

AI-02087 By the way Syndrome

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Explain the "by the way syndrome " when we are exiting the door or near you the end of a meeting or a consultation or a conversation. List 22 examples.

The "by the way" syndrome is a phenomenon where a person brings up a new, often significant, topic or question right as a meeting, consultation, or conversation is about to end. It's also called a "door knob" question, because it often happens when a person has their hand on the door knob, about to leave. This timing can be problematic because the new issue may require more time and attention than is available, leading to a rushed, inadequate response or a need to schedule a follow-up. 😞

The syndrome is particularly noted in medical settings, where a patient might bring up their most important concern as the doctor is leaving the room. However, it applies to any conversation, from a work meeting to a social chat. The reasons for it can vary, including social anxiety, fear of being judged, forgetting the topic earlier, or a desire to avoid a difficult conversation until the last possible moment.

22 Examples of the "By the Way" Syndrome

1. A patient says to their doctor, "By the way, I've been having this chest pain all week."
2. An employee tells their boss, "Oh, and by the way, I've decided to resign."
3. A student says to their teacher, "Just one more thing, how do I apply for that scholarship you mentioned?"
4. A client mentions to a financial advisor, "By the way, I'm thinking of making a major investment change."
5. Someone at a party says as they're leaving, "Before you go, I wanted to ask about that promotion you got."

6. A coworker says as you're getting up from a coffee meeting, "One last thing, can you help me with a huge project I have this weekend?"
7. A friend on the phone says, "Oh, I almost forgot, I have some big news to tell you about my relationship."
8. A contractor says to a homeowner, "By the way, we found some unexpected structural issues with the wall."
9. A partner says as you're heading out the door, "I have to talk to you about something serious later."
10. A parent says to a teacher at the end of a conference, "One more thing, my child has been getting bullied at school."
11. A job applicant says at the end of an interview, "Just so you know, I also have another job offer."
12. A friend says as they're walking out of your house, "Did you hear about what happened with Sarah and her husband?"
13. A colleague in the hallway says, "By the way, the deadline for that report has been moved up to tomorrow."
14. A person at a networking event says, "I was just about to leave, but I wanted to ask if you'd be open to a job opportunity."
15. A family member says as they're getting into their car, "One more thing, what do you think about me moving in with you?"
16. A vendor says to a client, "Just before I go, there was an issue with your last payment."
17. A landlord says to a tenant, "Oh, I meant to tell you, we're planning to raise the rent next month."
18. A direct report says to their manager, "By the way, I won't be able to come in to work for the next week."
19. A person leaving a social gathering says, "I know you're busy, but can I get your advice on something personal?"
20. A friend says while you're putting on your coat, "I've been feeling really down lately and I wanted to talk about it."

21. A student says as they're leaving class, "Can you clarify what's going to be on the final exam?"
22. A customer says to a store clerk, "By the way, I have a complaint about one of your employees."