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# Is Anyone Ever On Time For Anything?

Mar. 4, 2014

By [Michael J. Solender](#) 



Michael J. Solender has written hundreds of feature articles for regional and national publications. He is a regular ...

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It seems I suffer from the rarest peculiarity known to man; I am terminally, helplessly and hopelessly prompt. No matter how hard I try to be late for meetings, appointments or scheduled events I just can't do it, my DNA won't allow me to be tardy.

You've probably never met anyone like me.

Like many Charlotte residents I'm a "not-from-here" and yes, I grew up north of the Mason-Dixon Line. Granted, there the obsession with all things dominated by the clock is a bit more compulsive than it is in the South.

But for me, established and agreed upon meeting times, social, business, or otherwise are not to be treated as mere suggestions. These are binding oral contracts needing respect and above all, adherence.

Initially I thought the predisposition for tardiness was generational. That theory soon proved false. My calendar over the past two weeks had seven scheduled, agreed upon (in two cases reconfirmed) meetings. Four were business related and three were social.

My meetings involved a cross section of millennials, Gen X & Y'ers, over fifty types, professionals and even retirees. In each case I was the first one at the agreed upon meeting place and the only one there within five minutes (my rather generous grace period) of the agreed upon time.

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One meeting involving four others didn't have the required quorum until thirty minutes had gone by. One lunch date was forty minutes late without as much as an "I'm sorry," they even seemed perturbed that I was nearly done with my solo lunch. I was wolfing it down in order to not be late for my next appointment – even though the other attendee was.

Look, I'm a busy guy. My calendar is so jam-packed with notes, diagrams, contacts, and, places I need to be, it looks like Cam Newton's playbook.

I'm no busier than the next guy. I simply have an ethic of respecting others' time. This notion was instilled in me by my father whose mantra could have been, "Half of succeeding in life is just showing up – on time."

Before you start railing on me for being intolerant and noting the city's traffic woes, kids that need attention and dogs that eat appointment books, know that I'm not talking about the very occasional circumstances beyond our control that beset all bipedal beings. I instead refer to the institutional variety of belatedness that has become ingrained in our citizenry and seemingly accepted by all.

Why is it that we go ballistic in a restaurant when our reservation isn't honored immediately yet routinely show up for office meetings where the host, the boss and all the necessary decision makers sidle in at their discretion? I keep waiting for the revolt, and have on more than one occasion tried to engineer my own, but my efforts have not yielded the desired outcome. I toil alone on the battlefield of the timely, a solitary soldier with a synchronized alarm clock.

Technology all but eliminates the most common excuses for those few who are ashamed enough to even feel badly about their condition. Smart phones allow for scheduling with advance notification, provide GPS directions to far flung locales, and even suggest traffic routes to take that are the most expeditious and updated with current traffic conditions.

But instead of making people timelier, these devices actually enable chronic slugs to become even more waylaid. With the constant checking of email, voice mail, their stock portfolio and yes, their next appointment, they are meticulously organized, albeit chronically late.

It comes down to this: Wherever the late crowd isn't at any given moment is where they would much rather be. They're not late for your appointment; they're simply early in their mind being somewhere else. 

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Gracie is an undergrad English major who loves cuddling with cats and making lists. One day she hopes to have a ...

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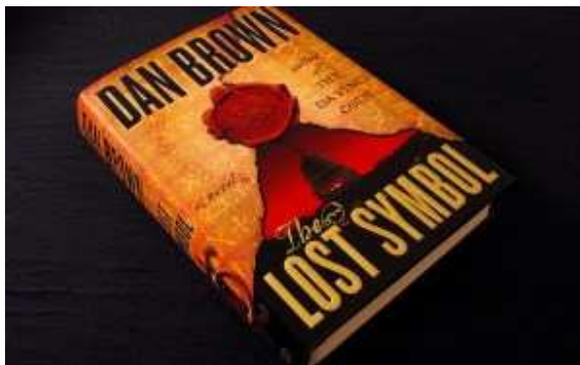
2. You've done something terribly rebellious and then told a friend about it, only to watch them burst into laughter. Maybe it wasn't as rebellious as you thought...

By [Maha Ansari](#) 



Maha Ansari is journalism student at Carleton University, with a passion for human rights, cats, and all things pink. ...

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She lit a cigarette and smirked, “Well, I am sure you will finish it off before I even get some.” Stomach pain.

By [Zach Stafford](#) 



Zach Stafford is originally from Tennessee and currently lives in Chicago where he works in HIV prevention and ...

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