

DTD Episode 88 Show Notes

6 Key Causes of Chronic Lateness and How to Overcome Them

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Are you one of those chronologically challenged people? The ones constantly running into meetings exclaiming "sorry", as you move to find a seat? Or, do your friends and family just roll their eyes as you explain, once again that "traffic was terrible" or "I got lost" as you maneuver your way through the group?

Tardiness creates drama and is a sign of disrespect. And don't underestimate the negative impact that chronic lateness creates! You need to do all in your power to be on time! I have coached people with this affliction and found varied reasons for it.

Here are some of the main culprits I've helped clients overcome. Do you struggle with any of these? As always, get real. You have to acknowledge something before you can change it.

1. You don't gauge time well. You aren't realistic about how long things will take or how much travel time is required.
2. You get lost in a current task and time slips away. You look up to see that there is zero possibility of arriving on time.
3. You like to seem important and arriving late to a meeting or gathering proves that you have many things on your plate. People should just appreciate that you've blessed them with your presence at all.
4. You are completely disorganized with your calendar and have no idea what's on it or when. It has totally gotten away from you.

5. You don't say no appropriately so are constantly overscheduled. Maybe you don't even bother to check before you say yes yet again. You'd feel bad saying no. You'll just figure it out later.
6. You just don't care. You are a Type B personality to the Nth degree. You'll get there when you get there. You have no idea why so many people let time rule their lives.

Unless you are of the just don't care variety you are probably experiencing drama yourself as you try to maneuver through a too full calendar. If you're the ego later your stress might be in finding things to do to continually appear busy.

And the people who are waiting for you are feeling stress. If you are an important part of the meeting you may be wasting everyone's time. They can't finalize a conversation or make a decision without you and have to wait and then spend additional time summarizing what's already happened. Or, your family and friends held up dinner or waited to cut the cake or started without you but missed your presence once again.

It's a sign of disrespect too. You are saying that you are more important than other people. Anyone can be late for a meeting or can over schedule. It takes intentional action to avoid it.

When I work with leaders who are chronically late I give them these strategies.

1. You don't gage time well: Reality check your time estimates. Create your initial estimate and then tack on some extra time. If you have repeating tasks keep track so that you have a reference for next time. Have a colleague or friend who is notoriously on time review your estimates. Or, if you have an admin give them more control over your schedule.

For travel times add 10 to 15 minutes additional for every half an hour the

travel should take. If you're in an area with extra heavy traffic or it's rush hour you will need to tack on more. And make sure to factor in time to get into the building. If you have to hit the 20th floor you'll need time to park in a large lot or structure, wait for the elevator and take the ride up. Getting places early feels REALLY good! I'm an efficiency junky and also a freak about being on time. How do I deal with the extra time I have when arriving early? I always travel with portable, quick tasks to do. I can still be efficient with my time without the stress of running just on time or late.

2. You get lost in a current task and time slips away: if this is you there's a super quick fix. Just set an alarm on your phone. Determine what time you need to be done, pick a catchy tune, utilize the self discipline to stop when you need to and you've got it.
3. You like to seem important: get over yourself. The truth is, everyone in that meeting or event had many other things they could have been doing with their time too. You don't look busy and important you just look rude.

It is way more impressive to juggle many things well. Be intentional about what you commit to and follow through on your word.

I remember the year I was getting married. I was a single mom, business owner, Board member and helping to start a non-profit. I made it to my kids' activities and arrived early to all of my professional commitments while still managing to plan a wedding. I said no where I needed to and honored the commitments I made by juggling my calendar. You can get a lot done while still respecting yourself and others!

4. You are completely disorganized with your calendar: Find a system that works and stick to it. If you have an admin who can own this for you give up the fight. Or, perhaps he or she is the one creating the chaos by overbooking you. If this is the case, get in control. Create specific rules about the number of appointments, after work obligations, breakfast

meeting per week, etc. And then, get in the habit of checking it before you add anything to it. And you must check it throughout each day or at least first thing in the morning. And, again, be intentional about to what you commit.

Years ago when I was just starting my business I did struggle with this a little bit. I had been a stay at home mom for a few years with just a few play dates and an occasional pediatrician appointment on the calendar during the day. I remember missing a very important phone conference call. It was the very early stages when I still maybe had one meeting to track every couple of weeks. I was not yet back in the habit of checking my calendar everyday nor keeping track of time for anything other than nap or snack times. I had to re-learn. That one miss and I was back on track!

5. You don't say no appropriately so are constantly overscheduled: focus on the stress and overwhelm this causes in your life. You need to build the motivation to start saying no appropriately.

Here's one strategy I teach. Buy yourself time by telling someone you need to check your calendar. You should be doing that anyway! This will give a quick phrase to help you breathe and be intentional.

6. You just don't care. If this is you, you need to find a way to care or you will never be motivated to change. Since being late is probably not causing you any stress can you think about what it's doing to other people? Are they feeling disappointment or stress? Can you think back to important events you've missed? Have you lost any jobs or professional opportunities? Have any of your relationships been negatively impacted?

If you can muster the motivation then you can deploy some of the strategies I've included here.

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