



RAY EDWARDS

LIVE WITH JOY LEAD WITH PASSION PROSPER WITH PURPOSE

How to Deal with Abusive Customers

In today's episode we're talking about how to deal with abuse customers. I have to have a sense of humor today I've had some weird customer run-ins. I love my customers, 99.9% of my customers are fantastic, intelligent, stalwart, enjoyable people with a great sense of humor, honor and dignity, and .1% have problems. I'm sure it's not just me, I talk to friends who have businesses and who have had weird encounters with crazy customers; there, I said it.

Have you had this in your business, customers that are just over the top irrational, seemingly out to attack you and to make your life miserable? I'm going to talk about how to deal with customers like this, who are abusive, dishonest, bullying. There's a saying, the customers always right. Are they always right? I think not, and you must protect yourself and our staff from bullies, and in this week's episode I'll share seven tips for handling abusive or problem customers.

If you enjoy listening to the show I would consider it a great honor and privilege to have you subscribe and leave a review for us in iTunes. It helps get the word out to other people who want to enjoy the show and we have more and more subscribers every week, it's so exciting. I'm late with this week's episode because it's been busy and crazy, but this isn't going to be the week that I break my streak of 117 weeks of doing this show.

So when you write a review in iTunes it helps new people discover the show. A big thanks to Dr. Brad Miller, to JSelf93, to Chris Pelon, Roger Carr, Ostank, to Clean Colleen and Chef52 for giving us reviews on iTunes. We're holding a contest this month for another couple of days yet. First, everyone who gives us a review in iTunes get free copies of two of my books, *Money Words* and *Just Get Started*. You get free digital copies of these books and from all the entries we're going to draw one winner at random for our \$797 training that we just completed called, 'How to Profit from What You Already Know.

To enter, you simply subscribe to the podcast in iTunes and then give us an honest rating on iTunes. Be sure you either put your website URL in your reviews so we can contact you or email us after you publish your rating, that way if we draw your name we can contact you to let you know you've won. We can also send you your digital books that you win and you can also enter by leaving us a voicemail. Go to the bottom of this post at RayEdwards.com/117 and we'll have the drawing on June 15, just a couple days from now. We'll let you know if you're the winner and that's how that works.

It's simple and we really appreciate all the help we've received with this, thank you so much.

Tip of the Week

I found an app I really like that I'm going to share with you this week called 'Habit List'. It's for tracking habits. I've been reevaluating my goals as we come to the middle of the year and I realize more now than ever before that goal setting is great, I still believe in it, but what it really comes

down to is what we habitually do every single day. If we can develop habits, they will help us achieve our goals automagically, as my friend Raymond Aaron says.

If you go to the HabitList.com website for their app, they say, "Habit List includes everything you need to reach our goals, wrapped in a beautiful and intuitive interface. It motivates you, helps you stay focused and keeps you on track. It's for all the little things that make a big difference." I don't think it has everything you need to help you reach your goals, so if I were writing their copy I would probably ask them to revise that, but it's a great app for tracking your habits daily, weekly, monthly.

You can set it up however you want and I like the fact that you can track streaks. I have a streak going with this show, we've been doing this show now for 117 weeks in a row and that's a streak I don't want to break. The loner you make a streak the more you don't want to break it, right? So that's cool, and then you can be reminded of what habits are due today that you haven't done, if that's the case. You can also track the trends that you've developed with your habits.

The app is \$2.99. I love it and highly recommend it. Check it out.

Spiritual Foundations

I had the great honor and privilege of teaching in the Healing Rooms School of transformation last night, as I'm recording this and in fact, the Healing Rooms is a worldwide ministry that has thousands of healing rooms all across the world. If you've never heard of them check them out at HealingRooms.com.

What's done in a healing room is simply, if you need healing, be it physical or spiritual or emotional healing, you can go to healing rooms. It's non-denominational and they simply pray for you. They don't give you advice. They don't give you counseling and they certainly don't prescribe drugs or anything like that, they simply pray for you. A prayer team will lay hands on you, pray for you and many people are healed inside and out, as a result of the healing rooms. I love what they do.

I was able to teach last night and I was talking, not about healing, but about our job as Christians, not hiding out in the church building. It's to launch out into the world and having influence in our sphere of influence, where we've been placed. Wherever you are right now, God can use you as an influence for his kingdom and someone brought up the cultural influence of Hollywood, the music and movie industry and there's always a tinge when Christians talk about these things of negativity, like the terrible values that are being taught in movies and TV shows, it's horrible.

I have a different view. I see a lot of redemptive messages being played out in movies, television, books, music and you can find bad examples, of course you can if you go looking for them, but you can also find such great inspiring and surprising examples as well. I'm a fan of the TV show the Walking Dead and many of my Christian brothers and sisters probably think I'm under the influence of some demonic spirit watching these horrible weird demonic creatures roam the earth, eat human beings and do all the horrible things they do.

However, what they're missing is the fact that when I watch that show I can see the redemptive story, the spiritual message in that show and probably not intentionally, I have no idea what the writers of the show intended. It started out as a graphic novel probably. It wasn't in their minds to write some kind of veiled theological story, yet I look and see parallels that are pretty obvious to me that there's a story happening of the living people, who are clustering together in community

and trying to live out values of integrity, love, honesty and honor amidst a crazy world that's out to kill them, and how they remain good people in the face of horrifying conditions around them. That is an opportunity to teach biblical principles, whether you intend to or not, it's what's happening.

It turns out that faith, God and the bible are rather prominently featured in these episodes and what I shared with the class last night and what I'll share with you now is that I believe there's a great move of the people of God to influence the world. It's like we're an invasion force for the good. You watch movies and television shows and you will see the message of the gospel of Christ being slipped into scripts.

Even if you're watching a show where there's a scene where someone is standing in front of a crucifix hanging on a wall and they're contemplating doing something that's right or wrong, you have to remember that every visual element that shows up in a shot, be it on a TV show or in a movie is intentional it doesn't happen by accident. I just submit to you that if you look carefully you can see the influence of the people of the kingdom in the music industry, the publishing industry, the movie industry, and the healthcare industry, education and science communities.

We are there. Our people are there and they're having an influence for the good, and not necessarily to try to sneakily get our message in and convert people to our way of believing, but to demonstrate the love, the power and authority of Jesus Christ in the world today. He said, "By our love they would know we're his disciples." We are to go out in the world and do this; this is not just me making something up.

From the gospel of Matthew Chapter 28:18-20, I want to read to you what Jesus said. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

So my word for you this week in Spiritual Foundations is, go therefore, and make disciples.

Feature Presentation

Okay, sometimes let's just call it like it is. Sometimes customers are not right. That saying, 'the customer's always right is incorrect.' Sometimes customers are dishonest, abusive, and even psychopathic bullies. I have a customer a few years ago, I want to be respectful and careful not to name any names or point any fingers, but I have a customer who was just off the charts mentally disturbed.

This person was completely irrational in their dealings with my company. They engaged us to work for them and they made unreasonable demands. Any rational human being who looked at the facts of what happened would have realized that these demands were unreasonable.

This customer sent many abusive and threatening emails and finally, actually sent me an email personally and said, "If you don't do what I want I will smear your name across the Internet. I will report you to federal agencies and the very fact that I'm doing this will mar your record, whether you're found guilty or not, and I've done it to other people before and this person listed several people they had bullied into submission before and gave me links to the smear campaigns on the Internet and said this will happen to you if you don't do what I demand."

I realized, after I had engaged with this person far too long, that I was dealing with somebody who had a real mental problem and there was nothing I would be able to do to satisfy them. We engaged an attorney and got the Better Business Bureau to mediate and the BBB even found the person to be completely irrational and dismissed the entire thing. But the threat was there and the negative psychological energy was there.

It wasn't a pleasant experience. These things happen and 99% of the customers we deal with are happy and delighted with our products and services. Do we occasionally make mistakes? Yes, we do and we make them right and take care of them, but every once in a while we get some weirdo's who come in and make trouble and they are troublemakers.

I had one this week, which is what prompted me to think about this episode, because this is a problem that I know happens for a lot of people in business online. When you're in business online you've basically opened the doors of your store to the entire Internet and you and I both know that there are some disturbed, troubled individuals on the Internet. I'm not vindictive with these folks, which is why I'm not naming names or linking to them to smear their names.

I'm just saying that while I love them and empathize with whatever pain is causing them to do the things they're doing, we have to recognize that there comes a point when we cannot tolerate for ourselves and especially for our employees who have to deal with this on the front lines, abusive customers. People who are bullies that have found an avenue of bullying through business, because there's an attitude in business of, the customer's always right, and there's something called 'saving the sale'.

Many of you know this if you've worked for companies where you were in a selling position and you were told you need to save this sale, or save this revenue. Maybe you had to put up with things from customers that just weren't right. You had to listen to language and abusive threats and so forth that weren't right, because you were "saving the sale". It's not worth it, that's what I'm trying to tell you.

There comes a point where you can love people, but you can say, "Your behavior is affecting me and my company in a way that is not productive for either of us; therefore, you're not going to be allowed to be a customer of ours anymore.

So, how do you deal with abuse customers, and yet, also stay open to feedback that might be useful to you and your other customers? Sometimes when people complain they have a valid point. So here are seven tips for dealing with and recognizing abusive customers.

1. Have clear policies in place regarding the most common questions your customers may have.

Just because somebody complains because you're download procedure is confusing to them or because they felt the email wasn't clear that you sent them, doesn't mean they're being abusive or bullying. You need to have policies in place that instantly help you deal with common questions your customers may have. This may take the form of canned responses that explain certain things that you know you're going to get questions about.

It may involve changing some of your procedures so that the web pages or download pages are more easily understood by your customers, but have policies in place dealing with how you're going to answer the most common questions your customers may have.

2. Establish a procedure for processing feedback.

If you receive feedback from a customer that says hey, I don't like the way your product is formatted, because it's very confusing to me. That's feedback and I believe we need to be grateful for the feedback even if we don't agree with it. I'm learning still that sometimes even though I don't agree with it, I might need to rethink my position. I'll give you a for instance.

We just completed part one of a workbook that had lots of black formatting blocks in it, like bars that went across the page and borders and it looks really nice in the PDF and it looks nice when you print it out. Someone wrote to us and complained that it was using a lot of ink in their inkjet printer and my first reaction was that's ridiculous. If you are really worried about the \$.10 it's going to cost you to print that whole workbook then maybe you shouldn't have bought the product.

That was my first internal response, even though I never said that to anybody. Then I realized they have a valid point. It would be useful for me to offer a print-friendly version of that workbook, so we're reworking it and doing that. It was a good suggestion. So, our procedure for processing feedback is we receive the feedback, consider the feedback and ask ourselves, is this valid in some cases and should we do something to be responsive to this feedback.

Part of our procedure for feedback is always to be grateful for the feedback. If someone takes the time to give you feedback on your business, I interpret that as they care enough to offer me feedback and not just complain about it. I'm thankful for that.

3. Respond quickly and decisively.

Most temper tantrums by customers can be avoided by responding to their inquiries quickly, and customers can sometimes be irrational about this I admit, it's true. I had a customer this week who paid for something and they got... here's what happens in this particular product when you buy it. After you put your credit card information in and click the purchase button, the next page you're taken to in every single case is the registration page, where you yourself choose your username and password to access the product.

That's the only option you have. There is no other outcome that happens when you successfully pay for the product. Yet, I received an angry email from a customer in the middle of the night saying, "I bought your product but never got my username and password. I'm going to report you as a scam. You are a scam." Clearly, that was an over the top reaction from the customer and obviously, they were not paying attention to what happened on their computer screen and didn't read the instructions in front of them.

But, we responded quickly and decisively and said this is what happens when you purchase. This is how you now get your username and password and they sent another angry irrational email, so we simply said hey, this obviously isn't working out for you, we're really sorry. We refunded their money, not because they asked for it, but because it was the best option and we told them we hoped they would find something helpful to them.

This wasn't working for us and we responded quickly and decisively, not rudely. Never rude. There's no reason to be rude.

4. Identify bullies quickly and disengage politely.

When you find a bully, and you know, you'll always know when someone is being bullying. They're pushing you around and seeing if they can push your buttons and what they can get from you. Disengage. The more you engage with them, the more you argue and try to rationalize and

get them to see your point of view, the more they're going to bully you because they see that they've got you. They see they can tangle you up and get you all twisted in an emotional knot.

When you know you're dealing with a bully what you do is simply say, this relationship is not going to work, so thank you for your interest. We suggest you find someone where you can be happy with what they're doing and you end the relationship. There's nothing that says you have to do business with people.

5. Know when to fire a customer and do it sooner rather than later

You are perfectly within your rights to fire a customer and refuse to do business with somebody if they aren't going to be nice and civil. It doesn't mean they always have to agree with you. It doesn't mean they never have a complaint that may be legitimate. It may not be legitimate, but they think it's legitimate I can deal with that. What I will not tolerate are people who are abusive to my customer service people or abusive to me or simply over the top irrational in a way that tells me this person is troublemaker.

Look, some people are troublemakers, that's what they do to amuse themselves or to fill some emotional need that comes from a hurt that I don't know about, don't understand and frankly it's not my job to deal with in most cases, unless I feel prompted by God to do differently. Sometimes the proper response is to simply say, it's clear that doing business with my company is not working out, so let's end it now.

6. Realize that sometimes the relationship is just not right and end it.

This is different than what I was just talking about. Sometimes people buy products that aren't really helping them. We've occasionally have someone purchase our products that the individual in question was not very tech savvy. In fact, they had trouble with concepts like downloading and watching video online. In one case, I remember that we had a customer who purchased a product that was a tutorial on how to build a WordPress website.

Through an exchange of emails with this customer I realized this person is really struggling with the most basic concepts of this endeavor and it's probably not going to work out for them. I simply wrote back to them and suggested that maybe this isn't the avenue for them and then gave them other suggestions about other companies they might use. In fact, one suggestion I gave them was to go to [SquareSpace.com](https://www.squarespace.com). You don't have to do any technical stuff to build a website and they might want to consider working with them instead. I refunded their money.

I sent them to another vendor to help them get the result they were after. This is different than firing a customer because they're a bully. This is no firing a customer, it's helping them realize that maybe they made a choice that wasn't in their best interest and maybe there's a better choice for them to make. This will make them happier and will also make you happier in the long run.

7. Never engage in a public debate with a customer.

I see this often when people post complaints about a business or individual that the business or individual feels like it's their job to respond publicly and frankly, I've done this a couple times in the past when I was dealing with the mentally disturbed extortionist. I did respond publicly a couple times. I did so politely I didn't argue with them, but I realized after the fact that that was just feeding the fire. Don't do that. As much as you want to, don't.

It doesn't matter how perfect you are, you are going to have people who are going to say negative things about you and your business online and if they know what they're doing then they can make a lot of trouble for you, especially if you engage with them in the fight. So don't play that game, it's just not worth it.

By the way, after having said all this, let me underline the fact that not all customer complaints are bullying or abusive. Something to keep in mind that I learned a long time ago and I can't remember who I learned it from. I would give credit if I could remember it so perhaps you know who said this originally and you can pop it in the comments. Go to RayEdwards.com/117 and put the attribution in the comments. I would appreciate that.

It's this... most complaints are poorly communicated requests. Think about that. So, if someone complains that I don't understand your download procedure or if they complain your download procedure is stupid, that's a poorly communicated request. Ask yourself, what are they asking for here? They're really asking for a download procedure they can understand, so what can I do to make my download procedure easier to understand? That's a request.

So, when you make a mistake or you find something you can improve upon, admit it and correct it immediately, as fast as you can. That's what most of the questions and inquiries that we get are like. They're either something the customer didn't understand or something we can do a better job explaining, so it's not a case of bullying or being a troublemaker. I'm not talking about those things those things are a legitimate part of business.

When I talk about troublesome, problem customers I'm talking about the crazy antics of a few irrational, disturbed troublemakers that are over the top, vindictive, hateful, spiteful, bullying and abusive. Those are the kinds of customers we're talking about dealing with. Having a policy and philosophy in place of making sure you don't allow yourself to be bullied and you don't, for sure, allow your customer service staff or assistant's to be bullied or pushed around, because they shouldn't have to endure that, even if it costs you money.

As hard as it may be, don't let the crazy antics of a few troublemakers distort your perception of your customers. I said at the beginning of the session that 99.9% of our customers are delightful, wonderful people. I love my customers literally. I appreciate you so much for listening to this show, investing in our products and programs. I have a hard time expressing the gratitude that I feel everyday that I get to do what I do.

It's because all of you and I appreciate you so much for that. So I don't allow the misbehavior of a few folks to color my perception of everyone else and I urge you to adopt that same philosophy. If you get 99% positive feedback and 1% irrational criticism, recognize that the problem is likely not on your end.

What to Do Now

Leave a comment on the blog and until next time, I pray that God will continue to bless you and that He will keep on doing more for you than you can ask or even possibly imagine!

How do you take what I've given you in this episode and put it to work? Here are some steps you can take to put this week's episode content to work for you right away.

- Going back to our Spiritual Foundations section, ask yourself how, as a follower of Christ you can exert more influence for his kingdom in your so-called ordinary life, because there is no ordinary life. We are children of destiny. We have an extraordinary mission on the earth. Our delight, privilege and honor is to discover what it is. Ask yourself that and see if that doesn't make the day look different.
- Review the list of actions for dealing with abusive customers and start putting this into practice immediately.
- This might be a good time to review your customer records and ask yourself if there are a few stinkers you need to get rid of.

My assistant pointed out, one of the emails I eluded to earlier, she pointed out to me that this person has bought everything that you've offered in the last year and complained about every bit of it. We decided that maybe it's not right for them to continue doing business with us, because they just aren't going to be happy. We've bent over backwards and done all sorts of special things for this individual.

So, review your customer records and ask yourself, are there some folks who don't need to be your customers anymore? It's a totally valid response.

Those are your three action steps, and by the way we've started offering transcripts of the shows, which you can get on each episode's show notes. The transcripts will be available as soon as possible after the shows release. You can find the transcript for this episode when it's ready by going to RayEdwards.com/117. Transcripts, by the way, are provided by our friends at SuccessTranscripts.com, a great solution if you need your podcast, sermon, speech or other audio transcribed.

In wrapping up today's episode I would like to ask you this question. Have you ever had to deal with a crazy customer? How did you handle it? What suggestions do you have? Don't name any names, but I'd love it if you would share your story in the comments, as well as tips on how to deal with this situation. Go to RayEdwards.com/117 and share your crazy customer stories.

Until the next time my friends, I pray that God will continue to bless you in more ways than you can ask or even possibly imagine!