

Character Council of Indiana

PUNCTUALITY* VS. *TARDINESS

“Showing esteem for others by doing the right thing at the right time.”

How punctual are you towards others?

- Do you arrive punctually for mealtimes and other family gatherings?
- Do you arrive early at your place of employment?
- Do you keep appointments that you make with others?
- Do you promptly pay your bills?
- Do you write thank-you letters and notes in a timely fashion?
- Do you punctually return books and other items that you borrow?
- Do you fulfill the promises you have made to others?

Punctuality commitment:

- I will be at the right place at the right time
- I will prepare for unexpected delays
- I will plan a daily schedule and keep it.
- I will not fall into the trap of “just one more.”

Do you have talent, charm, and experience, but find that people do not recommend you? Do you struggle to be at early morning meetings on time? Does your family tell you a meeting time earlier than the actual time, so that you will show up on time? Do you struggle to meet deadlines? If so, you may be struggling with the character quality of Punctuality – Showing esteem for others by doing the right thing at the right time.

What does it take for a businessman or woman to be referable? Four simple ideas have proven effective. Yet, surprisingly, bright people fail to develop these habits, and this results in a lack of business referrals:

1. Show up on time
2. Do what you say you will do
3. Finish what you start
4. Say please and thank you.

Numbers one and three are tied to punctuality. Not only do referable people show up on time, they also finish on time. All of us must overcome obstacles to begin and end on time.

For the riders of the Pony Express, being on time was more than clocking in on time; punctuality was a fight to win the battle. Significant obstacles including distance, terrain, weather, bandits, and Indian attacks often stood in the way of winning the battle. Pony Express riders determined to overcome every obstacle to be on time every time as they carried news across the nation.

Schedules are key to punctuality, however they are only as good as those who keep them. A schedule is to time what a budget is to money. Both schedules and budgets are guides for resource management. They indicate how much time or money is available for a given task or purchase. Budgets remind us that overspending in one area means sacrificing in others. The same is true for schedules. Time must be guarded even more closely than money. Once time is spent, it is gone forever.

If you are a leader overwhelmed by demands on your time and find it difficult if not impossible to be punctual, consider these solutions:

1. Delegate – things that you may like to do, but should not be doing
2. Simplify – Learn how to streamline and avoid unnecessary complexity.
3. Prioritize – Focus on uniqueness and delegate everything else.
4. Say no – Be willing to say no and balance your availability.

Learn how to value people and relationships. At the same time balance punctuality by not being impatient, inflexible, or impolite to people who cause you to be late.