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Desperately seeking feedback

Type A's need pat on back to avoid heart attack

Portrayed as excessively hard-driving, humorless perfectionists, Type A's are thought to be constantly counting a heart attack. But according to Michael J Strube, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology, what Type A's really want is to know how they are doing, and most of their frantic activity is designed to help them find out.

According to the most current research, Type A's are approximately twice as likely as Type B's to develop coronary disease. As that correlation between Type A behavior and the incidence of coronary heart disease has become stronger, the Type A personality has been the subject of intense study, both medically and psychologically.

So, what's the good news?

Current research suggests that of all the behaviors exhibited by Type A's, hostility and anger are those most strongly linked to coronary disease. And just what is it that makes them angry? According to Strube, the culprit is frustration in getting diagnostic information about their abilities. When their situation, at work or otherwise, provides adequate feedback, they'll go right on being Type A, but can direct their considerable energies toward climbing to new heights, rather than toward making them candidates for a coronary.

"While success and achievement are undeniably important to Type A's, it's equally important to them to know how they're doing," says Strube.

His research, conducted over the past four years, shows that Type A individuals will go to great lengths to get information about their skill levels in situations where they're uncertain of their ability. In similar situations, Type B's are content to validate what they already know about themselves, even to the extent of avoiding new information.

How do Type A's get that way?

"They start out early," says Strube. "We're talking about children as young as three. It seems to be a matter of their parents urging them to excel, while presenting them with ill-defined goals, little or ambiguous, feedback." This, he believes, creates a lifelong need for a constantly updated view of themselves and their abilities.

Strube recently edited Type A Behavior, a special issue of the Journal of Social Behavior and Personality. Most of the leading researchers in the field contributed original, recent work to the book, which presents several viewpoints about what goes into the making of a Type A individual.

One theory suggests that Type A's exhibit their characteristic behavior patterns because they have a powerful need to control their environment. Strube agrees that Type A's like control, but argues that this desire is geared toward resolving uncertainty about their ability, rather than toward controlling a situation for its own sake. He contends that the Type A's desire to maintain control of a situation, such as working alone, allows him to check out his own performance more effectively than would working with others. Interruptions in a Type A individual's pursuit of his ever-escalating goals cause hostility because they interfere with this self-appraisal process.

Experimental methods

To test the notion that self-appraisal is the key factor in Type A behavior, Strube and his associates conducted a series of six studies. The experimental groups ranged in size from 78 to 119 subjects. Before the experiments, each individual was classified as Type A or Type B using the standard Jenkins Activity Survey.

In the first two studies, subjects were given ambiguous feedback on their performance on a variety of word problems. They then were offered the opportunity to repeat the task using new techniques that would enable them to obtain more diagnostic information and resolve uncertainty about their abilities. In one study, 70 percent of Type A's sought out further information, compared with 35 percent of Type B's.

Later studies yielded further evidence that, compared with Type B's, Type A's persist longer at a task if it will yield new information, but exert less effort if it will not. Type A's also look for information by comparing their proficiency with another individual.
Female drummers open Edison series

Lady-Gourd Sangoma, four African-American female drummers breaking new ground in a predominantly male music form, will open Edison Theatre's "OVATIONS" season at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Sept. 21 and 22. Lady-Gourd also will open the "ovations for young people" event are $7. Students, "OVATIONS!" subscriptions, University faculty and staff; and $9 for non-members.

The ensemble, which has been called a "guitar band covered with a skirt of movable heads," is the group's signature tune. Four "ovations for young people" event are $7.

Type A's continued from p. 1

their performance with others and respond to uncertainty about their abilities with anxiety.

When Type A's are unsure of their abilities, they feel more anxious than others and work harder to find out just how good they are. Oddly, once they know their abilities, or think they aren't very good at something, or that they can't do something, they are more likely to quit trying — not because of helplessness or boredom, but because they have the information they need and see no point in continuing their efforts.

It is when a Type A can't get the desired information that trouble begins. Strube, an admitted Type A, offers an illusory threat with a "trivial" event from his own early days as a young professor.

"There were no clear guidelines about what a new assistant professor had to do, or in what journals." Because there was no way to know how much was enough, Strube worked 90 and 90 hours a week, publishing a dozen or more articles a year. "It's a wonder my health and my marriage survived," he says. Eventually he and his department chair developed a method to clarify expectations and regularly assess whether he was tracking.

Type A's are often successful, motivated, Strube says — they choose situations in which they feel they offer challenge rather than comfort, that require sensitivity to the environment, and that allow them a fair amount of autonomy. They frequently attain distinction in their fields and the professions. But it is information that drives them, he says.

Strube argues that Type A subjects who are hindered in assessing

Memorial service for Herbert Spiegelberg

A memorial service will be held at 3 p.m. on Sept. 25 in Steinberg Hall at the Busch Campus of Washington University, Box 1070, One Brookings Dr., St. Louis, Mo., 63130. Memorial contributions may be made to the Washington University Office of Development, Campus Box 1073, One Brookings Dr., St. Louis, Mo., 63130.

N.Y., and Lynne Morgan of Fairfield, Conn., and three grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held at 5 p.m. on Sept. 22 at the Friends Meeting House, 2539 Rockford Ave., Rock Hill, Mo. Contributions for the Annual Herbert Spiegelberg Lectureship were given to Washington University, Department of Philosophy, Campus Box 1073, One Brookings Dr., St. Louis, Mo., 63130.

Editors

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Mailing list for Medical Record: send to: Office, Washington University, Box 8037, 660 S. Kirkland, St. Louis, Mo. 63144.
Nicholas C. Burckel, Ph.D., associate dean of University Libraries, served as chair and commentator for a session on “Differing Perspectives of the Role of the Archives in Academic Research Libraries” at the American Historical Association's Annual Conference held in Chicago. He also contributed a chapter to a new reference manual, the Handbook of American Women's History. The editors of this comprehensive guide to scholarly research and general expertise. University Libraries and the University of Chicago, three institutions noted for their leadership in the preservation and intellectual process for American women. In addition, Burckel wrote an article for The Midwest Archivist titled “The National Historical Publications and Access Services Program: An Update on the Archival Assessment Reports in Historical Publications.”

Susan Crawford, Ph.D., professor of biomedical communication and director of the medical school library communication, center, has been awarded a distinguishable appointment in the Academy of Health Information and Technology of the Medical Library Association. The recognition reflects the recipient’s achievement level in the profession of health sciences librarianship designated by the Academy.

Cornell H. Fleisher, Ph.D., professor of history, presented three papers, “Precolonial and Decolonization in Otolaryngology,” at an international confer- ence held in Munich; “Centralization and Decentralization in the Ottoman, Safavid, and Moghul Empires,” sponsored by the Institut für Kultur und Geschichte des Nahen Orients der Universität of Munich; and “The Reign of Justinian: The Last Days of the Roman Empire” at the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Empire at the Free University of Berlin.

Marvin E. Levin, M.D., professor of clinical medicine, was presented with the Silver Needle Award by the American Diabetes Association, Missouri Affiliate, in honor of his many years of service in the fight against diabetes. He also recently served as a visiting professor of medicine at the University of Calgary in Alberta, Canada, and also at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, where he becomes interested in diabetic vascular disease and the problems of the diabetic foot.

Charles R. McManis, J.D., professor of law, has been named a fellow of the American College of Trial Attorneys. The College bestows upon members attorney general in the construction of a just and correct administration and enforcement of those laws that the College believes to be of the utmost importance to the administration of justice in our society. He is also an active member of several other organizations, including the American Bar Association, the American Law Institute, and the American Society for Law and Medicine.
**Lectures**

**Sept. 13-22**

**7:30 and 9:30 p.m. Filmboard Selections**. Features raw works by Beckman, a New York-based artist, and selected works by other artists from the University's permanent collection, including works by William Beckman, Duncker Hall, Chamber of Art, Steinberg Hall, upper gallery. 1977-1981. Graham Chapel. For more info., call 889-6530.

**Wednesday, Sept. 19**


4 p.m. Dept. of Chemistry Seminar by James Banks, Maryland. School of Medicine, St. Louis. Department of Chemistry. Room 101 Lupata Hall. (A reception for former WU mathematics dept. chair Robert H. McDowell will be held at 5:30 p.m. in the Lupata Hall Gallery.)

8 p.m. English Dept. Poetry Reading by Andrew Hudson. Dept. of English, U. of Cincinnati, and author, Saints and Sinners and After the War. Duncker Lounge. For more info., call 889-5190.

Friday, Sept. 14

**4 p.m. University Biology Seminar. "Regulation of Rhodental Gene Transcription." Iain Brandt, Dept. of Biology, University of Virginia. Department of Biology. Room 775 McDonnell Medical Sciences Bldg.

4 p.m. Dept. of Music Lecture Demonstration on the Performance of 20th century Vocal Music by Robert Steele. Emerson Hall. For more info., call 889-5574.

Monday, Sept. 17

4 p.m. Dept. of Chemistry Seminar. "Recent Developments in the Biocatalysis of Carbohydrates and Related Compounds." John D. Roberts, Nat. Inst. of Health. Department of Chemistry. Room 101 Lupata Hall. (A reception for former WU mathematics dept. chair Robert H. McDowell will be held at 5:30 p.m. in the Lupata Hall Gallery.)

5 p.m. Dept. of Germanic Languages and Literatures. "Nazi Propaganda and the Other." Karen Knorr, Konrad, Konrad lawyer and human rights activist. Room 200, G. and E. Floyd Hall. For more info., call 889-9625.


**Tuesday, Sept. 18**


Wednesday, Sept. 19


4 p.m. Dept. of Chemistry Seminar. "Chemistry of Tungsten-Iron Alloys specifically Designed Surfaces." Mary Anne Draper, Dept. of Chemistry, University of Texas-Austin. Department of Chemistry. Room 101 Lupata Hall. (A reception for former WU mathematics dept. chair Robert H. McDowell will be held at 5:30 p.m. in the Lupata Hall Gallery.)

5 p.m. Dept. of English Poetry Reading by Robert Steele. Emerson Hall. For more info., call 889-5190.

Thursday, Sept. 20

4 p.m. Dept. of Chemistry Seminar by Robert Bige, Syracuse U. 311 McNair Laboratory. For more info., call 889-6630.

Friday, Sept. 21


Noon. American Student Medical Society.

Noon. American Student Medical Society.


Tuesday, Sept. 25

7 and 9:30 p.m. Filmboard Selections. "Silent Night," Swedish film with subtitles. $5. Room 100 Brown Hall.

Friday, Sept. 27

7 p.m. Filmboard Selections. "Sex, Lies, and Videotape." (Also Sat., Sept. 15, same time and place.) $5. Room 100 Brown Hall.

Monday, Sept. 30

7:30 p.m. Filmboard Selections. "A Dry, Harlem Kind of Passion." (Also Tues., Sept. 18, same time and place.) $5. Room 100 Brown Hall.

Tuesday, Oct. 1


Wednesday, Oct. 2


Friday, Oct. 4

**4:30 p.m. Filmboard Selections**. Includes services, dinner and program on "Personal Reflections on Judaism" by venture capitalist, Hilte Field, 6900 Puevy Blvd. For more info., call 889-6620.

**Saturday, Sept. 15**

1:30 p.m. Football, WU vs. Case Western Reserve U. Friedman Field. For more info., call 889-5070.

Saturday, Sept. 15

The law school will issue three credits to attorneys who attend and make reservations or for info., call 993-5505.

Calendar Deadline

The deadline to submit items for the Sept. 27-Oct. 7 calendar of the Washington University Record is Sept. 14, at 5 p.m. Items should include the state time, date, place, nature of event, sponsor and admission cost. Incomplete items will not be printed. If available, include speaker's name address, and the title of the event; also include your name and telephone number. Send proposals to Andrew Cox, calendar editor, Box 1070, or by electronic mail to p72245AC at WUNX.

**End of the Record**