



Just in case it matters to you:

CLIENT / CONTACT BULLETIN 10-21

- A NEW APPROACH TO DEALING WITH STRESSFUL ISSUES: JUST *DREAM*. According to newest Harvard University research, students who dreamed about an upcoming test improved performance ten times as much as non-dreamers! The neuroscience results suggest that “a good night’s sleep and even a nice nap can boost your brain’s ability to remember and learn... If you dream about it, you will probably understand it better... since dreams are the brain’s way of processing, integrating, and really understanding new information. Researchers suspect that dreams don’t directly improve memory; rather, they’re byproducts of a deeper thought process in which memories are being integrated.”

MEANWHILE, ‘STRESS AWARENESS DAY’ (a pseudo Hallmark holiday last month) is about the level of *anxiety* in America. Stats show that over 60% of adults, three out of five doctors, and one-third of kids age 8 to 17 feel ‘stressed’ – over work, school, finances, weight, love, taxes, peer criticism, and the like. Each year some 275 million ‘sickdays’ are attributed to ‘stress’ for one in four people, also prompting two-thirds of all spoken curse words. Relaxation tapes, stress balls and lots of other services and products are now a \$14 billion industry, with another \$23 billion annually going to anxiety-related health care costs. Now here’s a paradox: (1) A recent study found that “eating 1.4 ounces of dark chocolate every day for two weeks was shown to reduce stress” (although research was done at Nestle so may be slightly skewed); (2) Other research shows that depressed people eat twice as much chocolate – those with major depression scarfing 12 oz. a month, compared to 5 oz. for people with fewest signs. It turns out that “chocolate releases brain chemicals that can lift mood, though it’s possible that the subsequent crash could drive depression.”

[FAST COMPANY – Apr 10, and THE WEEK – May 14, 10]

- YOUR COPY MACHINE CAN BE A MAJOR DATA-SECURITY LEAK. Check out: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iC38D5am7go>
- KIDS ARE “LEARNING TO BE JUST A PASSIVE RECEPTACLE... The more TV a toddler watches, the worse his grades and health will be.” According to researchers in Michigan and Montreal who studied TV-watching habits of 1,300 kids between age 2-1/2 and 4-1/2, then again at age 10, *every hour they watched as kids beyond the ‘average’* (nine hours a week) impacted both achievement and health: “by 4th grade, 7% less engaged in class, 6% worse at math, and 10% more likely to be bullied. They also snacked more, exercised less, and had higher ratios of body fat... a compelling argument against excessive TV viewing in early childhood.”

[THE WEEK – May 21, 10]

AND THE EDUCATION SYSTEM ISN’T HELPING. “Countless studies show that increased spending on early childhood education could and would affect both cognition and character at its most malleable – lowering dropout and juvenile delinquency rates by building ‘soft skills’ such as discipline, self esteem motivation, collegiality and persistence.” But instead, in the infinite wisdom of government, lazy students can obtain a high-school ‘credential’ in the form of a “GED” – ‘General Education Development’, not, as commonly thought, General Equivalency Degree. Some 12% of credentials are in this form, versus ‘diplomas,’ but statistics show this program has failed dismally; less than 1/3 actually enroll (mostly into two-year junior colleges) of which 75% “last no longer than one semester and ultimately earn roughly the same as high school dropouts... The majority tend to lead distinctly unstable lives, with patterns of drug use and divorce... Moreover, its popularization *accelerates* the dropout rate, by offering the less motivated a simpler alternative to high school.” Meanwhile, ‘soft skills’ are ignored while the Administration and Congress obsess on ‘cognitive’ goals for math and reading proficiency, and “failing education systems mask the poor job they’ve done closing the achievement gap... by continuing a soft bigotry of low expectations.”

[BLOOMBERG BUSINESSWEEK – May 10, 10]

- DOG-LOVER-DATA: Of the world’s 400 million dogs (approximating the people population of U.S. and Mexico) it’s estimated that “half of all owners allow their dogs to lick them on the face... Since only 10% share E.coli strains with their pets, the real factor in germ transmission may be whether an owner washes hands after playing fetch.” [DISCOVER MAGAZINE – June 10]
- THOUGHTS FOR THE WEEK: **“The biggest big business in America is not steel, automobiles or television. It is the manufacture, refinement, and distribution of anxiety.”** – Eric Sevareid

“What do I regard as the lowest depth of misery? Thinking of the right thing to say – later.” – Bill Maher

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