Dear Alice,

I read many advice columns and have never seen this issue addressed before. I am always late for work, church, etc... I have always considered myself just not a morning person, but I'm basically late for everything. It drives everyone crazy!! What can I do to get out of this "habit," if I can call it this!! I do like my job, but just don't want to get out of bed, mostly because I just don't feel rested. So I get speeding tickets getting to work and now I'm afraid I may soon be getting in trouble at work!! Any advice would be helpful. I'm sure there are many other people like myself!! The worse part of this is how my mornings at work are ruined because I feel so bad I'm late and try to compensate for this, which just causes more stress. I'm worried that I will not get a good reference if I do move to a new better paying job! Thanks in advance for answering my question!!

Answer

Dear Reader,

Sometimes, people are late due to reasons that they simply cannot control such as your car not starting, a family member being sick, traffic ?you get the idea. But, if you find yourself being late more often than not, or more than you would like, you may want to ask yourself some quick questions. Are you getting up in enough time to accomplish what you need to get done? If not, are you getting enough sleep at night? Do you find yourself doing things like checking e-mail or cutting your workout too close to the time you need to leave instead of preparing for your day ahead of time? Once you answer these questions, you may be able to find out why you?re late arriving to places. Then, you can then formulate strategies to correct this issue so that you can get to where you need to be on time.

Improving your sleep and time management may aid in fixing your tardiness blues. For example, consider adjusting your bedtime to see if going to bed earlier gives you more energy in the morning. Likewise, research has shown that regular aerobic physical activity, as well as practicing yoga or meditation can put some spring in those otherwise heavy early-morning steps by helping you get more restful sleep. What?s more, starting out earlier to compensate for procrastination and inevitable interruptions in your commute may help you get to where you want to be once you do get yourself out of bed. Lots of sleep improvement, energy-boosting, and time management strategies can also be found in the related Q&As.

If these ideas don?t seem to work for you, it may help to consult a health promotion
professional or mental health professional to figure out the true origin of your chronic lateness. You may find that your tardiness is a way of acting out frustration or dissatisfaction with your job or in your personal relationships. No matter the root cause, working with a professional may be the ticket to conquering your tardiness forever, if you find you it’s difficult to do on your own. Remember, there is no shame in this?talking with someone may help you get your life back on a timely track.

The tips mentioned here and the advice included in other Go Ask Alice! Q&As may help, but may only act as a short-term fix for some who forever feel that they’re drowning in the sea of time. Time management is self-management; so, improving your on-time record will benefit from figuring out some short and long-term priorities and goals. It’s never too late to remedy chronic lateness, and your question is an obvious indication that you are motivated to do so. Good luck!

Alice!
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