

Popular Threads on Solosez

Timeliness – Give Me Some Advice!

So the morning started out normally, but then my husband tells me he is sick and so I am suddenly having to drive the little Bubba to daycare then hopping the train to get to a conference downtown and of course getting a little lost on the way to the station because I had never driven to the one closest to daycare....ugh. I just hope the coffee is left out at the conference so I can grab some and then register at break and I wish I could be one of those always punctual people!!

I am almost always on time, meaning I arrive with a whole minute to spare. Other times I am late, but not enough to be noticeable, and other days (like this morning) I run into unexpected circumstances and am really late.

I would appreciate advice from people who are naturally timely or even better, who have trained themselves to be timely!

Amy Kleinpeter, Pasadena California

When it comes to being on time for Court, I figure out how long it *should* take to get there (including parking and walking to the courtroom) and then double it. I'd rather be there early and have a cup of tea than be scrambling and stressed.

My \$.02

Scott I. Barer

Our children come first! People get sick. Crap happens. You're doing the best you can in a difficult situation. Motherhood is an adventure! Enjoy the ride.

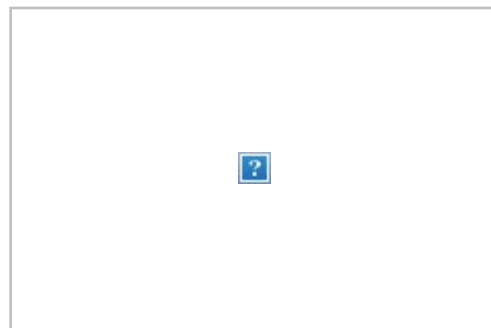
Said by the father of twinswho survived.

Bruce Dorner, Londonderry, New Hampshire

Things happen unexpectedly. You cope and move on. When sudden emergencies come up, deal with it best you can and then discard any (unrealistic) expectations that it doesn't impact your schedule or things somehow "should have" been better.

With regard to scheduling, for hearings I may be an hour early. Better than the alternative of being late or missing a docket call. Locally, getting to the courthouse at 7:45 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. for an 8:30 a.m. or 9:00 a.m. hearing is prudent planning, meaning I don't get caught up in the same traffic patterns. This especially includes the crunch of going through the detectors and inspection at the courthouse in a pack of 200 other lawyers.

For CLE or other events, I do not always arrive as early. Planning to



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allow time for things to go wrong means that you are quite early at times. Having something to do while waiting becomes of import.

Darrell G. Stewart, San Antonio, Texas

If you can, build in an extra 30 to 60 mins. to your appointments to allow for unusual circumstances, like your morning today. If your schedule says to be somewhere at 11 AM, and you plan around that, when something out of the ordinary happens, then you're going to be late. However, do not get to the point where your life controls you, because, life happens, stuff is going to come up that you can't control. If other folks can't handle it, not much you can do about that.

In other words, do the best you can, and get everything in perspective.

Tom Simchak, Houston, Texas

When it comes to court appearances, conferences, motion dockets and the like, I early on developed and nourished a sense of fear (amounting to dread) of being late--fed by the observation of a**-chewing of other attorneys by judges (some of whom enjoy a reputation as petty tyrants).

Dick O'Connor

Anytime I have to arrive at some place, even my own office, for an appointment, I schedule my arrival for 1/2 hour earlier. This is usually possible, unless on the off chance that ONE day's schedule cannot be controlled beforehand, but this is extremely rare. That way, I can settle down, focus, and study the environment. With any remaining time, I can check voicemail messages and my commitments for later in the day.

If meeting at a client's premises and I don't want to walk in early, I stroll the area, which for me is usually a business district, and try to learn more about it. Last week, I handed out two business cards to two people whom I met on my "way to waiting." One guy commented on my [frankly] brilliant parallel parking job, which left both tires within four inches of the curb in a very tight spot. I told him that since I was from NJ I had a genetic predisposition to being a good parker. He laughed, and we had instant rapport and a good talk for the five minutes I had left. Maybe I'll even get some business out of it. Maybe not, but I walked in to the client with a chipper mood.

However, doing this means that I must be brutal with my time commitments to cull the deadwood. If there is any chance for wasted time, I eighty-six it. Of course, Solosez is never wasted time!

Arthur B. Macomber, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

I used to have a lot of trouble with timeliness until I learned why I have trouble with it. I took an international negotiation class that explained there are two types of "time culture" in the world, polychronic and monochronic. The US is generally monochronic, while I, unfortunately, am not. I blame my Irish heritage.

Monochronic people/cultures view time as a very real, very specific thing,

such that 1pm exists as a finite moment. This means that 1pm is different than 12:59pm, which is "early", and 1:01pm, which is "late."

On the other hand, polychronic cultures/people view time more as a convenient fiction that people agree to believe in so that all your friends can end up in the pub about the same time. (That last bit is my own twist on the theory.) At any rate, it means that 12:55pm and 1:05pm are all quite similar to 1pm, and that's generally close enough. Polychronic cultures don't have the rampant "time anxiety" that appears to be chronic in monochronic cultures.

In the class (which was held in Ireland), the US and Germany were examples of "monochronic" cultures, while Middle East countries, Ireland and Spain were examples of "polychronic" cultures.

All of these "time" topics made me notice I was usually late because I tried to get too much stuff done right before I had to leave for an appointment. I like multitasking, but multitasking is not my friend when I have a deadline. Apparently, multitasking is also a polychronic trait.

My solution is to jot a list of everything that must be done for me to leave the office for an appointment. Unless there is a bona fide emergency, items on that list get done first. Next, I set an alarm on my PC. I use Peter's Ultimate Alarm Clock and set it to go off 30 minutes before my target time to leave. This gives me time to wrap up whatever I'm doing, collect my stuff and get out.

I still have time anxiety, but it helps a lot for me to understand other people's perspective when it comes to time, timeliness, and why it drives us all nuts.

Or, you could just move to Ireland. Involves a good bit of packing, but you won't have to worry as much about being 1 minute late. (Though they're unfortunately catching up with American monochronistic ways.)

And by the way, I once had a marshal arts teacher lecture us about never setting a clock or watch ahead to "trick" yourself into being early for appointments. He felt that attempting to fool yourself when you are the very person who arranged the deceit was an insane thing to do. It did seem like a bad precedent as personal habits go, and it never worked terribly well for me anyway, so I gave it up on the spot.

Good luck, and whatever you learn, let us know!

Marie Clear

A couple of other notes to add to what has already been said:

If you know you've got to leave for an appointment, don't get 'sucked in' to doing other things when you should be getting ready to go (i.e. reading or responding to non-urgent emails, or doing 'one last thing' before you head out the door).

Also, when you realize you're going to be late, if at all possible, call ahead and give a heads-up to others - even if they're waiting the same amount of

time that they would have waited without a call, they'll appreciate the call. If I'm on my way to a meeting, etc. and something comes up, there's a traffic snarl, I'm running late from another appointment, etc., I always try to call to say I'm running late and give an estimate of the time I will arrive. Even for court appearances, you can often call the court and let the clerk know you got held up but that you're on your way. Or you can call opposing counsel's office and tell them - they can often get in touch with counsel to let them know you're running late.

Finally, it helps to be prepared ahead of time for appointments, etc. so that if something comes up at the last minute, you're not running around trying to get files, materials, briefcase, etc. together while dealing with the last minute 'emergency' at the same time. I always try to have my briefcase ready with materials I'll need for an appointment the night before, even if the appointment is later in the day; that way, if I get caught up and have to run out at the last minute, I don't forget anything or waste more time trying to get things together.

Allison C. Shields

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