# When you need to be there, Be there

By: Jordan Johnson



Today we live from one meeting or phone call to the next. We have meetings for the meetings. We chain smoke one task after another. Think about the business and the push of our lives. We have had incredible inventions that were designed to give us more time to relax and enjoy life & family; such as the washing machine, dishwasher, and microwave. All of these save us time, but what did we do with that time? We did not relax, we simply jammed more stuff, tasks and work in the "time saved" place. Motto: "accomplish more in a day than my parents did in a week."

We have become prisoners of our own productivity and efficiency. Get one more thing done. We have set precedence and now it is the expectation.

This, as you can imagine, has impacted our simple interpersonal skills. The ones that require face-to-face, not text or email, were sacrificed to make more time. Technology has created a wide gap in our "effective" communication skills, we can all agree on this. Research shows that in the business world there is a shift back to the need of effective interpersonal skills (the kind that takes time, effort, and engagement). This is especially true in healthcare, where communication is key for not only safety but just being a decent (compassionate) human being. Many aspects make up the interpersonal skills of simply being a "likable" / "decent" human being. I will tackle several on separate articles.

Note: Some people truly suck or have the traits that make them not "likable." There are special jobs for these people; they should just not be the out front people "face" of your business or company. They **WILL** harm your company and its reputation. Is this harsh, maybe so, but the good news is this is completely changeable. You should invest in them. **Coach UP or Coach Out**.

Are we really present in our meetings, on our calls, in our conversations? The efficiency and productivity drive in us increases the probability that we are not. I am guilty of this. Let's say you are on a webinar. Are you engaged, listening and hearing? My guess is, like the rest of us, you have hit the mute button and are working on other projects, answering emails or sending text messages. Another scenario. You go to an actual face-to-face meeting with a group of people. How many times does your cell phone come out? Is your approach, Give me the bullet points and quick facts only?

We get offended if people do this to us (when we don't have undivided attention), yet we do it to others all of the time. How does this work out in the spouse relationship? We are there, but not really there in



most cases. In the past, we have built a certain level of tolerance, but as I indicated, this is shifting. It is painful and requires a conscious effort to reverse the urge, but it can be done. There is a push back to the simple affirmations of a handshake, a smile, eye contact and asking questions. These are the things that have been lost in our effort to conquer efficiency. The cost has been the creation of cold, self-serving agendas and prolonged isolation with little care for others.

This is simply not a sustainable human characteristic model. <u>Maslow's hierarchy of human needs</u> has confirmed this for years at its most basic form. We need attention, belonging, affection, affirmation, confirmation, and friendship. There is no connection with rush business only all of the time approach.

I know you are thinking not in business. **WRONG**. [Jeb Blount](#) had it right in his book *People Buy You.* You must be likable to get "in the door" and be able to make a connection. So, this means you MUST BE PRESENT. You must engage beyond the email and text message. Making conversation, finding commonalities and solving problems. This what ultimately leads to retention. You can invest in all of the fancy software you want but at the end of the day people truly "Buy You."

The need is greater than ever because technology had closed this imperative aspect off. Only now are we seeing the true impact and repercussions of this vital missing link? It was and is clearly not sustainable personally or in business.

It sounds simple, and it is. It just requires work and some retraining. No one wants to be told they are lazy, so here you go "you are lazy" when it comes to change. Listen, this will require effort and commitment. You don't have to but let me assure you that your business will suffer, your clients will complain, and your employees will disengage, especially as the momentum continues to shift towards bridging this gap.

The bottom line the change is happening, and you have a choice. Life is more than a meeting and a spreadsheet.

#youwillbeleftbehind