

Dependability

De-pend-a-bil-i-ty

1. Quality of that which can be counted upon; able to be leaned upon.

De- is the Latin prefix meaning “down” or “from”. Combining this with the word *pendere* (“to hang”) creates a word picture of the term *dependable*—something reliable enough “to hang from.”

Think boulder from which a climber anchors a rope to scale the side of a mountain. The life of the climber hangs from the “stability” of the boulder. The climber has to depend on that rock for his/her life.

Being dependable is proven by consistency. Every promise is a reliable promise, it is consistent. Others can “hang” their plans on a dependable person without fear of let down or disappointment.

Commit with Caution

A dependable person does not make rash decisions nor do they promise if they cannot deliver. Agreeing to support an idea or complete a task require thinking through the commitment. What do the promises involve?

Dependable individuals take the time to count the costs before they make the promise. Risks and options are weighed so that when an agreement is made it can be kept. Even when those commitments require some personal sacrifice or unexpected work. The promise is kept. A person is only as good as their word.

Three Parts of Dependability

“Persons, promises and price”

Dependability begins with a relationship. Two people are involved. It may be a supervisor, a student, a faculty member, a coach, a friend, a brother or a sister, a team member, along with every other affiliation.

Dependability also involves a promise. An agreement to fulfill certain duties, to show up to work on time. It is an agreement made by personal consent, not by force.

Dependability may also involve a price. There may be sacrifice involved. Show up at work instead of sleeping. Leave off the Braves game or fun to complete a job. It is a commitment to keep a promise by getting the job done regardless.

Supervisor as Leader

The supervisor should prepare the student for greater independence, to fulfill responsibilities without depending on external supervision. To create a person who is “without dependence.” Start with small things so that students can learn to be dependable and move to managing greater things.



For Students:

A dependable person makes these promises:

- I will show up to work on time.
- I will pull my share of the load.
- I will work as a part of the team.
- I will keep my word.
- Be careful what I promise.
- I will correct my mistakes.

The only people who count are those who can be counted on.

—Henry F. Cope, Chicago Tribune, Chicago, Ill., Jan. 19, 1908.

When all Else Fails:

I will follow these steps:

- Try to solve the problem, complete the task, even if it means added hours, or more effort.
- If I cannot resolve the problem I will appeal to my supervisor or my team to whom I made the promise. Explain my situation in as straightforward a way as possible and ask to be released from the obligation or to get a time extension until a solution can be found.
- I will work diligently until the project is completed. Regardless of the sacrifice, because I made a promise and dependability is keeping a promise.

For Supervisors: Teaching and Reinforcing Dependability

- Students should arrive at work on time. Being dependable means being timely.
 - Set the proper expectation with students on work schedule and consequences for tardy or late arrival to work.
- Supervisors should model the behavior expected.
- Supervisors should clearly define responsibilities that each student will have.
- Supervisors should support the team and individual participation in the team.
 - Clearly defining the role of the team and it's members is important.
- Supervisors should make sure that if a student makes a commitment it is carried out.
- Reinforce dependability with immediate verbal confirmation and recognition along with in end of semester evaluations.
- As students take on more responsibility provide support but once they are proven dependable enable them to function without immediate supervision.

