

Bad Hair Days

We will sometimes encounter customers who can quicken our pulse, make us go pale, send shivers down our spine, go weak in the knees, make our blood boil, and cause many other physical transformations. This, by the way, is not a matter of “if,” it is a matter of “when.” Some of these customers do not intentionally mean to do this to us, but there are others who come to the party with the intention to do us harm.

I truly believe that most customers who allow us to create high anxiety in ourselves (remember, no one can give us anxiety, we give it to ourselves), simply want empathy, to be heard, and want solutions to their problems. They don't want to fight with you and they don't want you mad at them. But in many cases our past dictates our future, so some customers, remembering a past experience in dealing with a similar situation, get hostile in preparation for the perceived battle they think they are in for. These people will come at you with their fangs out because they want to show you who the big dog on the block is, and how they are not going to be kicked all the way back to the porch.

Then, there are the “controllers,” who will come at you with all guns blazing, even with the smallest of problems, because they want to show you who is in control. By the way, this is not about you - it is all about them. Do not take their aggressive interaction or attacks personally, because in most cases, they were not seeking you out specifically, you just happen to be the first one to the scene of the accident. This is their life and this is the way they are with everyone, including family and friends. When I have encountered these people in my life, my first thought is: “Boy, I am glad I am not married to you.”

It does not make any difference whether it is the customer who wants solutions or the controller who loves to see you sweat; you need to always remain in control of your own emotions. They will try to intrude on your emotional space, and the controller will thrive on taking over your emotions. Do not let that happen under any circumstance. Take a deep breath; remind yourself that you are in charge and in control of your emotions, not them. Focus on the goal of solving their perceived problem, find the shortest path to that goal and do not get caught up in the emotional moment.

Once again, this will not be easy, because as humans, when we are pushed, we want to push back. Your mind is going to be screaming: “I would like to kick their butt all the way to the door!” But do not let yourself get pulled over to the dark side. Yes, think of Star Wars and remember that if you let the customer take control of your emotions, everyone loses. If you let them pull you over to the dark side, then you have given up your freedom, and surrendered to their power. Stand your emotional ground and keep calm no matter how painful it is feeling. You might feel like you need to get angry back in order to show them how powerful you are. WRONG! This only shows them how weak you are. The true power is in your control and in your ability to not let your decision making skills get washed away with your emotions.