**Three Ways to Bring Back Courtesy**

If you’re feeling like the workplace (and the world in general) is becoming more crass, you’re not alone. According to Harvard Business Review polls, 98% of people report experiencing uncivil behavior at work. Half say they are treated rudely at least once a weak, double the number who reported weekly rudeness a decade ago.

Lack of courtesy is costly, and it’s also demoralizing. It’s bad for business, and erodes our collective humanity. We don’t need to bring back bowing and curtseying, but leaders can model and promote courtesy. True courtesy extends beyond simply not eating your co-workers’ food in the fridge. Here are three things you can do today to create a more courtesy-gracious world.

**1. Be on time.**

It seem like 5 minutes late to a WebEx meeting isn’t a big deal, but to the person who raced to their desk to be on time, it feels longer, a lot longer.

To see just how long, sit and stare at your computer for five full minutes, or listen to conference call on hold music for five minutes. When you’re the one waiting, five minutes is endless. Trust me, the person waiting on you is not sitting there pondering your best qualities while the clock ticks.

Accidents happen; sometimes you can’t avoid being late. If that’s the case, a quick email or text to let the other person know can keep them from stewing over your tardiness.

**2. Look people in the eye.**

With increasing dependence on cell phones, humans are getting way worse at this. When you look into your laptop or cell phone while someone else is talking, you’re giving not so subtle cues you’re not fully invested in their conversation.

Human beings are hardwired for personal connection. When you fully engage on an emotional level, you move beyond a mere transaction. Making eye contact makes you stand out as one of the few people who actually pays full attention. When you do it, the other person naturally follows.

**3. Do favors.**

You don’t need to be a suck-up. But going out of your way for others does pay off in the long run. In the best seller, *Give and Take*, Wharton professor Adam Grant’s research reveals, people more likely to do favors for others are more successful in the long run because they create a circle of goodwill. People don’t forget that time you stayed late to help them with a presentation or the time you gave them that granola bar in your desk when you knew they missed lunch.

We try to model this in our firm. For example, people often ask me for introductions to others. When connecting people to each other benefits both parties, I always do it happily. I want to help people, not endlessly and not at the expense of myself, but in a way that creates that circle of goodwill for us all.

As you think about being more courteous, it’s worth mentioning, your strengths and weaknesses almost always cross the lines between work and home. It’s worth thinking about whether your personal circle experiences you as courteous or not. Said another way, if your girlfriend is telling you you’re always late, or never pay attention when she talks, there’s a pretty big chance you’re doing the same thing at work. What’s annoying to your family and friends is probably also annoying to your boss and co-workers.

Courtesy plays a big part in the way people perceive you. It also affects the way you perceive yourself.

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