

Availability (vs. self-centeredness)

Willingness to change my schedule and priorities to meet a need

May 2018

Status = “Available”

By Jill Welte Tomey

When I first started studying the character qualities, I wasn't a big fan of Availability. I didn't really see why it was a necessary quality on which to work. But once I started really looking at it, I realized that I was failing at being available. You see, I was the volunteer that could not say “No”. I volunteered at church and at my daughters' school. I was a Girl Scout leader and a PTA board member. I was on Parish Council. The girls were involved in dance, sports and scouts and I volunteered for all the fundraisers. I was available – right?

When I studied the quality, I learned it meant being available to those relationships and communities that you valued. It was an action word, not a status. A rental car has a status of “available” to rent while it sits on the lot. When a person is available, it means they are engaged and responsive.

I began to re-evaluate my schedule. Our life was very busy. Each day I would plan my day like a firefighter. If it wasn't late or broken, it didn't get attention. My evaluation of my schedule determined that I wasn't available to my top priorities. All the activities were good and deserving but not my top priority. My quiet, supportive husband is the one who got left behind. When I realized this, I was dumbfounded. Our remedy was to limit the activities that the girls could participate in and I learned to say “No” – at least sometimes. We scheduled both date night and family night into the weekly schedule. Any time I was asked to do something, I would evaluate it based on my *values and schedules* rather than just on the merit of the event.

This month, examine your availability to the relationships and communities you value.

To Practice Availability, I will:

- Put others ahead of myself
- Find a way to help, not a way to hide
- Be ready when I'm called
- Be glad for the chance to serve
- Check with the right person before I make commitments

“It's not that successful people are givers; it is that givers are successful people.”

-Patti Thor

“He who gives when he is asked has waited too long.”

-Sunshine Magazine