positions. Far from it. But direct, respectful communication, and productive team performance, requires a healthy dose of mutual empathy and understanding, even (or especially!) when the going gets tough.

2. RECOMMENDED BOOKS AND ENTERTAINMENT

BOOK: Call for nominations!

Hey subscribers, I've been so busy with other projects, I just have not scoped out a book I want to recommend to you. If you've read a book lately you think would be interesting to readers of this newsletter, please nominate it by emailing me with this [link](#), and explain why you think the book is valuable. Thanks!

ENTERTAINMENT: (Film) "The [Incredibles](#)," in wide release

Okay, I have not seen it, but it was the top box office draw in the U. S. this past weekend. To read the review, click on the link embedded in the film's title, above. I have seen preview and "making of" material about the movie, and it seems like a lot of good fun and humor, appropriate for the whole family. As for music, I found myself listening to a couple of CD's this weekend as I worked or ate dinner, but I'll just mention one. [The Best of Sydney Bechet](#) offers up a prime serving of classic New Orleans swing jazz. Lots of fun, and you won't be able to stop your foot from tapping.

CHUCKLES

A SMATTERING OF SILLY BUMPER STICKERS

Where there's a will...I want to be on it.

It's lonely at the top, but you eat better.

Don't drink and drive...You might hit a bump and spill it.

Friends help you move. Real friends help you move bodies.

Consciousness: That annoying time between naps.

Be nice to your kids...They will pick out your nursing home.

Always remember you're unique...Just like everyone else.

Eschew obfuscation.

IRS: We've got what it takes to take what you've got.

Hard work has a future payoff. Laziness pays off now.

Out of my mind...Back in five minutes.

I took an IQ test and the results were negative.

Adults are just kids who owe money.

Who are these kids and why are they calling me Mom?

I pretend to work. They pretend to pay me.

You! Off my planet!

Errors have been made. Others will be blamed.

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

If this e-Newsletter was forwarded to you and you would like to receive your own FREE subscription, just click [here](#) to become a subscriber. If you believe you have received this message in error, or to remove yourself from this mailing list, just click [here](#) to take your name from the "What's Up, Doc?" distribution list.

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. . .

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Schuler Solutions, Inc.

"I work with leaders who want to grow their businesses, and with meeting professionals who want to create great events for their audiences."

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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

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