



Defeating Delays

You can't always avoid delays, but you can make them constructive.

By Donald E. Wetmore

Life is often what happens to you along the way when you're planning otherwise. You will frequently encounter delays that keep you from doing what you planned to do.

In our hurry-up world we have little time to think about our lives.

You can be delayed in traffic, waiting for the dentist, in an airport, or in a line at the bank. You can't always control what happens to you out there, but you can exercise control over how it will impact you. You don't have to let delays defeat you. Here are six ways to conquer those delays:

1. Don't get frazzled. Being upset about the delay, telling yourself that it shouldn't be happening, only makes a bad situation worse. Your unhappiness won't make the delay shorter.

2. Bring important projects with you. Always have stuff with you

that you can work on if you experience an unexpected delay.

3. Carry an unread book or two. Studies show that 95% of the books people purchase are never completed. Why? Because we don't have time to read. If your flight is delayed for three hours, you can finish a lot of pages in that book you bought but never seemed to have time to read.

4. Bring your telephone contact list. Think ahead and ask yourself what telephone numbers would be useful if you were delayed. If you have these telephone numbers with you, you give yourself more choices to be productive.

5. Bring some entertainment. What do you like? Are you into crossword puzzles? Crafts? Game Boy video games? If you're prepared, delay time can be playtime. You need to spend some time playing to keep your mind sharp and flexible, and delays give you a chance to do so.

6. Sit and think. In our hurry-up world we have little time just to think about our lives, where we've been, where we are now, and where we're going. Use delay time to reflect upon your life. celebrate the good things that are happening, and commit to changing what needs to be improved. ■

Time Keepers

Use these tips to help you gain control of your time and your life:

- **Maintain balance.** Your life consists of seven vital areas: health, family, financial, intellectual, social, professional, and spiritual. Ignore any one of these areas and you'll sabotage your success.

- **Before attending a meeting,** make certain you need to be there. If you must attend, be sure there's a written agenda beforehand, with clear starting and ending times and an amount of time assigned for each agenda item.

- **Use the 20/80 rule.** Also known as the Pareto Principle, the rule is that 20% of an effort accomplishes 80% of the result. Give special attention to the 20% of people with potential to deliver 80% of what you need.

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