

What is impatience?

Learn what patience is and ways to recognize and overcome your impatience triggers. Steps you can follow to help identify what makes you lose your patience.

A tendency to be impatient is considered a major personality flaw. People who suffer from severe impatience are often considered to be arrogant, insensitive, and overbearing.

Impatience can cause a person to cut others off mid-sentence and to make what appear to be uninformed, quick judgment's. Impatience can lead the impatient person to snap at others in response to questions or requests. Impatience is considered to be a career stopper for many major corporations. Impatient people are not considered to be good managers or leaders for a company. Many factors can lead a person down the road to impatience. One of the biggest causes is stress. The more stress a person feels, the more likely they will be to react impatiently to additional requests for time.

Impatient people generally know that they suffer from impatience. Some people are lucky enough to only suffer from impatience when their impatience triggers have been pulled. For these people, controlling their impatience depends on learning what their impatience triggers are and learning to recognize the signals that patience is about to be lost. For people with chronic impatience, more intense therapy and retraining may be necessary.

Recognize your impatience triggers

The first clue to unlocking your impatience lies in knowing what has caused it. Follow these simple steps:

1. Ask people who know you, what are the telltale signs of your impatience - body language, facial expressions, or wording you use most when reacting impatiently?
2. Keep a journal logging your reactions to certain situations? Which situations led to you feeling the most impatience or reacting most impatiently?
3. Gauge the reactions of others to your interaction with them. Is there hesitancy or fear in their approach to you? Do you make others feel uncomfortable, is communication between you two-way?
4. Become aware of your reactions to different situations. Once you start paying attention, you will be amazed at how easily you recognize the signals of your build up toward impatience.

Overcoming your impatient responses

By following the steps above, you will learn factors that can lead to your reacting impatiently in situations. While knowing what pulls your trigger is a huge part of the battle in overcoming your impatience, it is by no means the end of the war. As you start to recognize those situations that lead to you losing your patience, you need to take action to compose yourself, prepare for what is a stressful situation for you, and keep yourself from visibly losing your patience. Steps that you can take when confronted with a patience-losing situation for you are:

1. If possible, remove yourself from the situation. If you cannot physically remove yourself, then emotionally remove yourself. Parents counting to ten when confronted with a difficult parenting situation are attempting to distance themselves emotionally. A supervisor confronted with a subordinate who isn't "getting it", may need to back-off, mentally count to ten, and start over. In these situations, by not reacting rashly, more productive results may occur. The idea is to get your point across without causing a loss of self-esteem, for anyone.
2. Practice active listening. Give the person you are speaking to your attention. Make eye contact and try to restate what you have been told. Do not be forming your response to the person before they have finished speaking.
3. Slow down your responses. Force yourself to speak more slowly and in a lower octave than you might otherwise speak in times of stress. This will give the appearance of patience, even if you aren't feeling it.
4. Reward yourself for a patient response to a situation where you might have reacted impatiently in the past. Recognize the effort you have made, and how good it felt to not overreact to a situation.

By learning how to control your impatience, you will enable others to approach you in situations where you would have been unapproachable in the past. By not giving in to your urge to instantaneously react to a stressful situation, you may find that the situation isn't as bad as you thought and did not necessitate such a reaction. As a manager, controlling your impatience can inspire others to react calmly during times of high pressure. It can also help to improve your managerial image.