



VISION2VOICE

INTERNAL
COMMUNICATIONS

Strategies for managing tough customers and stressful situations

What's ahead



1. Five step process for managing difficult situations
2. Supporting your each other
3. Rising above the situation and building resilience



VISION2VOICE

INTERNAL
COMMUNICATIONS

About me



Managing a difficult customer - a five-step process



Step 1 - Centre and protect yourself



- Designate a personal focus word such as: “still” or “whole.”
- Repeat this word in your head and take two deep breaths (or more) when you sense tensions rising.

Step 2 - Practice empathy



- While your customer's emotions are high, stay calm and sympathetic to their experience.
- Emotional reactions can offer important clues to help you better understand what is really going on? Are they angry, impatient, disgusted?
- Empathize that you understand their situation and can relate if you were in their shoes.

"I can see you are mad | frustrated | upset"



“

Empathy is simply listening, holding space, withholding judgement, emotionally connecting, and communicating that incredibly healing message of you're not alone.

Brené Brown

Empathy v. Sympathy

Empathy:

- Feeling with people
- Requires that we become vulnerable
- We connect with uncomfortable feelings within ourselves

Sympathy:

- Expressing concern for others
- But not feeling with them
- “drives disconnection”

Brené Brown video



Step 3 - Demonstrate Generosity



- Extend the most generous interpretation to the intentions, words and actions of others
- Work from assumptions of compassion and grace
- You don't know what that person is going through that has caused this reaction. They could be a bad person, or they could be someone having a bad day.



Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Step 4 - Listen

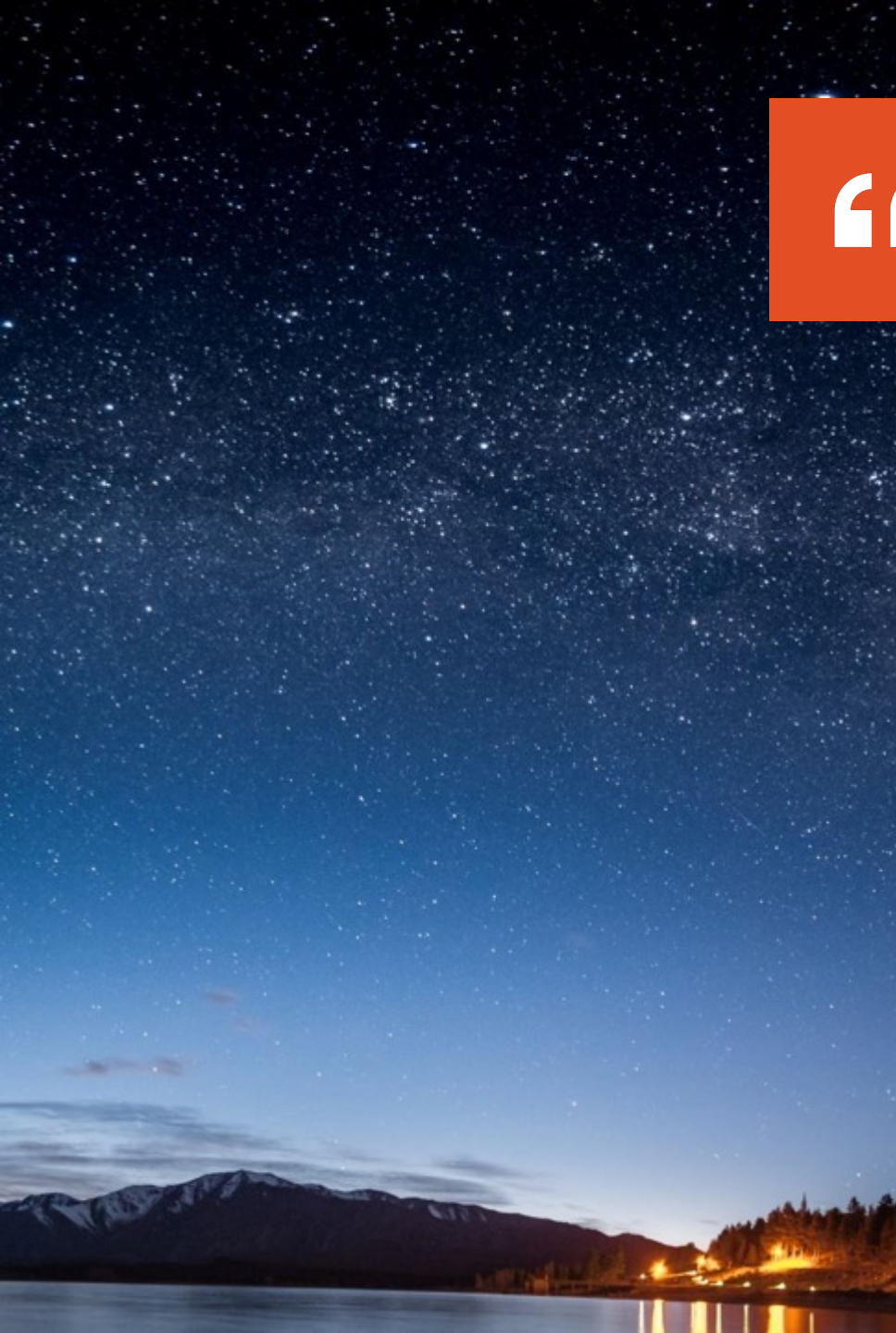


- Actively listen and thank them for their feedback. This transforms their grievances into an opportunity to connect with you. The customer may just need to be heard.
- Don't assume you know what went wrong.
- Ask questions to make sure you fully understand the issue.
- Repeat back what you have heard so you fully understand and can align into their experience with the intent to provide solutions.



Most people do not listen with the intent to understand, they listen with the intent to reply.

Stephen Covey



Active Listening—R.A.S.A.

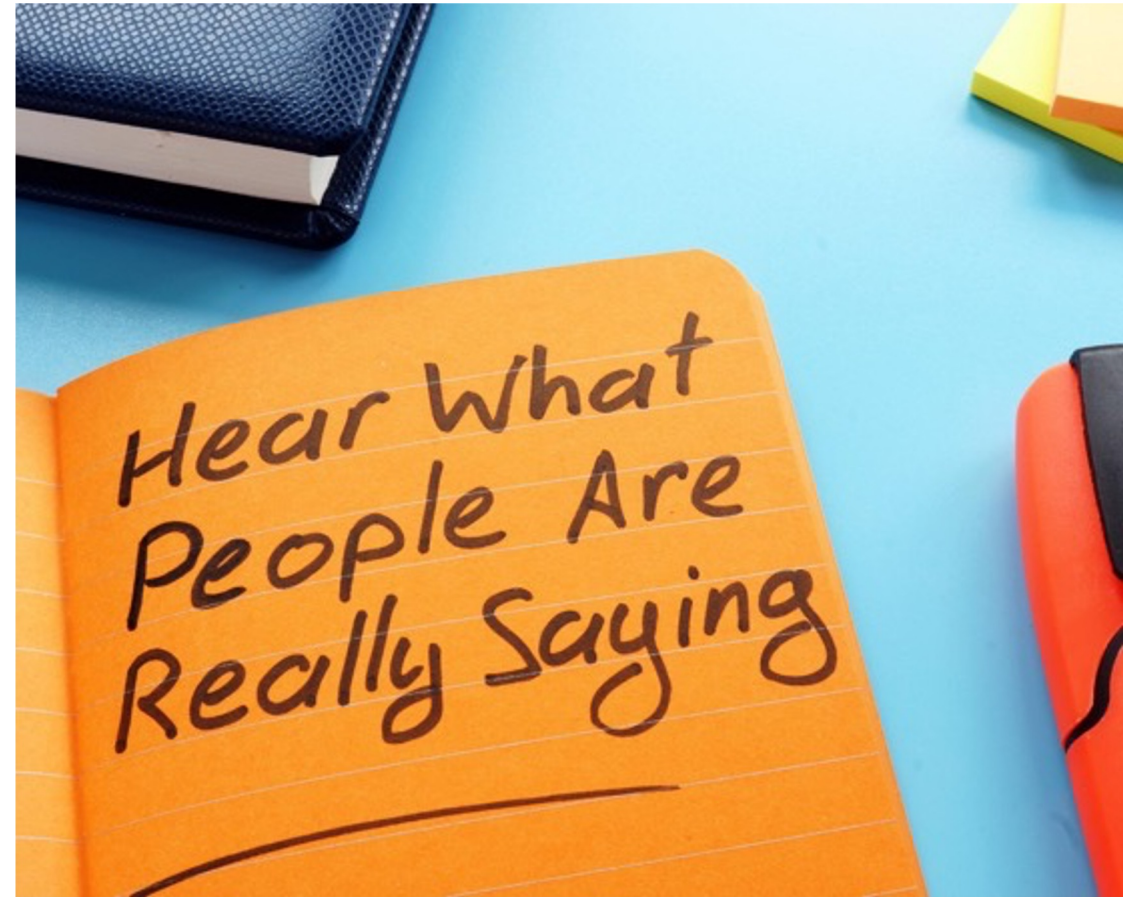
Receive

Appreciate

Summarize

Ask

Adapted from Julian Treasure
(<https://www.juliantreasure.com/>)



R.A.S.A.—Receive

Be present:

- look at the person
- avoid getting distracted by your own thoughts and judgments
- filter out other sounds
- don't interrupt

R.A.S.A.—Appreciate

Show that you are listening:

- body language and posture
- use encouraging words
- show curiosity

R.A.S.A.—Summarize

Paraphrase what you've heard:

- demonstrate understanding
- the word “so” is very important here: “so, you’re saying that...”

R.A.S.A.—Ask

Ask questions:

- request more detail
- clarify
- use open-ended questions to allow for elaboration

Step 5 - Solve



- Put the problem in front of you, not between you
- Offer options to rectify the situation. Continue offering; it may take time for your customer to “hear” your offer.
- Make important steps in problem resolution explicitly clear.

Solve

- Be helpful and focus on making their day better.
- Once everything is hammered out, make sure you thank the customer for bringing this problem to your attention. It shows that you value their opinion and their business. This also ends the confrontation on a good note and leaves the customer feeling appreciated and heard.

Discussion

- What are some of the scenarios you've encountered?
- What has worked and what hasn't worked?
- How do you think following the strategies you've learned will help?
- What's missing?

Supporting each other - a team response



Have a plan

- Establish a team norm such as a centering word that everyone can focus on and use to come together when conflict is arising.
- Pre-plan customer service solutions that can be offered in various situations, especially if managers cannot be present.

Help out

- A customer's anger can be infectious. Work to contain the situation.
- Supporting team members should also actively monitor what's happening without neglecting other customers or other critical tasks.
- Step in to help if you can.

Learn and grow

- Stuff happens
- Use it as an opportunity to learn, grown and get stronger as a team.
- Take the time to identify the tactics that work to achieve positive outcomes and fine-tune the team's approach to conflict resolution to increase the odds of turning negatives into positives.

After it is over

- After the situation has passed, connect with your teammate who directly interacted with the customer and practice your empathy skills.
- If possible, offer to take over their duties so they may take a moment to step away and regroup.
- Remember that stress affects both mind and body and they may need extra support.

Discussion

- What happens to the team dynamic when there is a difficult customer?
- What has worked and what hasn't worked?
- What's missing?



VISION2VOICE

INTERNAL
COMMUNICATIONS

Part 2 – Rising Above

How to reset and refocus after a difficult interaction





We can't rise strong when
we are on the run.

Brené Brown

Setting boundaries





Boundaries are made of Yes and No. Boundaries are our compass, the guidance system we use to make every single decision.

Sarri Gilman, *Transforming Your Boundaries*

Why do boundaries matter?

- Define our identity
- Establish order in our lives
- Protect us from others
- And protect us from ourselves!



“Where I end and you begin”

Boundaries set limits on ourselves and on others—two senses of self-control:

Taking ownership of our own thoughts, feelings, bodies, energy, time, possessions.

Making our thoughts, feelings, bodies, energy, time, possessions distinct from those of others

Resilience





What is Resilience?

Search



Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity.

- the ability to perform well under stress
- the ability to "bounce back" from difficulties or trauma



Resilience enables us to

- Overcome past difficulties
- Steer through everyday challenges
- Bounce back and move on when events take us off course
- Reach out to new experiences and challenges and towards our potential



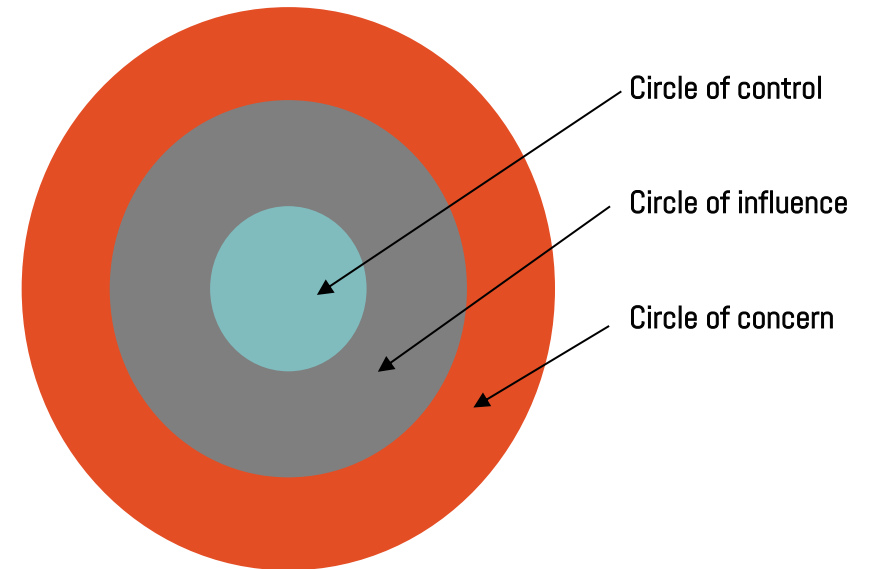
Resilient people get that s...t happens

- Suffering is part of human existence
- Don't ask, "why me?"
- Instead ask, "why not me?"



Selective Attention

- Resilient people are good at focusing on the things they can change and accepting the things they cannot
- “don’t lose what you have to what you’ve lost”
- Tune into the good—appreciate and be grateful for the good in our lives



Rising strong process



Brené Brown's rising strong process

1. Reckoning: walk into your story, pay attention to your emotions, rather than numbing or ignoring the discomfort.
2. Rumbling: own your story by being clear about what you've made up about the situation, other people and yourself.
3. Revolution: write a more courageous ending to the story by learning from failure and getting back out there to apply the learning.



VISION2VOICE

INTERNAL
COMMUNICATIONS

Where to find us!

Check out our monthly blog posts:
www.vision2voice/blog

