

extroverted to nearly reclusive, from easygoing to controlling, from generous to parsimonious.” But what they all had in common was adherence to eight simple rules:

1) *Ask*, “*What needs to be done?*”—not “*What do I want to do?*” The effective executives concentrated on the most urgent task (or, at most, on the two most urgent tasks). When it was completed, they didn’t move on to the next task on the list; they drew up a new list.

2) *Ask*, “*What is right for the enterprise?*”—not, “*What is right for the owners (or the stock price, the employees, or the executives)?*” A decision that is not right for the whole enterprise ultimately won’t be right for any of its stakeholders.

3) *Develop action plans*. But the plans should be statements of intention, not strait-jackets, and they should be revised often.

4) *Take responsibility for decisions*. Make sure that everyone knows who’s affected, who needs to be informed, and who’s accountable. “One of my clients, 30 years ago, lost its leadership position in the fast-growing Japanese market because the company . . . never made clear who was to inform the purchasing agents” that its new partner defined specifications in meters and kilograms, not feet and pounds. Effective executives

also review their decisions periodically, including those about hiring and promoting. When the latter decisions prove wrong, the executives should acknowledge that *they*, not the employees, are at fault—and then they should remove the employees from the positions.

5) *Take responsibility for communicating*. Share action plans with all colleagues, and ask for comments.

6) *Focus on opportunities rather than problems*. Problem solving, however necessary, merely prevents damage. Change brings opportunities, and exploiting opportunities produces results.

7) *Run productive meetings*, and recognize that follow-up activity is no less important than the meetings. Alfred Sloan (1875-1966), the longtime head of General Motors and “the most effective business executive I have ever known,” understood this well. It was through his postmeeting memos, summarizing the discussion and conclusions and spelling out any work assignments, that he made himself so outstandingly effective.

8) *Think and say “we,” rather than “I.”* The rule is not as simple as it sounds, and it needs to be strictly observed.

And one more rule (a bonus): *Listen first, speak last.*

SOCIETY

A Mixed Verdict on Brown

A Survey of Recent Articles

When the Supreme Court issued its landmark school desegregation ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* 50 years ago this past May, liberals enthusiastically hailed the decision and conservatives deplored what they regarded as the Court’s reckless judicial activism. A half-century later, there’s been a remarkable reversal: Many liberals now disparage *Brown*’s significance, and many conservatives applaud the Court’s action.

In unanimously finding state-sponsored school segregation unconstitutional, the justices in 1954 had to substitute their own moral convictions for the guidance they

would normally have found in the text of the Constitution and subsequent Court interpretations of it. Their ruling had the unfortunate effect of encouraging the “abandonment of constitutional reasoning,” writes conservative commentator George Will in *The Washington Post* (May 16, 2004). But it also had the salutary effect of accelerating “the process of bringing this creedal nation into closer conformity to its creed.”

Gerald Rosenberg, of the University of Chicago Law School, writing in the American Political Science Association’s *PS* (April 2004), insists that *Brown* actually accomplished “not very much.” The “all deliberate speed” with



National Guard troops escort a student to class at a desegregated school in Sturgis, Kentucky, in September 1956.

which desegregation was ordered to take place proved not very speedy at all. A decade later, “virtually nothing had changed” for southern black students: Their schools were still segregated. Change did come eventually—two decades after *Brown*, 46.3 percent of black students in the South were attending white-majority schools—but only after the 1964 Civil Rights Act and other actions by Congress and the executive branch. It wasn’t action by the courts that led to desegregation, Rosenberg maintains.

Attempts to end de facto segregation elsewhere in the nation “were less successful,” and they came to a halt in the mid-1970s, when, among other developments, resistance to forced busing “reached a fever pitch,” says Leo Casey, a former inner-city high school teacher in Brooklyn, New York, writing in *Dissent* (Winter 2004). More recently, “there has been a trend toward resegregation.” In the nation as a whole, about 33 percent of black students were in “intensely segregated” schools

(i.e., those whose student population was at least 90 percent non-Anglo) in 1988; that figure has since risen to 37 percent. In the South, the 44 percent of black students in white-majority schools in 1988 has fallen to 31 percent. “To a degree that few would have predicted a half-century ago, courts, communities, and civil rights advocates have all largely accommodated to racially segregated schooling,” Christopher H. Foreman, Jr., a professor in the University of Maryland’s School of Public Affairs, observes, also in *PS*.

Brown is “a testament not just to the reaches but also to the limits of judicial action,” says Neal Devins, a law professor at the College of William and Mary, writing in *PS*. The Court’s ruling also owed less to the “masterful” litigation strategy pursued for decades by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People than it did to “good timing”: Seven years after

Jackie Robinson desegregated major-league baseball, and six years after President Harry Truman ordered the armed forces and the federal civil service desegregated, the attitudes of many white Americans had changed. Only one third of white adults opposed segregated education in 1942; slightly more than half opposed it by the time of *Brown*. The popular verdict on the ruling: 54 percent approved, 41 percent did not.

The “major value” of *Brown*, writes Derrick Bell, a visiting professor at New York University Law School, in one of several articles on the decision in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (April 2, 2004), may be that it provoked white resistance—violent and well publicized—in Birmingham, Alabama, and elsewhere. The violence “appalled many who otherwise would have remained on the sidelines.” It wasn’t *Brown* that produced the Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act, says Bell, author of *Silent Covenants*, a new book on *Brown*; it was thousands of courageous black

and white demonstrators. For Bell and other disenchanted liberals, the lesson is that advocates of racial justice should rely less on judicial decisions and more on political activism. Because of the continuing resistance to “any but minimal steps toward compliance,” writes Bell, *Brown* is now only “a magnificent mirage, the legal equivalent of that city on a hill to which all aspire without any serious thought that it will ever be attained.”

But to Richard Kluger, author of *Simple Justice*, a classic narrative history of *Brown* first published in 1976 and reissued this year, the historic importance of the decision remains clear. “At the least,” he writes in the *Chronicle*, “we can say it brought to an end more than three centuries of an officially sanctioned mindset embracing white supremacy and excusing a massive and often pitiless oppression.”

The New Border Wars

“The Hispanic Challenge” by Samuel P. Huntington, and replies, in *Foreign Policy* (March–April and May–June 2004), 1779 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

In 2000, Mexican immigrants made up some 27.6 percent of the total foreign-born population in the United States, and Hispanics overall constituted 12 percent of the total U.S. population. Perhaps, in this nation of immigrants, these facts don’t come as much of a shock. But political scientist Huntington, Harvard University professor and author of *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996) and *Who Are We?* (2004), writes in the March–April issue of *Foreign Policy* that the “immense and continuing immigration from Latin America, especially from Mexico, and the fertility rates of these immigrants” represent “the single most immediate and most serious challenge to America’s traditional identity.”

Marshaling his figures, Huntington suggests that the Hispanics who began to settle in the United States in the 1960s are unlike previous waves of immigrants: They reject “the Anglo-Protestant values that built the American dream.” Because they come from nearby, many only “visit” the United States to earn money and then return to their home countries; even those who stay tend to concentrate in cloistered communities and not become part of the society at large. As an example, Huntington cites the “enclave city” of Miami—the “most Hispanic large city in the 50 U.S. states.” Faced with the influence of the powerful Cuban-American community, 140,000 Anglos left the city in the decade between 1983 and 1993; by 2000, some 65 percent of the city’s residents spoke Spanish at home. Huntington wonders whether the present state of affairs in Miami is also “the future for Los

Angeles and the southwest United States,” where many of the new immigrants have settled.

Because so many Hispanics do not join the societal mainstream, and because their fertility rate is high (3.0 live births per women of childbearing age, compared to 1.8 for whites and 2.1 for blacks), Huntington fears that, both passively and actively, they will weaken the bedrock Anglo-Protestant culture: the English language, the work ethic, “English concepts of the rule of law . . . and dissenting Protestant values of individualism.” Though increasing numbers of Hispanics arrive in the United States each year, Huntington concludes that they will share the American dream “only if they dream in English.”

In the May–June issue of *Foreign Policy*, critics of Huntington’s views were quick to take exception. “The insistence that American culture is ‘Anglo-Protestant’ is not only offensive but false,” says Roger Daniels, an emeritus professor of history at the University of Cincinnati. Addressing Huntington’s fear of a language divide, Roberto Suro, director of the Pew Hispanic Center, invokes data showing that, among immigrant Latinos, “the transition from Spanish to English is virtually completed in one generation.” As for a cultural division, Tamar Jacoby, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, insists that “we have never demanded that newcomers adopt any particular cultural habits, Anglo-Protestant or otherwise. As long as they adopt our ideas about freedom, tolerance, and equality before the law, we have left them to do as they please in the private sphere.”