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T. T. Mitchell Consulting

Changing Attitudes and Perceptions for Unlimited Growth

September 5, 2003

Issue 15

New!!! I am pleased to announce the availability of my first book on management, titled **The Mitchell Principles of Management**. It is a must for those managers who are looking for direct guidance in working with today's employees and co-workers, written in a conversational manner. You can see more information on the book by clicking on [this link](#). It can be purchased as an ebook directly off the page or arrangements can be made to receive a hard copy of the book in a spiral bound format by contacting me off the same page listed above.

Courtesy Is Lacking In Today's World

Some months ago I wrote an article on common courtesy for an organization I'm a part of. That article concentrated on why some people who consider themselves consultants possibly fail in business.

The truth in America today is that the concept of common courtesy seems to be lost in all sectors of real life. Want some examples? How many of us make phone calls that are never returned? How many people do you send gifts and cards to that never acknowledge receiving anything? How many people do you do something nice for and never receive a thank you? How many times do you call for customer service and have them make you feel as though you're the idiot? How many people never return your email, or even acknowledge that they got it at all? How many times has someone walked into you when you're not moving and told you to watch where you're going?

When you are the person who's the "victim" of a lack of courtesy, how do you feel? Do you get mad? Do you get depressed? Do you plot what your next move is going to be? Do you decide that it's not worth the effort to even try anymore?

I have found, since I started my own business, that I've had to develop an even thicker skin than I did as a director. People can be rude, whether it's to your face or just by ignoring your trying to contact them, even when they may have initiated events. They don't see it as being rude; they see it as a nuisance, something that takes time away from their daily operation. What they miss, however, is that they react with the same kind of anger if someone else doesn't return their call or email. What goes around comes around, as the motto says.

If these types of things occur in your personal life, you can easily decide that it's time to stop sending cards and gifts. You can decide to stop sending email to someone; you can stop calling on the phone. But if you're in business, or a manager, or a co-worker or an employee, can you really afford to allow yourself to get caught up in someone else's lack of courtesy?

Frankly, yes. Not so frankly, you have to change how you handle the situation if you're going to get caught up in it. You can't allow yourself to get angry to the point where there's no clarity of thought. You can, though, turn the tables on someone else and show them, as a lesson, just how they've been treating you. They may not even know it after you've done it to them, but people sometimes need to have lessons shown to them in order to gain some kind of comprehension.

Here's some stories and examples for you to ponder, along with how I might handle the situation. As Dr. Phil says, I don't expect you to substitute my judgment for yours, based on your situation. I also don't get too deep into the scenario; we could be here all day. What I hope to point out is the behavior that I feel is discourteous, and a possible reason why a certain reaction might occur. Not all of these have happened to me personally, but every one of them is a real scenario.

The first one involves phone calls. You're talking to someone and they receive a phone call. You're talking business, and it becomes obvious that the phone call isn't a business call. If you're me, you get up and leave, and wait for the other person to come to you later, apologetically, and try to continue the previous conversation. If you're me, you go ahead and continue the conversation because it is business after all. But you remember; the next time, you ask the person to come to your office to talk to you. If they can't and ask you to come to them instead, pass. Once you've established for someone else that they can treat you badly, they'll do it all the time.

You're talking to someone and they have call waiting. That person receives another phone call and puts you on hold. How long do you wait? Forever? Two minutes? One minute? If you're me, the first time you wait no longer than 30 seconds. If it happens a second time, you get 10 seconds to come

back to me. There is an acknowledgement that some incoming calls just might be important. If it's really that important, they don't want to talk to me anyway; if it's not, then I wasn't important enough to talk to, and we can talk later. In either case, the lesson will be taught one way or another.

You go to a potential client's office and you find out they're on the phone. You have an appointment, but this person is on the phone. They haven't acknowledged you; how long do you wait? If you're me, depending on how far you drove, you might wait anywhere from 15 to 30 minutes. After that point, your credibility is on the line. Are you a professional, or someone who will allow everyone else to dominate your time? Is the money you could possibly make from this person as valuable as the money you could have been making from someone else who treats you as an equal, as a professional? If you're me, you leave; you don't say anything, you just get up and leave. After all, they didn't acknowledge you; they didn't get up and ask you to excuse them because they had something really serious to attend to. They didn't ask you to reschedule; they just ignored you. I leave, and I don't call back. If they're serious about working with me, they'll call, they'll ask what happened, and then you'll tell them. Then if they decide they don't want to work with you because of that, so be it. If things occur as they did for me (of course it's a true story), the person might apologize, then ask for another chance. The lesson will have been learned either way; you don't treat people as peons.

You were contacted by a potential client, or someone in your office who wants to know something. You respond to the email, but you don't hear anything from this person. The next time you see them, you ask if they got your email. They tell you they're not sure, because they rarely check their email. A pet peeve of mine is people who have email addresses, but don't read the email. What's the point of having it if you're not going to use it? If you're me, you don't send anymore emails to this person; since they don't read their email, they're never going to know you didn't send anything anyway. You call and leave a message on their phone if you don't get them in person. However, be prepared to not hear back from them. I've noticed that people who don't return email usually don't return phone calls either.

Based on my responses to ways I feel someone has been discourteous, it might give the impression that I have no concern of the needs of others. That's far from the truth. I hope I have shown how impressions can be made, or how lessons may be taught. A truth is that people are busy; everyone's busy in their own way. However, just because someone is busy doesn't mean you have to grin and bear the brunt of people not being courteous to you. Keep in mind where doormats are kept, and what most people do on them.

As a manager, you need to make sure you don't treat anyone in such a

fashion; you have to go that extra mile to make sure those who report to you don't feel as though you're taking them for granted. The same goes for those you work with, whether you're in management or not. The further extension of this is in your encounters with your family, your friends, and every day people.

Most people don't take the time to look introspectively to determine if they are lacking courtesy. If you saw yourself as either the person who's dealt with such behavior in your life, or as someone who's possibly inflicted such behaviors towards others, try to think of ways to alter your mindset so that you, as well as those you encounter, will end up treating each other the way you'd wish to be treated.

New!!! I am pleased to announce the availability of The Mitchell Management Training Program, a 5-part training course for new managers or managers looking to improve their skills in working with others. You can see more information on the training program by clicking on [this link](#). It can be purchased as a complete package or as an email course.

T. T. Mitchell Consulting is dedicated to helping companies produce more effective and satisfied employees at all levels, as well as helping individuals to be better and more content in their professional and personal lives. Concentration is along the lines of management and leadership, diversity and harassment issues, employee relations and customer service education. Group or individual executive [coaching/mentoring](#) or motivational sessions are available. Offered are short term or long term programs and contracts to help all employees learn to work better in an ever changing and diverse world. If you would like to view services provided by T. T. Mitchell Consulting please go to the website for more information, <http://www.ttmitchellconsulting.com>.

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