

Nothing's fashionable about perpetual lateness

Written by Marcia Humphrey • Style on a Dime
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When my girlfriend, Janice and I took our daughters to the movie theater to see *The Princess and the Frog*, Disney's first-ever film featuring an African American Princess, we were beyond excited. My girlfriend, super serious about securing the best seats in the house for this historic event, wanted to arrive forty minutes in advance of show time. I, on the other hand, thought that was a bit excessive. Our compromise was to drive separately (she took the girls with her), so she could have first pick of the seats and I could finish my to-do list at home.

I arrived about ten minutes before the start of the movie to a nearly empty theater, and felt slightly let down that there was not a stronger showing by our community during the opening weekend. Despite my disappointment, I settled into my seat with my popcorn and we all began watching previews of the coming attractions. Little by little, folks began to trickle into the now darkened theater while Janice leaned over to me and whispered, "How trifling!"

By the time the movie had started folks were still coming in, some with large families, and stepping over the people who were already seated. My girlfriend became really annoyed when, during the first part of the movie, a family of four stepped clumsily over us to find free seats. To make matters worse, two of the kids kept crawling over us to go in and out of the movie! Really?!!

Halfway into the movie, I noticed that the movie was finally nearly filled, but I had to shake my head with embarrassment at my peeps; being late is not cute! Being late and disturbing others in the process is really not cute!! And being late, disturbing others, and having the nerve to ask folks to scoot down because you and your crew (five deep) want to sit together, is just downright u-g-l-y!!!

Being late is no joke when perpetual tardiness limits your success. There are several reasons you should practice being on time. 1. It demonstrates reliability 2. It demonstrates respect for others and their time. 3. It demonstrates commitment to something or someone besides you. On the other hand, your habitual tardiness creates 1. Stress for you 2. Stress for your family 3. Stress for your career and goals.

If after looking at your life, you are beginning to rethink your philosophy of arriving fashionably late, then here are some tips to get you started. 1. Pick out your clothes (try them on if

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needed) the night before. 2. Have all needed items-like keys-placed on the designated "launch pad" the night before. 3. Upon waking, immediately get dressed (after offering a prayer of thanks) 4. Give yourself some cushion time-plan on arriving at least ten minutes prior to the start of the appointment.

I would not be real if I didn't confess that I struggle with being timely-I can tend to run anywhere from one to ten minutes behind schedule. While I usually seem to arrive on time when I must, it's often at a high price; stress! I plan to keep practicing developing timely habits for three reasons- Alanna, Arianna and Landon-the three people who call me Mama.

In many ways, the way you prioritize and manage your time speaks to various aspects of your character. Demonstrate your ability to be trustworthy, reliable, and professional and then watch doors of opportunity begin to open. And when you walk through those doors, just make sure you do it on TIME. Enjoy!