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Here is a great article by Danny Dunn about being diligent in to be punctual in attending and handling meetings. Remember that one of the primary places leaders lead is by example.

How to Avoid Lateness Because Lateness is Lack *by Danny Dunn*

Proverbs 12:24 *The hand of the diligent will rule*



As an employee, employer, leader, follower and, perhaps most telling, the father of teen agers I find myself waiting on others. While this is a common occurrence and is a tremendous tool to develop patience and perseverance, I don't want to address those virtuous side effects. I want to address the core lack that lateness reveals.

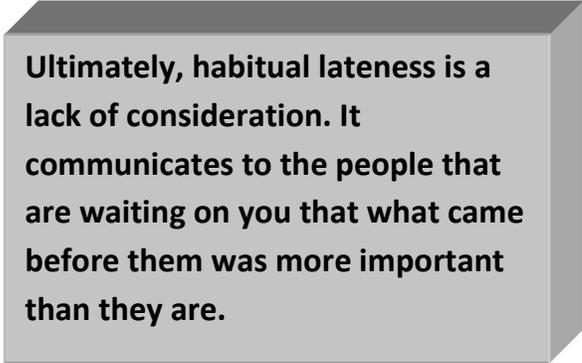
Some will argue that solid time management techniques and planning will solve this. Some will note that saying "no" is the key because in doing this you are saying "yes" to what's important. Others will point out that being overtired is leading to a lack of focus that makes you unable to work at your best. When it comes to showing up when you say you are going to I would say that each of these are symptoms at best and, more accurately, simply excuses we tell ourselves and others.

I was waiting to see a VP at a Fortune 500 company and he was late to the meeting. We were negotiating a large contract and this was going to be our final pitch. We had a full hour of the executives time to review the good work we had done with his team and

communicate the value of our solution to his company. The top of the hour passed and we waited. 10 minutes went by and we waited. Another 10 minutes went by and we began to txt our contacts to ask what was going on. None of them responded and finally after waiting for over 25 minutes, the executive came in the room and said we had only 15 minutes because he had other meetings that were pressing. What was of critical importance to us was not important to him and we knew it. In his view, his time was better spent elsewhere and we knew it. We were not as important as we thought we were, and we knew it. This is a great negotiating tactic that can result in professional paranoia on the part of any sales professional. It was intentional and had the desired result. We were reminded that we were not valued partners in his view but just another supplier.

I think about that often whenever I am late for a meeting with someone. What does my absence communicate and is that the message I wanted to send?

Ultimately, habitual lateness is a lack of consideration. It communicates to the people that are waiting on you that what came before them was more important than they are. They were not worthy of the foresight required for you to be present when you should have been. The problem with this ugly perspective is that it is true and everyone knows it. There are meetings that are more important than others and acknowledging that is somewhat liberating. The key is to ensure that you acknowledge that yourself and build your schedule accordingly.



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- ***Philippians 2:2-8 CEV*** Now make me completely happy! Live in harmony by showing love for each other. Be united in what you think, as if you were only one person. (3) Don't be jealous or proud, but be humble and consider others more important than yourselves. (4) Care about them as much as you care about yourselves (5) and think the same way that Christ Jesus thought.

The real challenge comes in when you enter a room that has people waiting and you have evidence that **it wasn't another critical meeting that delayed you but your own preference**. I have seen leaders sipping a fresh Starbucks as they walk 10 minutes late into a room full of people that were diligent and respectfully on time. They made sacrifices to be there when they said they would be and for coffee to be the thing that wasted all of their time is insulting. Fortunately, people are forgiving and understanding

but it sends the wrong message, sets the wrong precedent and devalues the time of the group. My favorite is when someone shows up late to a meeting in a major metropolitan area (Chicago, Southern California or the Bay Area etc) and says “Wow! Traffic was bad today, sorry I'm late” Everyone else in the room is thinking “I had to battle the same traffic to get here so what makes you special?”.

Lateness is not just a lack of consideration for other, it is a lack of respect for yourself.

Your personal ethos or code that you live your life by must be one that holds yourself accountable to your commitments. Being faithful in small things, like being on time, helps to cement that you will be faithful in larger matters. Responsibility and accountability are key leadership traits that engender trust from others. Many flaws that are apparent in leaders can be, and often are, forgiven by their followers and that is a necessary thing. Leaders are, after all, human. The point I am trying to make is that every action a leader takes communicates value and reinforces culture to the people around them. Make sure you value others and yourself enough to get the little things right.

Some tips to help avoid lateness:

- **Start early** - Give yourself a cushion for traffic or personal needs.
- **Look ahead** - See the faces of the people you are meeting and it will hard to keep them waiting.
- **Build in Margins** - Build in space to breathe between meetings so you can come fresh to the next thing.
- **Give Back** - Only allow a meeting to last as long as it has to and give people time back when you can.
- **Watch the clock** - keep pace in your meeting and help drive urgency by calling attention to the time when the current meeting drifts.

Check it out and sign up



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