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## ∞ WAITING ∞ Choosing Calm Over Control

According to my ability and judgment;  
I will keep them from harm and injustice.  
Hippocrates

**W**hat type of client, customer, or patient are you? When you walk through the waiting room door, does the person on the other side flinch, tense, or otherwise prepare for attack? Do you disappoint, discourage, or offer a disgruntled impression? Is every statement or question voiced one punctuated by an undergirding of subtle disrespect, disinterest, or distrust? What is your attitude saying about you, your words notwithstanding?

It used to be that physicians had to memorize the Hippocratic oath, the most memorable line, to laypeople, being, “First, do no harm.” Nowadays, this pledge has been updated to reflect a modern, high-tech society. Still, the underlying message remains the same. That is, one individual is making a promise to do his or her level best to help another person in need. Honestly now, aren’t we thankful that the majority of doctors and other professionals from whom we seek aid do abide by this long-standing motto? If we didn’t trust that person sitting on

## Burdens Do a Body Good

the other side of the desk or across the room to make a positive difference in our lives, we wouldn't waste time seeking out his or her expertise, right?

Though we continue to seek expert help from these professionals, we've similarly begun to tote along with us an attitude of consumer elitism. Truth to tell, we're ever ready to assert our rights even when they're not being compromised. We get angry when our appointment is pushed back. We feel frustrated when a promised contract doesn't materialize. We complain and fret and moan about every little inconvenience without taking time to consider that our minor grievance could transform into another's good. How is this so?

Consider this. The next time you're left waiting for an hour because of an unexpected emergency and your friendly neighborhood professional begs your pardon upon greeting you . . . give it. Think about how you feel when your best-laid plans go wrong. We've all had those days when we started out on time armed with a solid plan of great intent and then were interrupted, stalled, and thwarted. How did we feel? We were discouraged, weary, and wanted to give up. In the coming days, do yourself and everyone else a favor. Hone that memory of yours that never forgets an offense against you for the good of someone else, and take the oath to keep others from harm. Purpose never to rattle someone's already fragile emotional cage with your unrelenting demands or unrealistic expectations. Rather, tell the person that you understand. Tell them you appreciate their diligent service. Tell them thank you. You'll begin to see the person behind the professional façade, and we all know how terrific it feels to have someone see the "us" behind what we do. It can't do any harm.

**Takeaway Action Thought:** Never view waiting as wasted time. These are opportune moments allotted for the purpose of regaining some inner stillness, calm, and clarity.

## Weight-Bearing Exercises

There are only two ways to wait. We choose either to wait well or to wait poorly. If we give in to impatient thoughts and words, then we risk jeopardizing our health and that of those with whom we come into contact. In a society in which there is only stop and go, waiting offers a welcome in-between space to purposefully hit the pause button and to rest and reflect. It doesn't matter what we're waiting for: an appointment, an apology, or an answer. It's the conduct of our heart and minds that will make all the difference.

### Waiting Well

- ∞ lowers blood pressure; when we accept the uncontrollable as necessarily part of daily life, our physical bodies take note and respond accordingly.
- ∞ reduces inner stress; from headaches to body aches, we feel better when we realize we are not in control of others' behaviors or responses, only our own.
- ∞ makes one more productive; being forced to wait in one area allows more time and energy to invest in countless others. There is no wasted time if we use each day to its fullest.
- ∞ allows for better decision making; rather than reacting with anger and impulsivity, we thoughtfully consider, decide, and determine taking into account all possible repercussions of our choices.
- ∞ expands our understanding of another's perspective; removing ourselves from the emotional intensity of the moment enables us to see a situation more accurately as time passes.
- ∞ gives opportunity to love sacrificially; we deepen, grow, and change every time we put someone's needs above our own, personal discomfort and all.

## Waiting Poorly

- ☞ raises blood pressure; as our mind thinks, our emotions flare, and from head to toe our bodies respond to the stress. What and how we process our thoughts and experiences does matter.
- ☞ produces anxiety; we fret, worry, and stew . . . and forfeit the inner peace for which we long.
- ☞ inhibits productivity; when we focus exclusively on what we can't have, we become immobilized, unable to be of any good to anyone or anything else in our lives.
- ☞ increases chances of reacting impulsively; stand back, don't react. The more frequently a person acts or speaks before thinking, the greater the potential for negative and long-lasting fallout.
- ☞ shrinks one's sense of proportion; when we see only our side of a situation, we're not viewing life as it is. Whenever there are two people, there are two sides to every story, always.
- ☞ robs us of our ability to grow by enduring difficulties; when we respond self-protectively or solely with self-interest, we are the ones who are short-changed most.



Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.  
Psalm 27:14