

### **Objectives :**

- To learn telephone etiquettes.
- To learn the etiquettes while travelling abroad and with foreign visitors at your place.
- To learn the etiquettes of interacting informally in professional world.
- To understand the importance of privacy and maintaining confidentiality and respect other people's and your organization's confidentiality.
- To learn how to say no gracefully to unimportant demands of others.
- To learn time management and to be able to finish all your tasks on time by applying this knowledge.

## **5.1 Introduction**

Etiquette is a code of behaviour that describes the expectations of social behaviour of an individual according to the norms of the society, group or organization. There are norms of communication for people working in organizations. The way one must interact with others, either in person or on phone is well defined in the professional world. Also, etiquettes of different countries are different as per their culture. This chapter deals with the overall conduct of a person in different professional scenarios.

## **5.2 Telephone Etiquettes**

One of the fastest ways of communication is through telephone. It is very handy, convenient and cost-effective. Hence, it has become the most popular means of communication. The biggest challenge in telephonic conversation is that there is no advantage of the body language. The clarity achieved through eye contact and facial expressions is lost. To overcome this, two things become important in telephonic conversation : (1) The listening skill of the receiver and (2) The tone and clarity of voice of the speaker. The receiver must thus listen with more concentration than face-face conversation and indicate that she/he is listening by saying "hmmm", "okay", "right", "I see" etc. The speaker must keep a friendly tone and clear voice. Even the correct choice of words is also important. Following are few guidelines for telephonic conversation :

### **5.2.1 Etiquettes for Caller- when other Person Picks Up**

1. When you make a call, start with a greeting like "Good morning" "Good afternoon", etc. followed by your name and your organization's name. eg. "Good morning", this is Raj Mehta calling from Techsoft Ltd.".
2. If you have called the office number and someone else picks up the call, then ask politely to put you to the person you wish to talk to.

3. If you are asked for the reason of your call, give details.
4. If the person asks you to hold while your call is transferred, say "thank you" to the person before your line is transferred.
5. If the concerned person is not available, then give clear message to be passed on to the person or ask for a convenient time when the concerned person is available so that you can call back.
6. Do not get irritated if you are put on hold for a while or because the person is not available. Maintain a friendly tone and end the call by a polite "Thank you" or "Have a good day".

#### **Etiquettes for caller when the person to whom you want to talk, picks up**

1. Start with a greeting, "Good morning" "Good afternoon" or "Good evening" followed by your name and your organization's name.
2. Before starting the conversation, first tell the purpose of your calling and how much time you will take. Then ask, "Is it good time to talk to you?" Maybe the person is in the middle of the meeting or driving or doing some important task, where she/he cannot concentrate on the conversation. Eg. "I will just take 2 mins of yours to discuss about the last order. Is it good time to talk to you?"
3. Keep all the information handy before dialing the number. It is very rude to call a person and then keep that person waiting because you haven't done your homework.
4. Before hanging say "thank you" with a pleasant tone.
5. Make sure that there is no noise around you before you make a call.



**Fig. 5.2.1 Telephone etiquettes**

### **5.2.2 Etiquettes for Receiver**

1. Receive the calls promptly rather than making the caller wait for long.
2. Greet with your full name and organization name.
3. In some organization, people pick up the phone and greet followed by directly the organization name without saying their own names. It depends on what are the standard ways of communication in your organization.
4. Ask the name of the person and offer help. Eg. "May I know your name sir ? How can I help you ?"
5. If the person wants to talk to someone else, then pass on the line without making the caller wait for longer time and if the person is not available ask if you can take message to pass on to the person.
6. Always keep a notepad and a pen handy, so that you can note down the correct information.
7. Take down the message fully and correctly.
8. Pass on the message without fail to the concerned person.

#### **Some Do's and Don'ts of telephonic conversation :**

1. Be polite and tactful in using appropriate words. Remember, that your tone says it all in a telephonic conversation.
2. Always offer help.
3. Greet and give your and organization's name.
4. Ask necessary questions to get clarity. Also confirm whether the listener has understood or not.
5. Paraphrase at the end.
6. Listen attentively to the caller and give your verbal acknowledgement as mentioned earlier.
7. Let the other person complete before you start speaking.
8. Always keep a notepad and a pen handy to note down what you have listened.
9. Hold the mouthpiece properly. Do not hold it too far or too close.
10. Do not shout on telephone.
11. While talking on the phone, do not get distracted by your surrounding otherwise you will lose concentration.
12. Do not do parallel conversations. It disturbs the person on the other side of the line and leads to confusions. While talking on phone, do not pay attention to what your colleagues are talking about. If it is difficult for you to concentrate, then go to a place where there is no disturbance and then make a call.

13. While talking on the phone, do not chew a chewing gum, drink or eat something.
14. Do not use slang.
15. Don't sound impatient or frustrated. There may be days when you may have received many calls, but the caller doesn't know the count of your calls. Hence, it is important to listen patiently.
16. Always call back whenever you have promised to do so. This is the major complaint and to deal with it, you must note down everything clearly alongwith follow up action.

#### **Dealing with difficult callers :**

It may happen that on a given day, you receive a call and there is an irate customer on the other end shouting at you. What do you do at that time ? You may or may not be the reason of his anger. It may be a case that you already have a bad day, or you are working on a very important project. What would be your state of mind on receiving this call ? Will you get frustrated and tell the caller "Why are you shouting on me ? Why don't you talk to our Marketing department as this is their fault ?" The best way to respond to a difficult caller is to listen out first. This is what they want. Once they have vented out, they will be ready to listen to you. No matter how difficult your day maybe, or how much important work you are doing, it is important to remain calm while talking to a difficult caller. Following are the tips how to talk to a difficult caller and what to bear in mind while talking :

1. The caller is angry because something wrong has happened to that person.
2. The caller is shouting on you, but actually he is abusing the organization, as he doesn't know whose mistake it is.
3. You are the part of the organization and hence you represent the organization, so the first thing you can do is to apologize.
4. Talk very calmly and be a good listener.
5. If someone else is responsible for the situation, calmly ask the person, "Would you mind holding the line, while I transfer your call to the concerned person or shall I ask him to call you back ?"
6. Always address the difficult person with his name, listening to one's name makes one feel to be treated well. It will make the caller calmer.
7. If you have to pass on the message to the concerned person due to unavailability of that person, then do not forget to give the message. Also, as you had attended the call, you will be held responsible if the matter is not resolved. Hence, it's ok to even follow up with the person whether the matter is resolved and whether the customer has been called back or not.



**Fig. 5.2.2 Etiquettes for receiver**

**Quick Bites :**

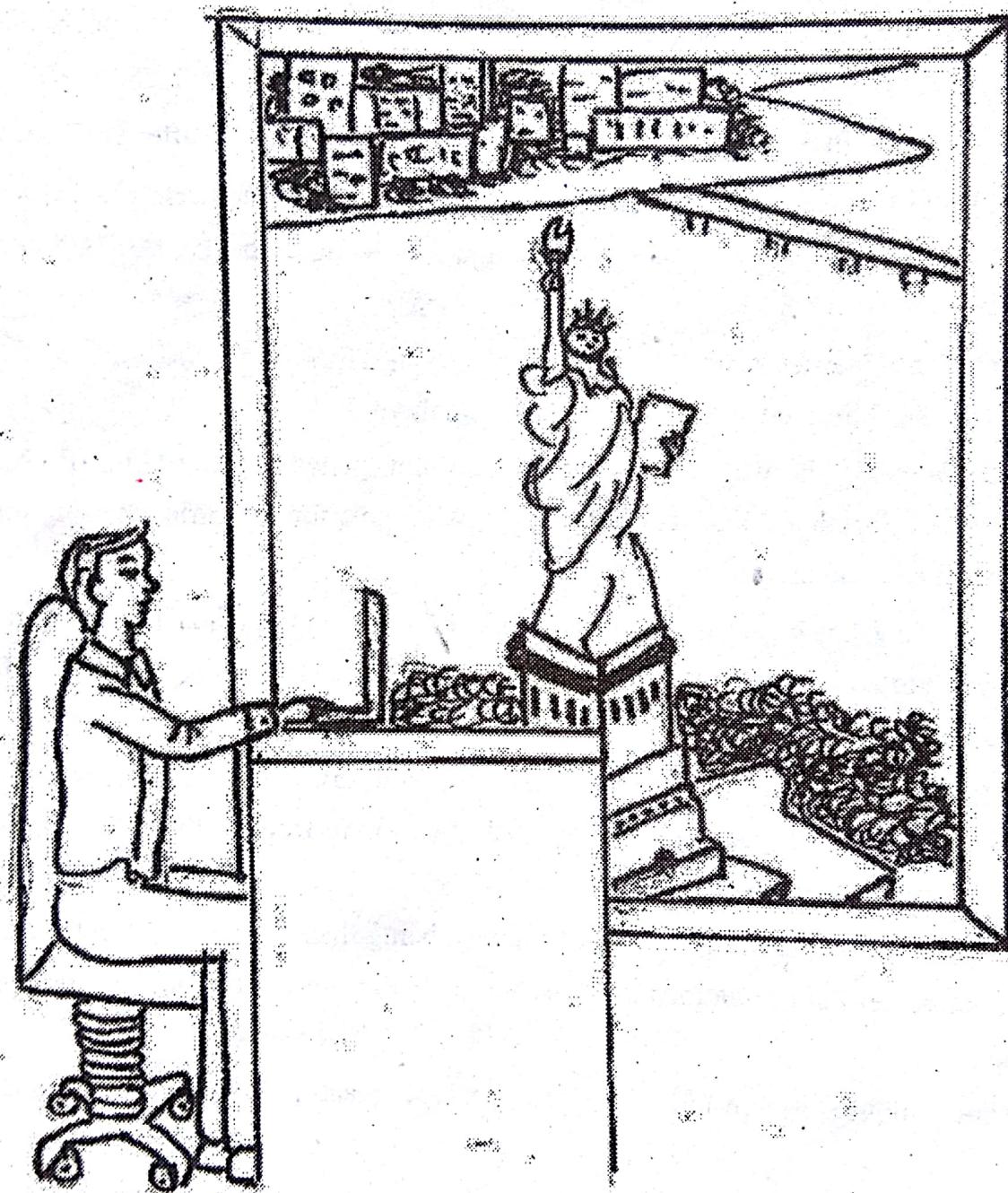
- Always sound pleasant on the telephone as it doesn't offer the advantage of body language.
- Show your readiness to help the person on the other side.
- Give proper information and be clear in your speech.
- Keep a notepad and pen near the telephone so that you don't have to keep the other person hanging.
- Always answer the phone in 2-3 rings.
- Always remember to call back if you have promised to do so.
- If you have taken a message for other person, then do not forget to pass on the message.
- Be calm in handling a difficult caller.

### **5.3 Etiquettes for Foreign Trips**

With the increase in global business, you may be required to travel to different part of the world on a business trip. Travelling to completely a different land can be challenging in terms of different culture, habits and language. Our foreign trip can be successful or unsuccessful based on whether we were able to communicate with them according to their expectations. As we have seen earlier, that when we communicate, we must communicate keeping the audience in mind, and communication is guided by the culture of the country. Following are the aspects that one must check before travelling abroad :

- Give all information like your arrival date and time and your schedule after you reach there.
- If you are asked to give information about your stay and food requirements before you reach there, then you must send the details clearly and before time so that they get time to make arrangements.
- Find out from the internet, a friend or colleague staying there, about the culture of the country and learn from her/him the ways to deal with people there.
- In different countries, the way of greeting are different, hence you must first find that out. In some countries, a firm handshake is used to greet, while in a few countries, kissing on the cheek is used to greet each other.
- Find out how they behave in a meeting. People of USA and Canada may directly come to business talks and are highly professional, while in India we start with small talks often asking personal questions.
- There are different norms of giving and accepting gifts in different countries. Usually, in some countries like USA, it is a good etiquette to open the gifts in front of the giver, while in Asian countries it is considered to be rude.
- In most of the western countries, there is a culture of being thankful for all little favours while in India, we assume certain obligations in our relations with others and would not always express our gratitude.
- In most of the countries accept India and Russia, people reach before the scheduled time of the meeting.
- It is also advisable to learn a few common words like greetings in their language.
- Also, find out the norms of taking meals and paying the bills of that country.
- Unlike Asians, the people in the USA, UK, Australia, Canada and a few other countries are straightforward which may sometimes sound to be rude, but it is their way of dealing with others.

- Any meetings would start with small talks, but remember that except India, people of other countries do not like talking about personal matters. So if you have to do a small talk to break the ice, talk about something general, like weather or something famous about their country.
- Finally, the best way of being prepared for a foreign trip is to hear the experience of a person who has already been to that country.



**Fig. 5.3.1 Etiquettes for foreign trips**

## **5.4 Visits of Foreign Counterparts**

As discussed in the above section, we know that the way people communicate and conduct themselves socially majorly depends on the cultural norms of their country. Hence, if any of your foreign counterpart is visiting our country, all of the above things must be checked so that we can understand their ways and avoid misunderstandings. Following are the additional points that must be taken care to welcome a person from other country :

- You may have received the details of their visit and if not, please ask them beforehand and make arrangements of their pickup from the airport.
- One person from the office must go to receive the person, do not send the driver alone.
- Show the courtesy to ask about the kind of hotel they would prefer to stay in and the arrangements they would like to have during their stay.
- Make arrangements for their daily commute for the entire period of their stay.



**Fig. 5.4.1 Visits of foreign counter parts**

- Make arrangements for their communication like arranging for a mobile phone and a sim card in advance.
- Make sure, that there is one person who is a point of contact if they need anything during their stay.
- If the stay is longer and weekends are included, you may offer to visit some famous place in your city or country, as for a person who has travelled for work does not have anything significant to do on a weekend.
- Offer for any other entertainment available on weekends.
- To summarize, you must make their stay in our country comfortable and make them feel at home.

#### **Quick Bites :**

- The social conduct of people varies largely based on the culture of a country.
- The ways of communication also varies largely in different countries.
- If you have to visit a foreign country, it is important to learn the culture of that country so that you behave and communicate in an acceptable manner.
- If someone from other country is visiting your organization, then it is important to learn their culture and also take care of all their requirements during their stay.
- The way one does handshake, greets others, indulge in small talks, gives or accepts gifts, shares personal information to others, etc. depends on the culture of the country and hence, you should learn the ways of the other country while travelling there or dealing with visitors from there.

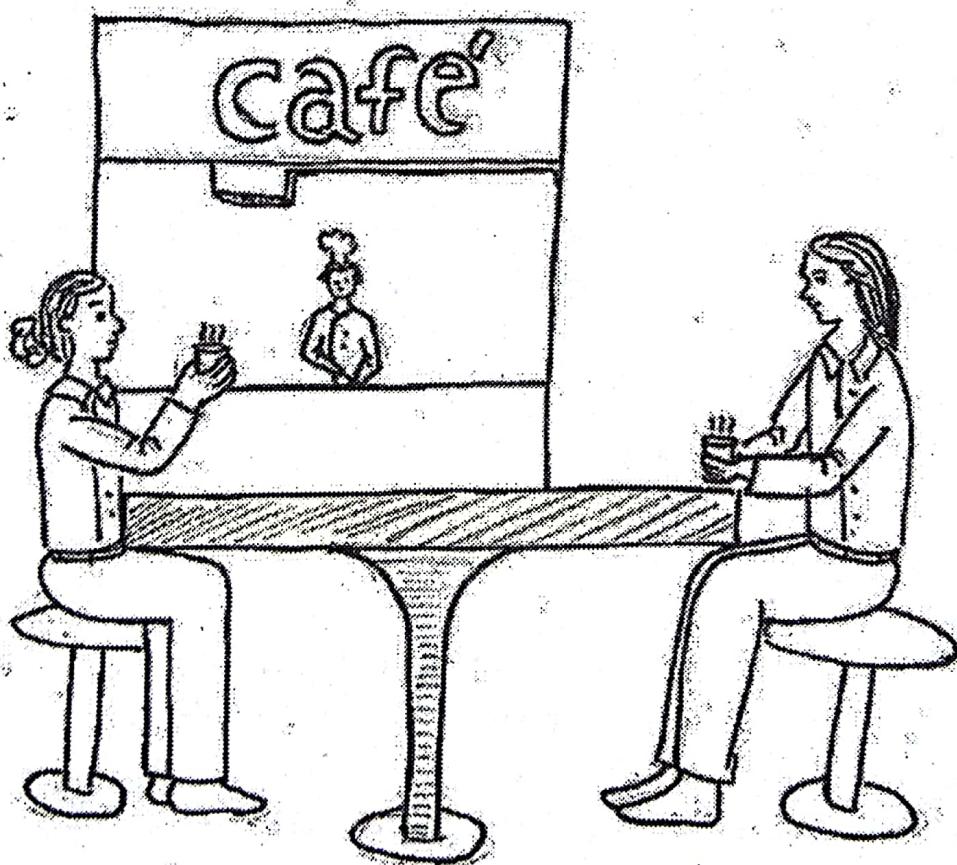
#### **5.5 Etiquettes for Small Talks**

There is nothing small about the small talk. Small talk is an important people skill. It helps in breaking the ice when we meet someone for the first time. It helps in establishing connection or defines a common denominator between two persons. It helps in forging a meaningful and lasting relationship with your business associate, a potential client and an existing client. It is an easy way to gain confidence in dealing with different people. It is instrumental in getting a job, working with clients and entertaining existing clients. Organizations look for people with such skills.

#### **Tips for small talks :**

- Have a positive body language with a smile and demonstrate your interest and desire to communicate.
- Be the first one to initiate the conversation. Say a hello first, introduce yourself and ask open-ended questions to enable the other person to say more. This will give you an opportunity to lead the conversation.

- The best topic to start with is always about the weather and other general topics. Also, if you can find out something to compliment about, then it is also the most desirable way to start a conversation, but take care that it should be an honest one.
- Be more interested in the other person rather than continuously talking about yourself. Listen with interest. Sometimes people just ask questions for the sake of asking and then are distracted when the other person is answering. To listen carefully, is the biggest compliment you can give a person.
- As this is a general talk, you may get carried away in telling many things, but it is advisable to think before you speak.
- Discuss general things like movies, sports, books, hobbies etc. this will make you appear friendly and approachable. For this, you must yourself have a knowledge of different things. So have a habit of keeping yourself updated.
- Avoid topics like your health issues, your own personal problems, the cost of things, gossips and controversial issues like politics or religion.
- Do not walk away abruptly. Close the conversation with a graceful line “It’s been nice talking to you.”



**Fig. 5.5.1 Etiquettes for small talks**

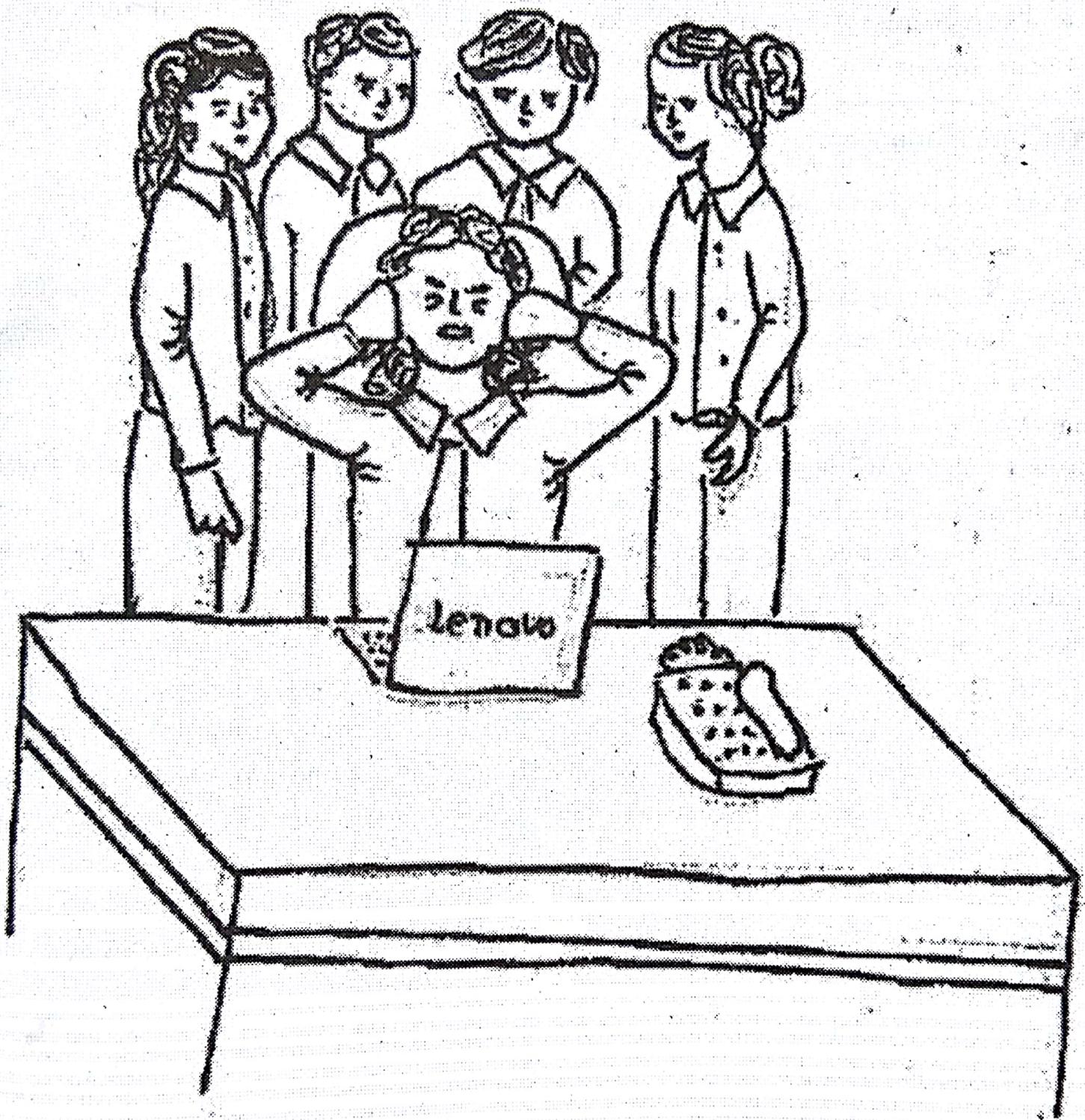
#### **Quick Bites :**

- Small talks are important to gel with people like clients and colleagues.
- Small talk is a good people skill and company's look for people having such skill.
- Though small talks are informal, there are a few guidelines of how to do it.
- Small talk should be about general topics and must be limited to break the ice.
- It should be used for a comfortable communication environment and not become too much personal.
- Remember that your relation with your clients and colleagues is professional, so do not go overboard while doing small talks.

#### **5.6 Respecting Privacy**

- To respect privacy is the fundamental concept of many societies. People have a right to peaceful enjoyment without being disturbed or harassed by others. People wish to have privacy not only at their homes, but also at the workplace, even if they maybe using the premises and equipments of the employer.
- As for the employer, it is important to monitor employee activity through CCTV camera and track the internet, email, social media and telephone use. This is justified as the employers have a risk of theft of property, data security, inappropriate and antisocial behaviour, violence, drug use, etc. Also, the employer's concern is that of the productivity loss due to misuse of office technology for personal matters.
- The monitoring of employees maybe necessary but every human being has a right to privacy as far as their personal information is concerned. The employees desire to work at peace and not being disturbed constantly.
- An employer must take consent from the employee before sharing any of their personal information like contact numbers. It is illegal to use the personal contact details of employees for marketing purpose. Many companies print the contact details of employees in their brochures or websites without their consent. This may lead to unnecessary harassment of the employee by others.
- As an employee, you must also respect privacy of your other colleagues. Standing behind a person unnoticed and seeing what she/he is doing is very rude. Do not peep into computers of your other colleagues. Monitoring of the internet usage is the employer's work and not yours.
- While indulging in informal talks during a lunch or tea break, do not ask personal questions by which others get intimidated. Do not share any information of your colleague with others.
- As an employee, it is your responsibility to keep confidentiality of the organizational data. Do not reveal any information of the strategies used by the organization, any new development in

your company or any important information to competitors as they may use it for their advantage. Also, keep confidentiality of the clients information.



**Fig. 5.6.1 Respecting privacy**

**Quick Bites :**

- Every person has a right to privacy to enjoy peaceful existence.
- Even in workplace, an employee likes to have privacy while doing work.
- The organization may monitor the activities of an employee for security and productivity purpose, but should not make them uncomfortable.

- The employers have a responsibility of keeping the personal information of the employees confidential.
- The employees have a responsibility of keeping the information of clients and organization confidential.

## 5.7 Time Management

**"Things which matter most must never be at the mercy of things which matter least." - Goethe**

Time, is the only factor which moves constantly, without stopping, with the same speed and forever. Time itself may not be tangible, but still we can see time by relating it to the situations in our lives and how we grow with time. It is a very important measure and a point of reference when we look at life as how far we have come. Time is not absolute, it is a relative term. For example, 5 mins for parents waiting at airport for their son is too long, but 2 months that their son stayed with them seems to be too short for the same parents. Some people even uses the phrase "it seems that the time has come to a standstill". For such a person, it may be the case that what that person is expecting is not happening and the waiting is not getting over. So, whether time is too short or long, is not decided by its measure, but by the state of mind of the person.

Interestingly, many people do not like their life to be the slave of time. They simply don't like the idea of everything happening at a perfect time. They like to do the things that they wish at their own time. They simply cannot work with their full potential if you bound them in the boundaries of time. But, as the famous quote says "time and tide waits for none", we see that if we wait for our own time to do things, it will go out of our hands and then its no more worth. Looking at nature, it has a perfect schedule. The sun rises every morning without fail and sets at a given time. Seasons appear one after the other as per their time and the life cycle of all living beings also works in continuation with perfect timing. Then, how can we not respect time ?

Let's examine various life situations- reaching the school or college on time, reaching the office on time, completing your ppt before you have to present it, reaching the bus stop before it leaves, taking the patient to the doctor immediately, taking food on time... and almost everything that we do is attached with time. Be it our personal life or professional life, doing things on time is very important.

We know that its important to do everything on time and that time is very precious. But, not everyone is able to utilize the time wisely. Though everyone has the same amount of time during a day, there are people who are the busiest of all and at the end of the day couldn't accomplish anything worthwhile, while there are others who do not look very busy and are doing their work calmly and at the end of the day, they have definitely accomplished something worthwhile as

compared to yesterday. They are the people who are moving ahead everyday. The first kind of people, who are the busiest are always complaining that their work never gets completed. They have lots of pending work and they are the most stressed out people. Both kinds of people have same amount of time and almost same amount of work, but the only difference is the way they manage their time.

Time management is a method through which we can make the most of our time. We can accomplish more in less time. Not only that, there will be no stress and all our work can be completed on time without compromising on the quality. To understand and apply time management, let's understand the Eisenhower decision matrix, which helps you decide on which activities to focus.

### The Time Management Matrix

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	I ACTIVITIES : Fire fighting Crisis Deadline-driven projects Pressing problems	II ACTIVITIES : Planning Prevention activities Recognizing new opportunities Relationship building Projects ahead of deadline
Not Important	III ACTIVITIES : Interruptions Phone calls Social media notifications Pressing matters of others	IV ACTIVITIES : Time wasters Checking mails Checking instagram, facebook Watching TV/web-series All pleasant activities

The above matrix shows 4 quadrants of our entire day. It has four kinds of activities that we do during a day- urgent and important, urgent but not important, not urgent but important and not urgent and not important. Now, the tasks are identified in a particular category, by considering your goal that you accomplish. So, if you want to make your own time management matrix, first list down all the activities that you do during the day. Then, to find out the importance of the activity, ask the question- 'Does this activity take me nearer to my goal ?' and to find out the

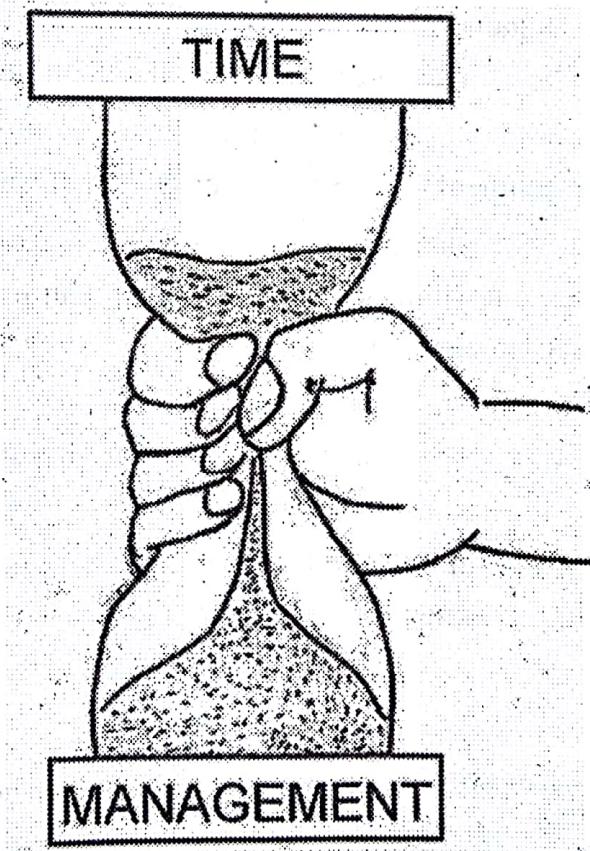
urgency, ask the question ‘Is it ok if I don’t do this task today or does it requires my immediate attention’?

1. The first quadrant is for activities that are urgent and important. This quadrant is the place where mostly the people who are the busiest all the time, dwell. This is a quadrant of fire-fighting. If your first quadrant is full, that means you are always chasing a deadline, or because you did not accomplish a task that was required to be done before, you have to address it urgently. People who stay in first quadrant also spend time in fourth quadrant because they get burned out by always chasing deadlines and so they feel they require some relaxation. They spend considerable time in watching TV or checking their Instagram or Facebook accounts. Being in this quadrant leads to stress, compromise in quality and sometimes even a give up attitude. So, to make the tasks of this quadrant minimum, you must be proactive. Do things way ahead of time. Plan your day with activities that are important for your goal and stick to it.
2. The second quadrant has important but not urgent activities. These are the activities that you do way ahead of time. A student revising what has been taught at the school daily, is an activity of second quadrant. Regular maintenance activities of your devices or your tools and equipments is also an activity of second quadrant. People who plan their day and stick to their schedules always stay in the second quadrant. They have to hardly do the activity of first quadrant when it is really a genuine urgent matter, like someone’s accident.
3. The third quadrant is of activities that are urgent but not important. Here, actually the urgency of the matter is not actual, but perceived. This quadrant has all the distractors. Phone calls, messages, notifications or an intruder. These are the activities of ‘other people’s priorities’. They are not at all important as far as your goal is concerned. For example, you have to complete an important presentation which you are supposed to present after few days and you decided to complete it today so that you can get it reviewed from your boss and make changes if required to make it more effective. But while you started doing it, one of your colleagues comes and asks you to accompany her to the café to have a cup of coffee because she’s having a headache. Though your work was important, you felt going with her is urgent and you went. You ended up with unfinished task at the end of the day. Here, we must stick to the mantra of ‘first things first’ and learn to say no to the other person. You should never have any activity which falls in this quadrant unless it is genuinely urgent. To avoid these activities, we must learn the art of saying no, which we will discuss in detail in the next section of this chapter.
4. The last and the fourth quadrant is that of not urgent and not important activities. They are clearly time-wasters. As seen before, the people of first quadrant go into the fourth quadrant activities when they want to escape the stress of fire-fighting. Also, people who don’t have clear goals and plans or who are not motivated to work towards their goals, usually stay in

fourth quadrant. One must always remain in second quadrant so that there is no crisis and hence no stress. To get enough motivation to work for the goal, you must 'begin with the end in the mind' which Stephen Covey identifies as one of the habits of an effective person. If you make a mission statement or visualize what you want to accomplish, you will get motivation to do the activities of quadrant 2.

**To conclude, if you want to use your time effectively, do the following things :**

1. Plan your day, everyday. Remember, "all things are created twice- you plan first in your mind and then implement."
2. Do activities way ahead of time.
3. Know your priorities.
4. Concentrate on task at hand and do not get distracted by unimportant things.
5. Avoid other people's priorities by saying a 'no'.
6. Have a clear vision of your goal, this will motivate you to stick to your schedule.



**Fig. 5.7.1 Time-management**

**Quick Bites :**

- Often people who complain that they are the busiest are the people who are not able to complete their tasks.
- The busy people are usually busy on tasks that are not important.
- The busy people are often seen fire-fighting.

- People are not able to manage their time because of lack of clarity of their priorities.
- People end up doing unimportant tasks as they give in to other people's demands.
- To do proper time management, use the time-management matrix and analyse to know your major time-wasters.
- Do the activities of second quadrant and you will never have to do fire-fighting and you will meet all your deadlines without suffering the quality.
- The key to successful time- management is planning your day in advance.

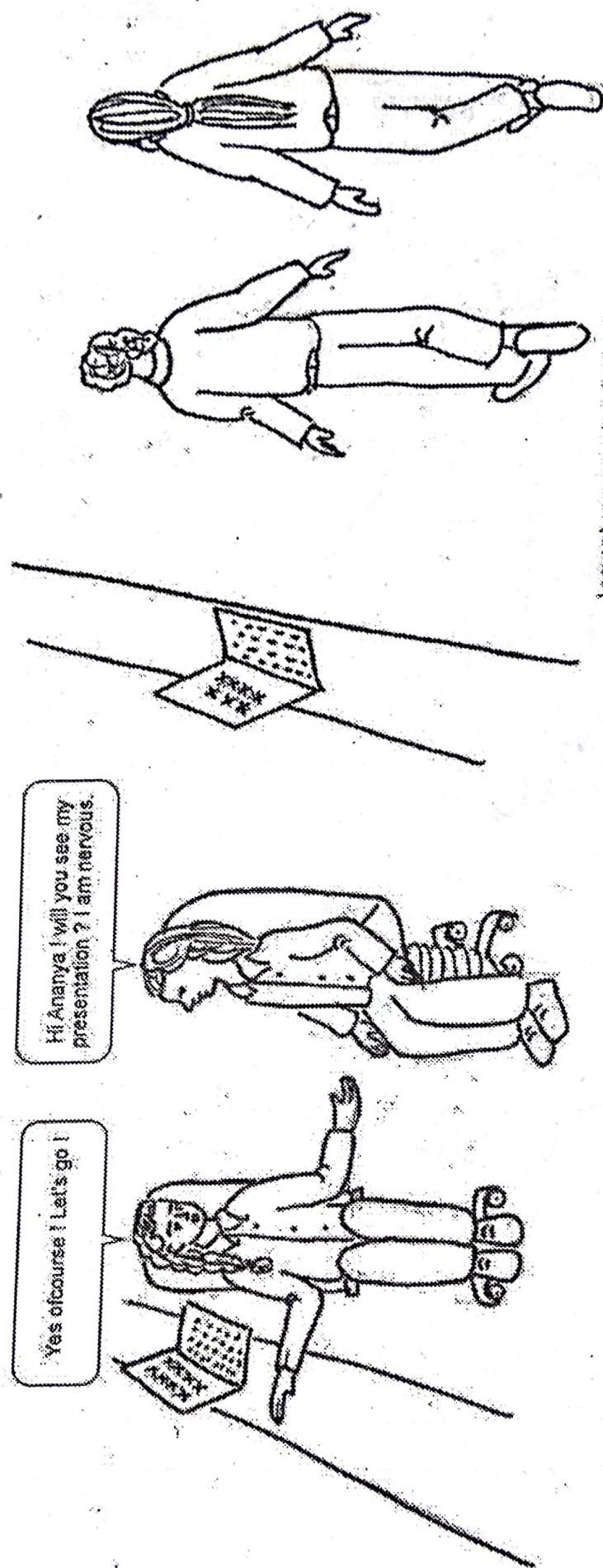
## **5.8 Learning to Say No**

We saw in the previous topic that when we do activities which are other people's priorities, we end up accomplishing nothing at the end of the day. Like in the example given above in the explanation of quadrant 3, people usually are not able to say no, even if they want to. Let's see why people are not able to say no :

1. We are vulnerable as far as our human relations are concerned. Because we have a need of acceptance, of importance and of sense of belonging, we don't say no. We feel that if we say no, the other person will be offended or what will that person think of me?
2. We have a strong ego sense, where we consider ourselves to be always helpful to others. Because of this strong attachment to our thought of being helpful, we don't say no.
3. When we don't have our own plans, we are vulnerable to fit into plans of others. We think that because we don't have anything to do now, so we can easily accommodate for other people's priorities. In fact we also have tasks at hand which are important for our goal, but we haven't made any plan for it.
4. We are not aware of our own priorities because we never visualised our goals or planned for it.
5. We are guided by our impulse or desire rather than our set principles. This happens because we've actually not set our principles.
6. Lack of power of taking decisions.

**What happens when we are not able to say a no :**

1. We end up wasting time which we may have utilized in doing activities of our own priorities.
2. We are not able to meet our deadlines and are always in a crisis.
3. Eventhough we may have helped other people but it does not necessarily mean that we will be in good books of others.
4. Because of our habit of giving priority to other people's priorities, we end up missing our deadlines and it creates a bad impression.
5. As we start seeing that our own work remains' unfinished, we go into resentment and it becomes a vicious cycle.



**Fig. 5.8.1 Not able to say "No"**

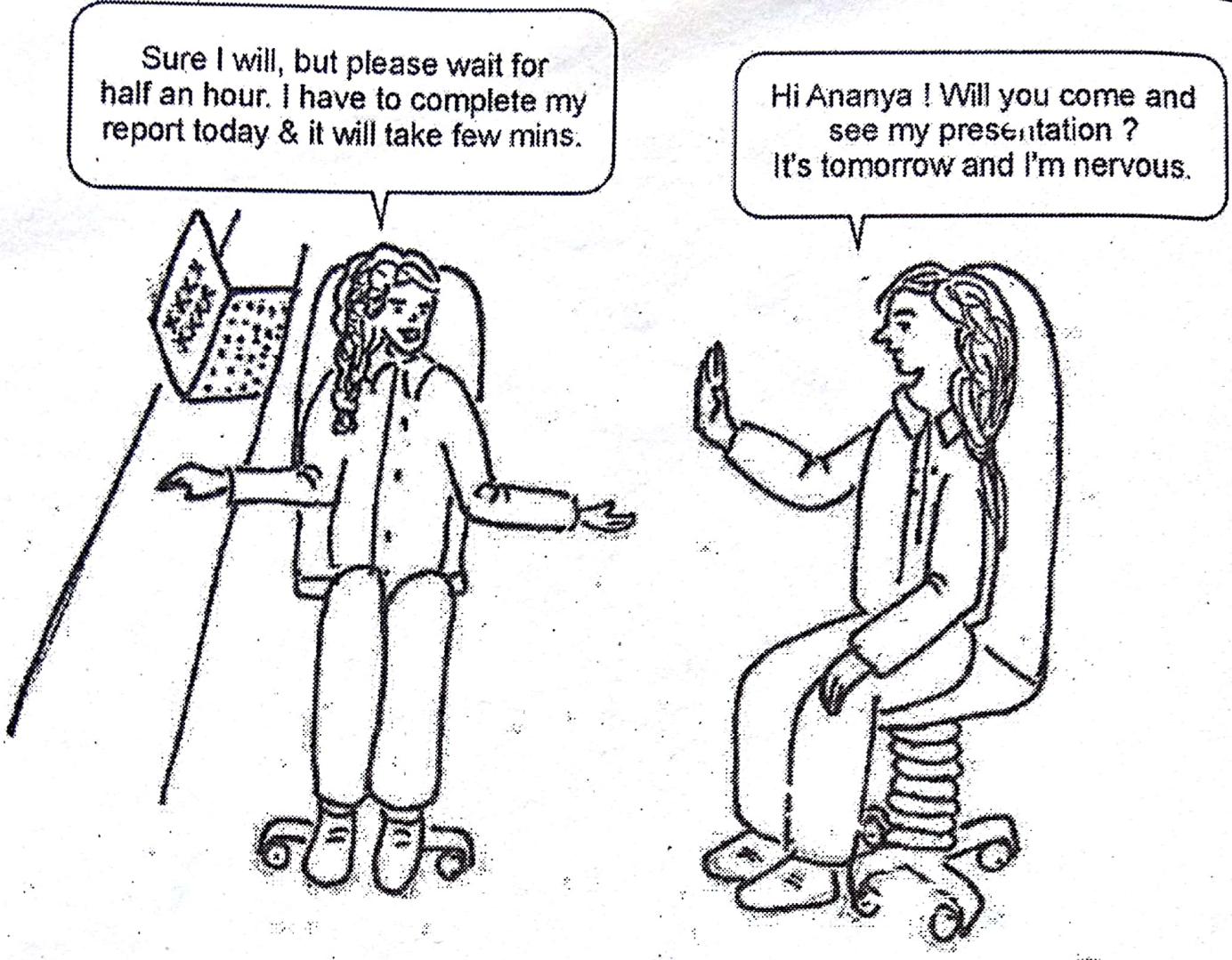


Fig. 5.8.2 Saying "No" gracefully

#### Quick Bites :

- To be able to say "NO" gracefully is an important skill.
- Usually people give-in to other's demands due to fear of non-acceptance and a strong desire of feeling of belonging.
- People can't say no due to lack of power of decision.
- When we are able to say no, we can pay attention to our own priorities and do not go into resentment later.
- 'Learning to say NO' does not mean avoiding others, but it helps in respecting your independent will without offending the other person.