

HORSES ON THE ROAD

Nine young soldiers had received overnight passes from their base camp. When morning came, none of the nine was present.

An hour after their absence was noted, the first soldier straggled back into camp. He was immediately taken before his company commander.

“I’m sorry to be late, sir,” the soldier said, “but I had a date, lost track of time, and missed the last bus. I wanted to make it back on time, so I took a taxi. About halfway back to camp, the cab broke down, so I went to the nearest farm and bought a horse. As I was riding on the horse, the animal suddenly fell to the ground and died. So I did the last miles on foot and here I am.”

Although he was skeptical about the chain of weird events, the company commander let the young man off with a mild lecture on the virtues of punctuality. Thereafter, seven more stragglers reported in, one by one, each with the same story. They had a date, lost track of the time, missed the last bus, took a cab, cab broke down, bought a horse, horse fell dead.

Finally, the ninth and last soldier arrived.

Now totally exasperated, the commanding officer growled, “What happened to you?”



The ninth man replied, “Sir, I had a date, lost track of the time, missed the last bus, hired a taxi ...”

“Wait a minute! Wait a minute!” cried the officer. “Are you going to tell me that the cab broke down?”

“No, sir,” the soldier answered. “The taxi was fine. The problem was that there were so many dead horses on the road, we couldn’t get through.”

We chuckle at the story. But in our personal lives and in our careers, we hear some pretty lame excuses. Some are very creative, most are laughable, and many beyond belief. All of us are guilty of searching for excuses when we find ourselves in difficult situations or to explain aberrant behavior.

But, like the dead horses along the way, they hinder us from reaching desired objectives in a timely – and credible – manner.

– Beecher Hunter