

Practically applying the character quality of

Cautiousness

vs. Rashness

"Knowing how important right timing is in accomplishing right actions."

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The Safety Killer

Have you ever noticed how little compromises almost always work? Have you ever taken a short cut on a job that only broke a small rule and found it to save you time and money? Have you ever done something you would normally consider unsafe only to find that it worked out and saved time? If each of us was honest, we would probably have to answer yes to one or more of those questions. However, making them a habit is what leads to major accidents, serious error, and damaging miscalculations. Cautiousness helps to avoid the trap of little compromises because it instills an understanding that big compromise is what follows. Short-term gratification and rash decision making are precursors to catastrophe. Right actions may require more time and preparation, but they will lead to long-term success.

Be a Skeptic

A wise man once said, "A little wariness prevents great weariness." Great vision is only achieved by careful planning and preparation. Sometimes, in the midst of this process, the vision is found to be too lofty or in need of refinement. When you treat even your own ideas with skepticism, you save heartache in the future by eliminating unwise ideas and fine-tuning your good ones. You can then focus your enthusiasm on a vision that is no longer just smoke and mirrors, but rather one that is achievable and worth your time, resources and enthusiasm.

The Yellow Light

When approaching an intersection, you may be confronted with a yellow light. You are suddenly faced with several choices. Do you brake and come to a stop? Is the vehicle behind you ready to do the same? Are you travelling at a speed that requires you to continue through the light, even

Commitment to Cautiousness

- I will think before I act
- I will follow safety rules
- I will talk at the right time
- I will look out for danger
- I will ask permission

accelerating? Each of these decisions requires cautiousness, and they all apply to circumstances in the workplace. You may be faced with a big decision and a number of cautions or "yellow lights." This does not always mean that you should stop. What is required is a careful examination of what is going on around the circumstance. Just like in your car, applying cautiousness may require you to accelerate. Don't balk at a yellow light. Remain focused on your goal until you are faced with red.

Balance Cautiousness

Cautiousness has often been the word used to excuse simple laziness. As we have just discussed, right timing may require more action and more work. Cautiousness should not be used as a cop-out.

In the same way, we need to communicate our application of cautiousness in such a way that we don't appear to be either lazy or rash. This may require more explanation to those who want to rush ahead or to those who want to hold you back. Although we don't want to become controlled by perceptions, it is important that we take them into consideration so that, when the project is complete, everyone involved will feel that their cautions were heeded and applied whenever possible.

Seek right timing in right actions in your workplace and in your personal life. The extra time it takes is time well spent.

How CAUTIOUS are you?

- Do you ask for counsel from wise and experienced people?
- Do you learn from the mistakes of others (and from the ones that you make yourself)?
- Do you think about results or consequences of what you are going to say before you speak?
- Do you consider how your actions will affect others?
- Do you consider the timing for doing a good deed?
- Do you plan ahead and count the cost?