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Clarify Commitment

When I started my first company, one of my mentors, Dick Morgal, discussed the word 'commitment' with me. Although I was relatively new to business that word became a vital element in my understanding of human values. He had noticed some of the people who worked with me were a bit casual about sticking to their word or following through on their promises. I too was casual about things like being on time. So we talked about this characteristic in people's behavior.

He explained: "Being on time means 15 minutes early for an appointment." I argued with him initially, but soon understood what he meant. I thought being so early was extreme. Then one of my international colleagues, Duncan Ehlers, reinforced this idea by saying:

"When we are early we control the situation. When we are late or just on time, the situation controls us."



This does not mean we need to be control freaks. It just means we give ourselves a chance of being able to present ourselves at our very best rather than worrying about the uncertainties that crop up when we are in a frenzied rush. Personally, this was a huge challenge for me because I often like to push the envelope by challenging myself to be just in time to fit in one last task before moving on to the next obligation. These two wise men impressed on me that being late for appointments is disrespectful and shows the other party we don't care much for them. It's arrogant.

I didn't want to be disrespectful or arrogant. Initially I just didn't understand the effect that it had on others so I cleaned up my act immediately.

Another insight struck me. Not following through on my word could cause anxiety in others because lack of consistency evokes a sense of distrust which could erode their belief in me.

No way can we be credible in any relationships without people trusting us, so we are not talking about a choice. This is an absolute certainly in the English speaking world, because this is one of the ways we value professionalism.

AHA Moments...

- Test this idea – “When we are early we control the situation. When we are late or just on time, the situation controls us.”
- Never forget – “Our credibility in any relationship is built on trust.”



*We don't quit playing because we get old.
We get old because we quit playing.*

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

