



HOW TO BECOME DEPENDABLE

By Julie Fuimano, Personal Development Coach & Author

What does dependability mean to you? How does it feel when someone does not return your call or e-mail? What happens when someone tells you they'll do something and they fail to deliver? Can you depend upon yourself to deliver?

In order to be credible as a leader and become someone who people can depend upon to get things done, take your word seriously. You teach others how to treat you as a leader by how you treat yourself. Make a commitment to honor your word, choose your words carefully, and learn how to follow through on all of your promises.

Being Your Word vs. Keeping Your Word

Keeping your word is about what you do; being your word is more about who you are or how you are being. It is the congruency of who you are and your actions. Keeping your word means doing what you say you'll do. Both of these are extremely attractive, meaning that leaders who possess these qualities are attractive to be around.

Being your word is rooted in integrity while keeping your word is rooted in honesty and commitment. Keeping your word requires conscious effort whereas being your word is your essence – it's who you are at your core and requires no effort. Keeping your word will pave the way for being your word.

Honor Your Word

Make a commitment to yourself to do what you say you will do. Commitment means persisting until completion. It means taking your word seriously and committing to what you say.

Become more aware of what you say to yourself and others through the course of the day. Learning to say less is the precursor for honoring your word. It's much easier to honor your word when you've thought carefully about what you are promising! By promising less, it's more likely you'll be able to deliver. Each time you deliver what you say, you become more credible as a leader and as a person, and your word becomes more meaningful.

Whenever you use the word 'should', take notice. If you 'should' do something, then either do it or stop saying it and move on. Holding onto the thought by should-ing yourself takes up "mind space" and adds stress by robbing you of energy that could be used for something else.

If you are responsible to do something, call someone, or complete something, then do it. You'll be glad when it's over. If there is something that stands in your way, move it or arrange to have someone else do it. Don't let anything or anyone deter you from becoming a person of your word. Become a person and a leader whom others can depend upon. Dependability means you are credible and trustworthy and that people can place confidence in you and what you say. It takes time and practice to develop. Each day offers new opportunities to stretch your dependability muscle.

If you truly cannot follow through on a commitment, own it by letting the other person know. By taking your word more seriously, you will find that you are more confident, your self-respect increases, as does the respect you receive from others.

Do Not Try...Do

The words you choose make a difference in your believability. You need to believe in yourself and in your word; this is not just about how others feel about you.

To try is not to do. If you were to ask people over for dinner and they said they would try to come, would you cook? 'Try' is a non-committal word. It means that you haven't yet made a decision. So, make a decision.

What choices do you have? Which choice makes you happier? Which choice are you willing to commit to?



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If you're not yet ready to choose, then say that. Tell the truth. Say you're not sure, that you haven't made a decision; set a timeframe for making a decision, and stick to your deadline.

Learn To Follow Through

Following through is the most important element of dependability. It means making a commitment and finishing things once they are begun. There is a glorious feeling one experiences when a project is completed. Having unfinished projects is both stressful and energy depleting.

There are several reasons why people don't follow through: procrastination, perfectionism, being overextended, being unable to say no – to name a few. What stands in your way? Learning to become more dependable means making your commitments a priority and eliminating the barriers that impede success.

When you start something new, create a timeline for completing it. Schedule these to-dos directly on your calendar. Get things off your plate and onto your schedule and delegate everything possible. This will help you plan your time to get it done and prevent it from slipping through the cracks. Before committing to something new, make sure you are willing, able, and want to do the necessary work or have the required workforce or resources to complete the task. If you don't want to do it, if you already have too much on your calendar, then say "no". Learning to say "no" will increase your self-esteem, give you more energy, allow you to complete your other projects and free up time for more enjoyable things. Learning to say "no" is not selfish; it's a requirement for effective life management and maximum enjoyment.

You might say that you cannot say "no" at work. However, when you've marked your time to complete your current commitments and you know that taking on something new will push the other projects back or make it impossible for you to handle everything without long overtime and weekend work (stressful and unacceptable), then let your boss know this. Don't assume s/he knows exactly what you are working on and how much time you have available to spend on something new. Explain that taking on the new project will mean you will not be able to complete the current project in the required timeframe. Then your boss can decide which project is the priority and how s/he wants you to spend your work time.

Learning to 'under promise' is another tip for increasing your dependability. It means promising less and saying it will take longer, giving yourself room to deliver higher quality and quicker service than anticipated. Making fewer promises on your time will allow you to get more accomplished and you will be viewed by others in a favorable light. Do this often enough and you create a personal brand that screams dependability.

Coaching Challenge

Some action steps you can take immediately to build your dependability muscle:

1. Evaluate your current commitments and promises. Create a plan to complete each project and schedule the tasks on your calendar. Eliminate those commitments you are unable to keep and inform the other people involved.
2. Start being more particular about what commitments you make. Learn to say "no" when able.
3. Promise less than you think you'll be able to deliver and give more than the person expects.

Julie Fuimano, MBA, BSN, RN, CSAC is named one of the TOP 100 THOUGHT LEADERS in personal leadership development. Your happiness and success is her business! Her coaching clients experience dramatic and profound results in their productivity, level of confidence, and their relationships. As a certified coach, accomplished writer, and motivational speaker, Julie empowers your personal best and teaches you simple, practical tools for meeting your goals, communicating effectively with others, and enjoying yourself at work and at home. Visit www.NurturingYourSuccess.com to learn more about coaching with Julie or contact Julie@NurturingYourSuccess.com to have her speak at your next meeting or conference. Subscribe to her blog at www.NurturingYourSuccessBlog.com.



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