

Late Again? Causes

Is lateness common?

Experts estimate that 15% to 20% of people develop habits of chronic (long-term or happening for years) lateness or tardiness. Chronic tardiness affects all people — young and old.

How does chronic tardiness affect a person?

Late-comers to appointments, meetings, and work shifts: 1) Face embarrassment when others, who show up on time, begin to think the person has a problem. 2) Are greeted with unfriendly glances, rolling of eyes, and sarcastic remarks such as, "We're glad you can *finally* join us." 3) Create anxiety (stress) inside themselves thinking of excuses for tardiness: "The traffic held me up." "I could not find my keys." Coworkers become tired of the late-comer's excuses, and become tired of doing all the work until the late worker arrives.



Psychologists found that people who are always late: 1) Score lower on Tests of Empathy (ability to feel what others are feeling and ability to relate to others); lower on Tests of Self-Esteem (feelings of positive self worth); and lower on Tests of Self-Discipline (ability to control one's thoughts and actions). 2) Score higher on Tests of Anxiety (feelings of worry, stress, nervousness) and higher on Tests of Distractibility (attention jumps from topic to topic blocking skill of concentration).

Tardiness affects the way others see you and the way you see yourself. Employers fire workers who are often tardy. Employers do not give raises and promotions to workers who are often tardy.

What causes chronic tardiness?

1) Rationalizing (Fooling Yourself with Excuse Making for Your Lack of Social Skills): The tardy person may **blame external events** ("The traffic was terrible today"). The tardy person may **blame other people** ("Wow. I am only 15 minutes late. Why is the boss so angry? He must have an anger problem."). The tardy person may **deny the problem** ("Hey, we all need to learn how to be flexible"). Excuse making leads you to think that you are a good worker with good social skills when your actions prove the opposite to others. Excuse making prevents you from seeing tardiness as your problem and correcting it.



2) No Self-Discipline: Another word for self-discipline is will power (or power within). Self-discipline gives you the skill to know that you should do something, then do it — even if you do not feel like doing it. Life is a conflict between short-term wants ("I want to smoke" or "I want to call in sick today") and long-term goals ("My goal is to improve my health so I will not smoke" or "My goal is to get a raise so I will not call in sick unless I am really sick").



The road you walk tomorrow will be set by the actions you take today!

Self-discipline helps create a smooth freeway for your work world life.

3) Thrill Seeking. Some people enjoy the rush of adrenaline (chemical the body produces when faced with stressful situation). The adrenaline rush and stress from running late makes some people feel fully alive, clear thinking, and super able to put forth energy needed to meet deadlines. Adrenaline rush and stress only make you think you are thinking better when you are not. Adrenaline rush and stress: 1) harms your health (blood pressure and heart) and 2) creates unhealthy relationships as others feel your stress. A better way to create positive "feel-good" chemicals in your body is to participate in exercise programs, tennis, dance, yoga, swimming, or workouts.



4) Busy Bee. On the way out the door, you stop to do little jobs (check messages, feed dog, water plants) until you discover you are late to work again. Or, you think that arriving early is a waste of time so you try to squeeze in little jobs before leaving for work. Think of extra time before a work shift as valuable time. Your body's biorhythms (physical, emotional, and mental activities) work best with a short rest before a busy day. When you arrive early, you can rest, think, plan, and focus so that you are your best self that day.

5) Planning Fallacy (failure to judge time correctly): Psychologists say chronic lateness is due to a person's lack of thinking skills to judge how long a task will take (such as eat breakfast, get dressed, drive to work). "Late-arrivers tend to judge time differently than their on-time friends," says Dr. DeLonzor, author of *Never Be Late Again*. When people were asked to read a book for 90 seconds, "early birds" stopped before 90 seconds, but "lateniks" put their book down well after 90 seconds. Also, Dr. Conte, psychology professor, found that on-time people estimated one minute (60 seconds) took 58 seconds, but relaxed persons estimated one minute took 77 seconds. If "lateniks" think time goes slower than time really does, that person will always be late!

6) I Don't Care Attitude. Always late people may have an "I Don't Care" attitude because they:

- 1) Do not care about feelings, thoughts, and lives of others, or
- 2) Like the attention of arriving late, or
- 3) Want to prove power over others by delaying the meeting until they arrive, or
- 4) Have narcissistic personalities (think they are better than others).



QUICK CHECK:

1. a) What percent of people develop habits of chronic lateness? b) Define chronic.
2. List 3 ways that tardiness affects late-comers?
3. Of what 2 things do coworkers become tired?
4. People who are always late: a) Score lower on what 3 tests. b) Define empathy. c) Define self-esteem. d) Define self-discipline.
5. Tardy people: a) Score higher on what 2 tests? b) Define anxiety. c) Define distractibility.
6. Define rationalizing.
7. What 3 things may tardy people blame or deny?
8. What does excuse making prevent?
9. What is another word for self-discipline?
10. What skill does self-discipline give to you?
11. a) Life is a conflict between what? b) Give one example of short-term want and long-term goal.
12. By what is the road you walk tomorrow set?
13. a) Define adrenaline. b) What 3 things does running late make some people feel? c) What 2 things does stress do to your body?
14. a) Describe what a busy bee stops to do. b) What do studies show? c) When you arrive early, what 4 things do you have time to do?
15. a) Define planning fallacy. b) What do psychologists say? c) What happens when "lateniks" think time goes slower than it does?
16. List 4 reasons for an "I Don't Care" attitude.
17. Define "narcissistic" personality.
18. List 6 causes of chronic tardiness. After each cause, write down your idea of how to change **always tardy to always on time.**