



WHY KEEPING COMMITMENTS IS IMPORTANT

Kathlyn Q. Barrozo
Class of 1991, University of Santo Tomas
B.S. Medical Technology

We are often faced with a lot of commitments—at work, in the family, with our relatives and friends, with other people. The challenge to keep them is sometimes great, because we do have other priorities to take care of. There might even be instances when keeping one commitment could prevent us from keeping another. During such times, we ask ourselves if we can ever get out of the other commitment.

Unfortunately, a commitment to do something should be kept. Oftentimes, trying to get out of a commitment could spell disaster, a bad reputation, lost peace of mind, or worse, erosion of a relationship. So before committing to anything, ask yourself some basic questions.

First, is the commitment time sensitive? If it is, tell the other person from the onset how you want to go about everything within your time frame. If the other person feels that your plan is fine, then you can go about doing what you have to do to keep your commitment. You are under obligation to do so now, because the other person has given you free rein. On the other hand, if the other person does not feel that your time frame is not in keeping with his, and you've already presented everything to him in honest terms, then do not make a commitment that you would just end up not keeping. Be sure to do this in the most gracious way possible so that the other person feels assured that you would still like to work with him on another commitment in the future.

Second, are there possible hindrances to keeping the commitment? It is good advice to anticipate what could come between you and your commitment. Are there resources you do not have just yet? Do you have enough information? Are there problems at the onset? Are there people you might need to find first for information? For instance, if you commit to see a friend at a specific time, ask yourself if you can make it to that appointment. Consider preparation time and travel time. The most common scenario: Friend asks, "Where are you now? I've been here for 30 minutes." Your reply, "I'm coming. There's just too much traffic." If this scenario happened in a professional setting, such as a job interview, you'd end up not getting the job. Make sure that when you make any commitment, you will do the necessary preparations and follow through.

Third, in the event that one way of keeping the commitment fails, is there another way you can keep the commitment? Exhaust all within your reach so that you wouldn't end up with egg on your face. It can be tempting to make a commitment at the spur of the moment, but what happens when you have to break that commitment? Always have a Plan B, like I always say.

In sum, the commitments we make are not as important as the commitments we keep. Those we keep build our reputation, those we make only add up in number.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Have you ever made an appointment you couldn't keep? Be able to tell the story in class.
2. Why is it important to keep our commitments?
3. How would you feel if someone didn't keep their commitment with you?
4. What are possible hindrances to keeping a commitment?
5. What advice can you give to people who get into commitments and fail to fulfill them?