

Exploring Leadership

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS: PATIENCE

We live in an impatient world. Thanks to modern technology, we never have to wait for anything. And because we never have to wait for anything, nothing is special enough to wait for. In this activity, participants will learn why we should overcome our impatience and some strategies for doing so.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- "Patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet." -Jean-Jacques Rousseau
- Why is it difficult to be patient? Are you a patient person?

Patience is the ability to stay calm while you wait. The modern world provides lots of opportunities to wait - in traffic, in line at the store, for a ride home, etc. It makes sense to be patient, but it is a skill we have to practice because the modern world also promises instant gratification. We expect packages delivered the same day, or immediate results at the gym. It is time we slow down and practice a little Patience.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Understand Patience as a valuable interpersonal skill.
- Practice methods to improve Patience and decrease stress.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Access to the Internet for link: <http://wolfmanenglishteacher.com/secretstash/PatienceTest.htm>
- YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0eP4K1il6VA&t=112s>
- Paper and pencils

EXPLORATION ACTIVITY:

Ask participants to take the Patience Test by going to the above link shown in the "What You'll Need" box (or a similar one) on their smartphones. (This could also be done on a projector for the whole group.)

- Tell them to scroll slowly enough that they can see all the words but quickly enough that they finish within two minutes. (It requires patience to do so.)
- When everyone is finished, ask who did it without cheating, then ask those who did cheat why they did so.
 - Show the above referenced 2 min. YouTube video (see "What You'll Need" box above) to the entire group. Ask participants to make two lists:
 - What makes you impatient? (Triggers)
 - When you are getting impatient, what are your symptoms?
 - Finally, try this short Patience exercise:
 - Relax and take long, deep breaths.
 - Slow your movements and speech. (Act patient even if not.)
 - Focus your mind on something you want to do well.
 - Remind yourself it's okay not to do it perfectly.
 - Remember that being impatient never makes things happen faster; in fact, it makes them seem to happen slower!

FACILITATOR TIP:

- Review the Patience Test and the video in advance to familiarize yourself with the content of each and to make sure the technology you'll be using works.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Ask the below open ended questions to your group to engage in a discussion about what happened during the activity.

- Share and discuss the lists of things that trigger impatience and the symptoms.
- Are your symptoms mostly emotional or physical?
- Do physical sensations (like hunger or exhaustion) affect your Patience?

APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

- At some point, we will all have to deal with difficult people. What personal skills will help you maintain Patience when you do that? [Listening skills, empathy, emotional intelligence-knowing why the person is difficult, makes it easier to empathize.]
- What role does Patience play in achieving long-term goals? [They require consistent effort; they do not happen quickly.]
- Why do they say “Patience is a virtue”? [Patient people are viewed as kinder and more pleasant by others.]



CONCLUSION:

If you're often impatient, people may see you as arrogant, insensitive, and impulsive. If you get a reputation for having poor people skills and a bad temper, others may even deliberately avoid working with you. On the other hand, being patient means that you're more likely viewed positively by those around you, and you'll likely be a better team worker, more focused, and more productive. So know your triggers and some strategies for dealing with them, and all your interactions will be much more productive and pleasant. Practice Patience!

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REFERENCES

- <http://wolfmanenglishteacher.com/secretstash/PatienceTest.htm>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0eP4K1il6VA&t=112s>
- <https://www.inc.com/rhett-power/4-tips-to-help-you-be-a-more-patient-person-science-says-you-will-be-happier.html>