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

Vol. 4, No. 9; September 2004; Copyright 2004 by A. J. Schuler, Psy. D

"Creating Leadership Solutions for Profit and Growth"

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THIS MONTH'S THEME: TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS

I can't claim to be an expert in time management. I tend to be creative, and to write, and both of those things carry with them a use of time that looks to others like. . . wasted time! But I also have a business to run, so I've developed some habits to help me stay in focus. This month, I'll share with you the little strategies that work for me, and I hope they may be useful to you. In today's world, time is becoming an ever more precious commodity, and we seem to have to squeeze so much into the limited amount we possess. So here we go. . .

IN THIS ISSUE:

1. TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS
2. RECOMMENDED BOOKS AND FILMS
3. CHUCKLES
4. PROMOTE YOUR OWN GROWTH
5. ABOUT DR. SCHULER
6. HOW TO SUBSCRIBE OR UNSUBSCRIBE
7. NEWSLETTER STATEMENT OF ETHICS

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THIS MONTH'S QUOTES:

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

"Conversation would be vastly improved by the constant use of four simple words: I do not know." -- André Maurois

"Our lives improve only when we take chances --- and the first and most difficult risk we can take is to be honest with ourselves." -- Walter Anderson

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1. TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS

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### HAVE A PLAN FOR THE LONGER TERM

As the old saying goes, “If you don’t know where you’re going, any road will do.” There’s no way to manage your time if you don’t have long term goals or ambitions. Then, once you’ve identified those, you have to understand and outline the steps you need to take to get there. You will learn more as you go along: some steps that were hidden to you will emerge, and as you learn more, you’ll uncover some potential shortcuts or best practices that can accelerate your progress. But you must have a plan. It’s true for a business, and it’s true for a life or a career.

### ASK YOURSELF THE RIGHT QUESTION

Here it is: “What can I do on a consistent, repeatable basis that will move me toward my goal?” Look at each month or week of your life, and decide what things you can do **CONSISTENTLY**, without overreaching or wearing yourself out. Be realistic. Life is a marathon, not a sprint. It’s better to commit to smaller, repeatable but consistent actions than to try to do too much too quickly that will not be sustainable as a matter of habit and practice.

### REVIEW YOUR PLAN OF THE DAY THE NIGHT BEFORE

This one habit has been a great help to me. In general, I am most productive in writing, document review and other tasks that require concentrated attention in the morning. But in the past, I often would complete my workday and then not look at my next day’s tasks until the next morning. That would force me to use time to mentally organize my efforts in the morning, when instead I could be far more productive if I had already worked all those details out. A few minutes the afternoon or night before a day’s tasks to review and prioritize those tasks brings me great returns. The truth is, at least for me, not all hours of the day are created equal. By placing a premium on my morning time, and protecting it, I am far more productive. By having my plan of the day updated and in place before the day begins, I can really hit the ground running. Then, in the afternoon, I am more relaxed and more disposed to make phone calls, attend meetings, etc. Interactive time, even for business, is fun and relaxing for me, and the afternoons are perfect for that, in my case. You should know for yourself when your premium time of the day is and protect it. Know in advance what you want to do with it, ideally, the night before.

### AVOID THE REACTIVITY TIME TRAP

To some degree, this happens to all of us. I think it was John Lennon who said, “Life is what happens to you when you’re making other plans.” We all have to adjust our schedules, every day, based on new priorities and “crises” that arise. But if all of your time is spent this way, then you are letting events control your life or your business, and events will not lead you to your goal. To avoid falling into the habit of being too reactive, and

letting your time fall into the reactivity time trap, you've got to learn to say no. Sometimes that's hard. In my case, I've sometimes had to turn down projects in the immediate term when they interfere with time investments I need to make to achieve my long term goals. That's not easy when you're turning down some immediate cash flow so that you can write a book! But that's life. Don't let all your time get sucked away by events: you won't get the time back.

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And now, a brief word on behalf of my new book, before returning to our time management tips:

Want to save time? "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](#).

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#### BUDGET FOR PLAY OR "WASTED TIME"

I underschedule myself. Some people, or airlines, overbook. I underbook, by design. This is not because I'm lazy – I'm not. But I know that part of what I do requires time to synthesize and explore new ideas. That means I need time to read, to play, to do things and try new experiences that might yield materials for interesting stories that work well once adapted for my presentations. Events and stories apparently unrelated to business often make the best, most memorable and entertaining tales to bring to an audience. And the process of writing often. . . does not look like writing, since ideas percolate in the unconscious mind before they are often available for use. So, for me, I've found it helpful to "underbook" my time so that I can be more productive. It sounds counterintuitive, but for me, it works. By refusing to fill up my calendar from one end to the other, I effectively budget for some amount of play or "wasted" time, but in fact, that is my productivity strategy. Otherwise, I become a walking, talking machine, my ideas dry up, and I become less able to offer genuine value or wisdom to clients or audiences. Since we live in a knowledge economy that, more and more, rewards wisdom even more than knowledge, I would argue that this approach could be good for you, too, even though your business is not the same as mine.

#### SOCIAL TIME COUNTS AS PRODUCTIVE TIME

Because we live in a knowledge based economy, which is transforming itself more and more into a wisdom and social networks based economy, I would argue that social time, water cooler time, or non-work related social time is in fact productive time. With the surge of information out there, no one can be an expert in all areas, but real productivity comes from knowing whom to tap for information or wisdom just when you – or someone you know – needs it. That’s what social time gets you: the ability to make connections with people and learn who they are, what they know, what they like and even what makes them laugh. Build trust and build relationships. Social time IS productive time. Budget for social time accordingly.

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## 2. RECOMMENDED BOOKS AND FILMS

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BOOK: “Great Comedians Talk About Comedy,” by Larry Wilde, Executive Books, Mechanicsburg, PA, 2000.

The first edition of this reissued collector’s classic was released in 1968. This may not be a topic of interest to everyone, but I think it’s terrific, as I am a student of the human mind and of what makes people in audiences respond. Though I’m not a comedian, I do use my own brand of humor, and so, as a student of professional presenting, I came across this book, whose interviewees include Milton Berle, Jack Benny, George Burns, Johnny Carson, Bob Hope and Jerry Seinfeld, among others. For those of you who may like shows like “Inside the Actor’s Studio” on the Bravo cable network, this book is for you, as it contains intelligent artists talking about their craft, as elusive as comedy is to define. Very good stuff. It might not be widely available. Look for it at [www.executivebooks.com](http://www.executivebooks.com)

FILM: Ah, go see a live concert instead. . .

I have not seen any interesting movies lately. Feels like a dry season for films. But I did have the great pleasure of seeing both Tony Bennett and B. B. King live in concert over the last month: two legends with about 150 years between them. They were great. They really held the audience, without a lot of effort: super entertainers who are right there with the crowd, true professionals and true artists. They awakened me again to the power and joy of live music. So, no matter where you are, go out to some local place for some live music (not karaoke!). Maybe there will be some better movies out sometime soon, but for now, a change of pace sure can’t hurt!

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### 3. CHUCKLES

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Supposedly, these are actual advertisements that have appeared in papers across the country.

Wanted. Widower with school-age children requires person to assume general housekeeping duties. Must be capable of contributing to growth of family.

Semi-Annual after-Christmas Sale.

And now, the Superstore--unequaled in size, unmatched in variety, unrivaled inconvenience.

We will oil your sewing machine and adjust tension in your home for \$1.00.

Girl wanted to assist magician in cutting-off-head illusion. Blue Cross and salary.

For Sale. Three canaries of undermined sex.

Get rid of aunts: Zap does the job in 24 hours.

Christmas tag-sale. Handmade gifts for the hard-to-find person.

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### 4. PROMOTE YOUR OWN GROWTH

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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.

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## 5. ABOUT DR. SCHULER

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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.

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## 6. HOW TO SUBSCRIBE OR UNSUBSCRIBE

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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.

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## 7. NEWSLETTER STATEMENT OF ETHICS

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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.

"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