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Developing Degree Programs that Work



Iola Cox, CPA, Chair
Rushmore University Board of Governors

This past week my family and I had the wonderful opportunity to attend Kamp Kauai, a family camp under the Kanakuk Kamp Ministries in the heart of the Ozarks in Branson, MO. The speaker, Dr. Gary Rosberg, spoke about the time in his life when he almost lost his family while he worked on his PhD. When he realized that he was sacrificing what was really important in his life for something with far less value he made a decision to change. He stated that it took him two years to gain back a relationship with his wife and daughters.

Both Mike and I were single when we obtained our degrees; but we saw the effects that studying had on the marriages and families of some of our fellow classmates. With this in mind Mike wanted to design a degree program that was flexible to accommodate the busy schedules of those with families and successful professional lives:

- We use the Oxford Tutorial system that allows your studies to fit around your schedule instead of requiring your family to fit into our schedule.
- Rushmore was one of the first schools to use the Internet so that you can learn at the office, home, the local library or the local bookstore and cut wasteful travel time getting to class.
- You can customize your program and classes so that they are applicable to your projects and goals at work.
- Rushmore sets flexible time limits for finishing your courses and the degree program.

Although obtaining your degree is important to both you and us at Rushmore we know that there are other things in your life that have much greater value.

However, the freedom offered at Rushmore requires greater focus, self-discipline, and time management from those students who successfully complete their degree. I have great admiration of our alumni and encourage you to continue to read the most recently published articles of our alumni on our website.

If You Need to Get Something Done on Time, Ask a Busy Person to Help You

By Dr. Don Mitchell, JD
Rushmore University Faculty

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Many of you have seen Dr. Mitchell's articles online about Rushmore Alumni and Friends. This is one of his Alumni stories which has been read, literally, thousands of times online. It focuses on Rushmore Alumnus Dr. Oliver Hackl.

One of the first things that any business leader learns is that some people can accomplish a hundred times more than other people can. Assign a critical task to one of these highly productive people, and you will be most pleased with the timely results . . . no matter how busy the person is.

How do highly productive people do it? They pay attention to the following principles of working with good discipline:

1. Structure work to make good use of the time available. That means if some of the required tasks take longer than others, they start those lengthy activities first. In addition, they schedule all tasks to be accomplished over the ideal length of time and completed in optimal order.

2. They only take on assignments for which they have enough time and resources to achieve good results and still meet the final deadline. Following this discipline usually means planning a project in some detail before agreeing to work on it.

3. They delegate whatever can be done acceptably by someone else so that the organization accomplishes more than it otherwise would. This means being aware of what other people in the organization are capable of doing and what they are working on.

4. They assign subtasks to outside specialists and organizations when such resources can add important value to the project results. This requires understanding the quality of work that can be done internally and externally within the necessary schedule.

5. They know which disciplines can add important benefits to an assignment. To choose the right disciplines requires a lot of continuing education, experience with a variety of tasks, and an interest in making on-going improvements.

6. They keep asking if anything that's been started is no longer needed. They drop activities that are unimportant or which have proven to be inappropriate.

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With so much to do before becoming highly effective, how do such busy people cram in all the efforts required to become so highly productive? It's easy: They combine a never-ending thirst to learn with efficient resources for gathering new knowledge and insights while continually polishing and building on what they already know.

Dr. Oliver Hackl, a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) graduate of Rushmore University (an online school), is a perfect example of this kind of superior orientation and ability. Let's look at his background and work history to help you see how he became a world-class entrepreneur in his thirties who is equally comfortable doing business in Europe or New Zealand.

A native German, Dr. Hackl's life took on a new seriousness at age nine when his father died. That untimely loss taught Dr. Hackl an important lesson: Live every day as though it might be your last. He acted on that insight by learning as much as he could and never leaving until tomorrow what could be done today.

Two years later his mother married a New Zealander. Dr. Hackl moved with her to the opposite side of the globe and began learning English from scratch. He enjoyed New Zealand and did well in school despite an initial language barrier.

Five years later his mother returned to Germany, and Dr. Hackl made another difficult adjustment. But he vowed to return to his newly beloved New Zealand.

After finishing secondary school in Germany, Dr. Hackl faced compulsory military training in the German Army. For financial reasons, he chose to spend 24 months in the military rather than the required 18 months. This decision meant learning a lot more, but Dr. Hackl likes to learn and was not concerned. He received valuable education in personnel administration and training and eventually served as a non-commissioned officer in roles where he was allowed a lot of latitude.

After the two-year army stint, he studied mechanical engineering while also spending some time learning about business administration, a field he enjoyed. Dr. Hackl next enlisted through a 14-year contract to become an officer in the German Air Force. Four rigorous years of study helped him complete officer's training and earn a degree (Diplom-Betriebswirt (FH) that's the German equivalent of an MBA) from the University of the German Armed Forces, majoring in information and communication technology and business organization.

Having been fascinated by computers since he was 14, Dr. Hackl also took every possible course and accepted every voluntary assignment he could to develop his knowledge of computer languages and how to apply computer technology.

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In addition, he took special training in how to lead a platoon of 100 men. Still wishing to learn more, Dr. Hackl took additional courses in English and IT while in the Air Force.

Loving the military, he was disappointed when a broken ankle ended his Air Force career. However, this unexpected change opened up new opportunities to learn through more studying and applying what he had already studied.

While Dr. Hackl was in the Air Force, his mother and older brother started a major company trading wooden components for the timber and furniture industries. Dr. Hackl joined them after the accident, starting in a sales role for the company. Within three years at the company, he had worked in many different functions and roles, becoming quite expert in the furniture industry.

When he was 34, Dr. Hackl was pleased to realize that he had achieved a high level of knowledge in many business management disciplines. He decided it was time to become his own boss to test how well his management lessons had been learned. He purchased a wooden parts production company out of a bankruptcy proceeding in Austria and soon directed the company into healthy profitability.

While many people would have been happy to settle back and enjoy the business success, Dr. Hackl decided to earn a DBA degree and hoped to gain skill in delegating daily tasks to his colleagues while learning more about advanced management practices for international businesses. Already working a 75-hour week, he knew that a studying to earn a DBA degree would challenge him to accomplish more as a leader in less time. During his DBA studies, Dr. Hackl often turned to himself as that busy person who can get everything done on time.

Through fitting DBA studies into spare moments during his long and hectic work week, Dr. Hackl improved his already impressive time management skills. The company continued to prosper. Graduation brought new opportunities: After earning his doctorate, Dr. Hackl found that business people treated him with more respect and it was easier to work with others to accomplish important tasks.

When a fire destroyed the company's production facilities in 2008, Dr. Hackl was able to turn that potentially negative event into an advantage. He quickly re-started the company's production while more than doubling capacity to permit increased sales while lowering costs.

As a next step, he will add a power plant fueled by wood chips and shavings. When those operations are running smoothly, his production manager will take over the company.

At that point, Dr. Hackl intends to accomplish his long-held dream by relocating to his beloved New Zealand, starting another company there, and enjoying the home, boat, and lifestyle of his dreams.

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When asked what might be next on the horizon, Dr. Hackl responded that he might start on a Ph.D. With his unquenchable thirst for knowledge and accomplishment, I wonder if one Ph.D. will be enough to keep him stimulated for a lifetime.

As you can see, a lot of preparation went into Dr. Hackl's quick climb to business success after leaving the German Air Force. After having gained the right knowledge and discipline, he quickly surpassed what most people accomplish in a lifetime.

How can you become your most effective employee, the one who always gets key tasks done on time?

What do you need to learn?

What are you waiting for?

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Your Editor's Notes

Each month, we offer a column written (and edited!) by Rushmore's Director of Editing, Laurel Barley. Laurel interacts with every Rushmore student—from their very first submissions. She works tirelessly to help each Degree Candidate create perfect Papers prior to submission to the Advisor for grading.

Say What You Mean, and Mean What You Say

By: Laurel Barley, Director of Editing, Rushmore University.



(www.ice-frog.home.insightbb.com)

One wrong digit or symbol in mathematics or computer languages can cost days and dollars, as every one of you will have learnt the hard way. Yet the same IT, engineering, insurance, finance and accounting professionals who are so precise with those esoteric languages have no problem referring to the same criteria as laws, standards, regulations, rules, guidelines and requirements. Nor do they seem worried that eight different factors cannot all be 'the key' to the success of the same system.

Variety may be the spice of life, but my palate becomes jaded when 'he said' becomes he averred, claimed, asserted, emphasized, focused on, stressed and highlighted. How, I wonder, does the author make anything stand

Another clarity issue raises its ugly head.

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Don't ape the language.

out when apparently everything does?

Words are often misused. A dilemma is a choice between two undesirable options, not just 'a problem'; assure, ensure and insure are not synonymous. Imagery obfuscates rather than illuminating: you can't steer a ship with a roadmap, or build a platform on a spine!

English has a larger vocabulary than any other language; properly used, it can convey subtle and delicate shades of meaning. Used incorrectly, it can and does destroy relationships, lose you the sale, or lead to costly and demoralising mistakes.

In the words of a wiser colleague: "Say what you mean, and mean what you say."

Up to a certain point, every man is what he
thinks he is.

F. H. Bradley

18 Practical Ways to Live the Golden Rule (Another great posting from www.zenhabits.com)

One of the few rules I try to live my life by, and fail every day trying, is the Golden Rule.

I love the simplicity of the Golden Rule, its tendency to make I interact with happier ... and its tendency to make me happier as well.

It's true: the rule of treating others as you would want to be treated in their place will ultimately lead to your own happiness.

Let's say that you apply the Golden Rule in all of your interactions with other people, and you help your neighbors, you treat your family with kindness, you go the extra mile for your co-workers, you help a stranger in need.

Now, those actions will undoubtedly be good for the people you help and are kind to ... but you'll also notice a strange thing. People will treat you better too, certainly. **Beyond that, though, you will find a growing satisfaction in yourself, a belief in yourself, knowledge that you are a good person and a trust in yourself.**

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Those are not small dividends. They are huge. And for that reason — not even considering that our world will be a better place if more people live by this rule — I recommend you make the Golden Rule a focus of your actions, and try to live by it to the extent that you can.

I will admit that there are strong arguments against the Golden Rule, that there are exceptions and logic arguments that the Golden Rule, taken to extremes, falls apart. I'm not concerned about that stuff. The truth is, on a day-to-day basis, living by the Golden Rule will make you a better person, will make those around you happier, and will make the community you live in a better place.

With that in mind, let's take a look at some practical tips for living the Golden Rule in your daily life:

1. **Practice empathy.** Make it a habit to try to place yourself in the shoes of another person. Any person. Loved ones, co-workers, and people you meet on the street. Really try to understand, to the extent that you can, what it is like to be them, what they are going through, and why they do what they do.
2. **Practice compassion.** Once you can understand another person, and feel what they're going through, learn to want to end their suffering. And when you can, take even a small action to somehow ease their suffering in some way.
3. **How would you want to be treated?** The Golden Rule doesn't really mean that you should treat someone else exactly as you'd want them to treat you ... it means that you should try to imagine how they want to be treated, and do that. So when you put yourself in their shoes, ask yourself how you think they want to be treated. Ask yourself how you would want to be treated if you were in their situation. John F. Kennedy did that during the controversial days of de-segregation in the 1960s, asking white Americans to imagine being looked down upon and treated badly based only on the color of their skin. He asked them to imagine how they would want to be treated if they were in that situation, and act accordingly towards the blacks.
4. **Be friendly.** When in doubt, follow this tip. It's usually safe to be friendly towards others. Of course, there are times when others just don't want someone acting friendly towards them, and you should be sensitive to that. You should also be friendly within the bounds of appropriateness. But who doesn't like to feel welcome and wanted?
5. **Be helpful.** This is probably one of the weaknesses of our society. Sure, there are many people who go out of their way to be helpful, and I applaud them. But in general there is a tendency to keep to yourself, and to ignore the problems of others. Don't be blind to the needs and troubles of others. Look to help even before you're asked.

6. **Be courteous in traffic.** Another weakness of our society. There are few times when we are as selfish as when we're driving. We don't want to give up the right of way, we cut people off, we honk and curse. Perhaps it's the isolation of the automobile. We certainly don't act that rude in person, most of the time. So try to be courteous in traffic.
7. **Listen to others.** Another weakness: we all want to talk, but very few of us want to listen. And yet, we all want to be listened to. So take the time to actually listen to another person, rather than just wait your turn to talk. It'll also go a long way to helping you understand others.
8. **Overcome prejudice.** We all have our prejudices, whether it's based on skin color, attractiveness, height, age, gender ... it's human nature, I guess. But try to see each person as an individual human being, with different backgrounds and needs and dreams. And try to see the commonalities between you and that person, despite your differences.
9. **Stop criticism.** We all have a tendency to criticize others, whether it's people we know or people we see on television. However, ask yourself if you would like to be criticized in that person's situation. The answer is almost always "no". So hold back your criticism, and instead learn to interact with others in a positive way.
10. **Don't control others.** It's also rare that people want to be controlled. Trust me. So don't do it. This is a difficult thing, especially if we are conditioned to control people. But when you get the urge to control, put yourself in that person's shoes. You would want freedom and autonomy and trust, wouldn't you? Give that to others then.
11. **Be a child.** The urge to control and criticize is especially strong when we are adults dealing with children. In some cases, it's necessary, of course: you don't want the child to hurt himself, for example. But in most cases, it's not. Put yourself in the shoes of that child. Remember what it was like to be a child, and to be criticized and controlled. You probably didn't like it. How would you want to be treated if you were that child?
12. **Send yourself a reminder.** Email yourself a daily reminder (use Google Calendar or memotome.com, for example) to live your life by the Golden Rule, so you don't forget.
13. **Tie a string to your finger.** Or give yourself some other reminder throughout the day so that you don't forget to follow the Golden Rule in all interactions with others. Perhaps a fake golden ring on your keychain? A tattoo? :)
14. **Post it on your wall or make it your home page.** The Golden Rule makes a great mantra, and a great poster.

15. **Rise above retaliation.** We have a tendency to strike back when we're treated badly. This is natural. Resist that urge. The Golden Rule isn't about retaliation. It's about treating others well, despite how they treat you. Does that mean you should be a doormat? No ... you have to assert your rights, of course, but you can do so in a way where you still treat others well and don't strike back just because they treated you badly first. Remember Jesus' wise (but difficult to follow) advice: turn the other cheek.

16. **Be the change.** Gandhi famously told us to be the change we want to see in the world. Well, we often think of that quote as applying to grand changes, such as poverty and racism and violence. Well, sure, it does apply to those things ... but it also applies on a much smaller scale: to all the small interactions between people. Do you want people to treat each other with more compassion and kindness? Then let it start with you. Even if the world doesn't change, at least you have.

17. **Notice how it makes you feel.** Notice how your actions affect others, especially when you start to treat them with kindness, compassion, respect, trust, love. But also notice the change in yourself. Do you feel better about yourself? Happier? More secure? More willing to trust others, now that you trust yourself? These changes come slowly and in small increments, but if you pay attention, you'll see them.

18. **Say a prayer.** There is a prayer on the Golden Rule, attributed to Eusebius of Caesarea, which would be worth saying once a day. It includes the following lines, among others:

"May I gain no victory that harms me or my opponent.

May I reconcile friends who are mad at each other.

May I, insofar as I can, give all necessary help to my friends and to all who are in need.

May I never fail a friend in trouble."

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Scholarship Opportunities from Around the World Paper Presentation Opportunities

ASIA Fellows Awards - Asian Scholarship Foundation

The principal goal of the ASIA Fellows Awards is to increase the overall awareness of intellectual resources in the countries of northeast, south, and southeast Asia and to contribute to the growth of long-range capabilities for cross-regional knowledge sharing.

The ASIA Fellows Awards seek to:

- develop regional expertise;
- establish a multilateral network of Asian specialists from many disciplines, professional fields, and countries;
- stimulate interdisciplinary research and inter-societal comparison; and
- contribute to new developments within existing area studies communities.

The grant provides the following:

1. Round-trip travel between home country and host country
2. In-country living allowance to cover housing and other expenses based upon the cost-of-living in the host country
3. Limited accident and health insurance
4. Field trip and language training allowance
5. Research allowance

Qualified nationals: Bangladesh; Bhutan; Brunei; Burma (Myanmar); Cambodia; China; Hong Kong; India; Indonesia; Japan; Laos; Malaysia; Maldives; Nepal; Pakistan; Philippines; Singapore; South Korea; Sri Lanka; Taiwan; Thailand; Vietnam

Deadline: January 11, 2009

For more information please visit

<http://www.asianscholarship.org/?head=GrantInformation&p=detail>

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IGES invites submission of papers focusing on suitable policy frameworks to achieve a low-carbon, climate-resilient society in Asia. Papers proposing strategies for a post-2012 climate change regime, which recognizes and rewards policies and measures that facilitate the development of a low-carbon future in Asia, are especially welcome.

IGES will select a few of the submitted papers and award the winning authors with an honorarium of USD 1,500 per paper. The winning entries will be published such as a special issue of a relevant journal.

The deadline for full paper submissions will be 1 November 2008.

For further details, please visit:

http://www.iges.or.jp/en/cp/callpaper_lcs_200811.html

Thanks to VDIC Newsletter for this information.