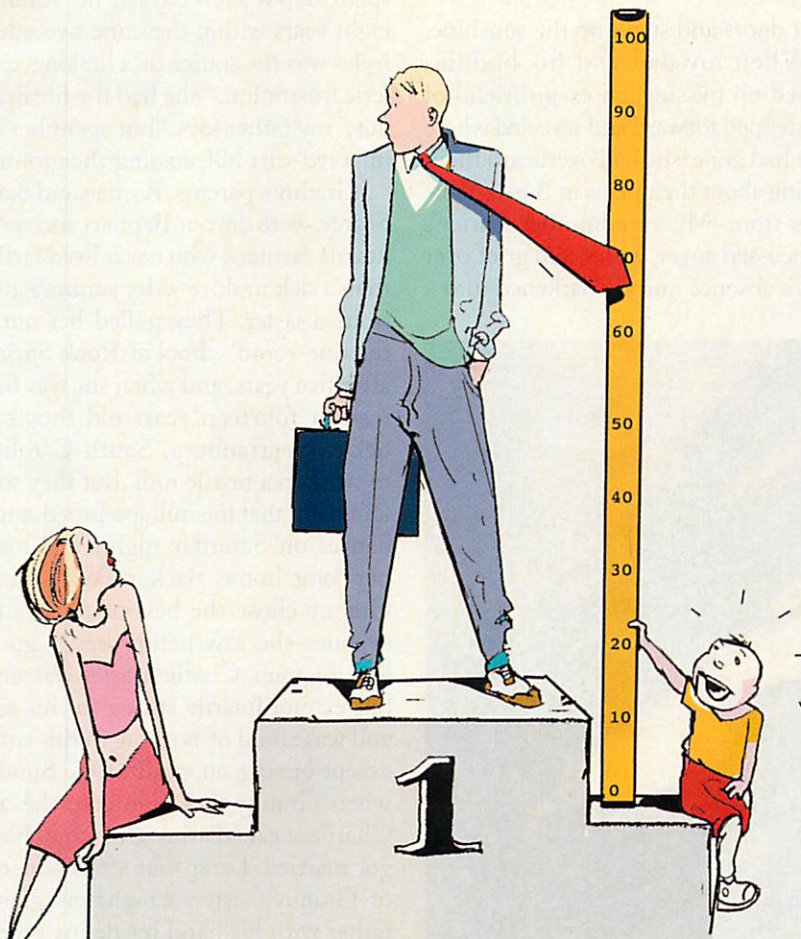


HOW I'M DOING

BY DAVID OWEN



In the hope of establishing a more equitable framework by which the public can evaluate my effectiveness as a father, husband, friend, and worker, I am pleased to announce that the methodology heretofore used in measuring my performance is being revised. Beginning tomorrow, my reputation and compensation will no longer be based on year-long, cumulative assessments of my attainments but will instead be derived from periodic samplings of defined duration, or “sweeps.”

From now on, ratings of my success as a parent will be based solely on perceptions of my conduct during the two weeks beginning March 7th (a.k.a. “spring vacation”), the two weeks beginning August 1st (a.k.a. “summer vacation”), the

seven days ending December 25th, and my birthday. No longer will my ranking be affected by unsolicited anecdotal reports from minors concerning my alleged “cheapness,” “strictness,” and “loser” qualities, or by the contents of viewing diaries maintained by my dependents. Page views, click-throughs, and People Meter data concerning me will also be disregarded, except during the aforementioned periods. The opinions of my children will no longer be counted in evaluations of my sense of humor.

Public appraisals of my behavior at parties will henceforth not be drawn from overnight ratings provided by my wife; instead, my annual ranking will be based on a random sampling of my level of intoxication during the week follow-

ing January 2nd. My official weight for the year will be my median weight during the four weeks beginning July 1st. All measures of my geniality, thoughtfulness, romantic disposition, and willingness to compromise will henceforth be calculated just three times per year: on September 15th (my wife’s birthday), August 26th (our anniversary), and February 14th. My high-school grades, S.A.T. scores, college grades, and income history will no longer be available for inclusion in any of my ratings, and in fact they will be expunged from my personal database. Evaluations of my success as a stock-market investor will no longer include the performance of my portfolio during the month of October.

Beginning in 2001, my annual compensation will cease to consist of my total income over the twelve months of the fiscal year; instead, my yearly pay will be adjusted to equal not less than thirteen times my nominal gross earnings during the four weeks beginning February 1st, when the holiday season is over, my children are back in school, and my local golf course has not yet reopened for the spring. My critics may object that my output during February is not representative of my output during the rest of the year, especially when I am at the beach. However, I believe (and my auditors concur) that the work I do during periods of cold, miserable weather provides the best available indication of my actual abilities as a worker and therefore constitutes the only fair and objective basis for calculating my true contribution to the economy. Conversely, my federal income-tax liability will henceforth be based on an annualized computation of my total earnings between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

These changes are being made as a part of my ongoing effort to insure that public data concerning me and my personality are the very best available. This new protocol may be further modified by me at any time without advance notice, and, in any case, is not legally binding. In addition, all assessments of my performance are subject to later revision, as improved information becomes available. Specifically, my lifetime ratings in all categories may be posthumously adjusted, within thirty days of my death, to reflect the content of newspaper obituaries regarding me, should any such be published, and the things that people say about me at my funeral. ♦