

Cut them some slack

“Patience is the companion of wisdom.”

– Saint Augustine, Carthaginian author, saint, and church father

“My car was a filthy mess,” he said, “so I went the car wash. The line was long and the car wash was packed. The full sign came on every time a vehicle approached the door. Of course, once you’re in the line you’re stuck. I had so many things to do and was getting frustrated.

“When the full light went off, the car in front didn’t pull ahead. I waited for a few seconds then laid on the horn. I guess I startled the driver because he immediately pushed the button, grabbed his wash slip, and pulled quickly into a stall once the door opened.

“I was cursing under my breath – thinking how some people just dawdle and don’t pay attention. It wasn’t until I drove into an adjacent stall that I realized the person in front of me was my neighbour. I made a joke about honking the horn to see if he was awake. We both laughed but inside I felt like a complete fool – a total jerk.”

Are you impatient? Do you often feel dissatisfied, upset, and angry with others? Do you easily lose control and fire off outbursts of anger, temper, and blame on those whom you perceive as being in your way – either in line or in life? Have you become a member of the “throw away” generation, discarding relationships, people, jobs, and opportunities whenever things are not working out as quickly as you would like? Do you burn yourself out in the pursuit of goals?

Many of us have grown impatient and, like my friend, only regret our impatience when it comes back to haunt us. It has become the norm of our fast-paced world to expect everything to happen instantly and for us to become instantly aggravated when it doesn’t. The result is that we can feel frantic and rushed, stressed and unhappy nearly all the time.

While impatience often breeds anxiety, fear, discouragement, and failure, patience creates confidence, decisiveness, and a rational outlook, which eventually leads to success.

What new behavioral traits are needed for patience to develop in your life? Here are a few ideas that I have found useful. Find something humorous about the situation and leverage it for laughter. Humour lightens the heart, fills the soul with joy, and lessens the load of our day.

Give thanks for the opportunity to learn something from the situation. Possess an attitude of gratitude. Let your thanksgiving exceed your complaining. Find something to be thankful for and focus on that rather than the perceived issue. The more you dwell upon that for which you are thankful, the easier it is to rise above your current dilemma and conquer it.

Look for the big picture and take something positive from the experience. Many of the world's greatest discoveries, breakthroughs, and fortunes came about from an initial problem.

Take your time. Don't be in a hurry. The faster I work on something the more apt I am to make mistakes and thereafter have to go back and fix my errors. It is far better for us to settle into a good pace and regulate ourselves within than to let our frustrations get the best of us.

Ralph Waldo Emerson perhaps said it best in one simple line, "Patience and fortitude conquer all things." If you want balance and harmony, if you want success and happiness, you have to do all that you can and then utilize the power of patience.