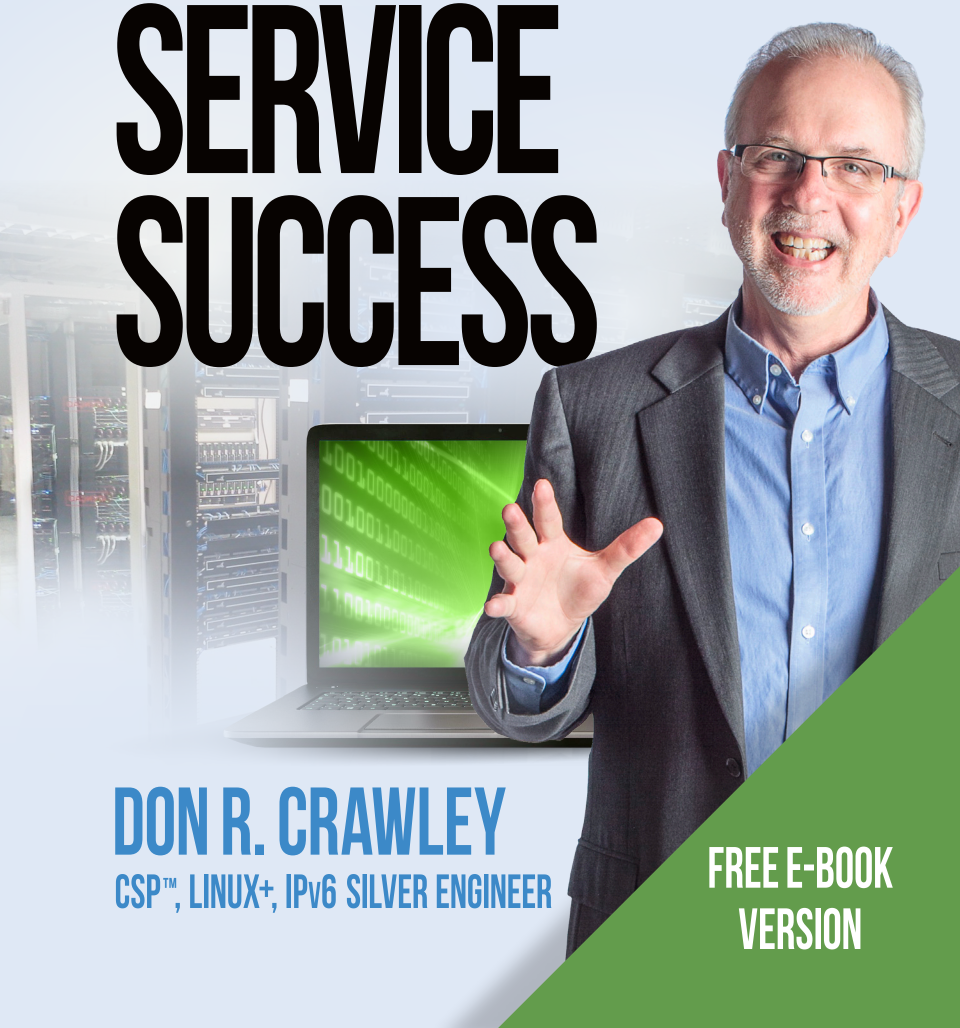
A COMPASSIONATE GEEK® KNOWLEDGE GUIDE

THE 5 PRINCIPLES OF
IT CUSTOMER SERVICE SUCCESS



DON R. CRAWLEY

CSP™, LINUX+, IPv6 SILVER ENGINEER

FREE E-BOOK VERSION

THE 5 PRINCIPLES OF

IT CUSTOMER SERVICE SUCCESS

THE 5 PRINCIPLES OF
IT CUSTOMER SERVICE SUCCESS

A COMPASSIONATE GEEK®
GUIDE FOR IT PROFESSIONALS

DON R. CRAWLEY

CSP™, LINUX+, IPv6 SILVER ENGINEER

This is a copyrighted work in which all rights are retained by the copyright holder. You may not copy this work in any form, nor change this work, nor store this document in a retrieval system, nor distribute or otherwise transmit this work in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the written prior permission of the copyright holder. The preceding restrictions apply to this document whether in whole or in part.

This book identifies and uses product names and services known to be trademarks, registered trademarks, or service marks of their respective holders. Such marks are used throughout this book in an editorial fashion only. Additionally, terms suspected of being trademarks, registered trademarks, or service marks have been appropriately capitalized, although Crawley International Inc. cannot attest to the accuracy of such information. Use of a term in this book should not be regarded as affecting the validity of any trademark, registered trademark, or service mark. Neither the author nor Crawley International, Inc. is associated with any vendor or product mentioned in this book.

For information about special discounts for bulk purchases, contact Crawley International Inc., PO Box 48094, Seattle, WA 98148-0094.

Telephone: (206) 988-5858
Email: don@doncrawley.com
Website: http://www.doncrawley.com/

Reasonable attempts have been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this publication as of the date on which it was written. This publication is distributed in the hope that it will be helpful, but there are no guarantees made as to the accuracy, reliability, or applicability of this information for any task or purpose whatsoever.

The author recommends that these techniques be used only as a guide to working with end users and customers. Under no circumstances should these techniques be considered universal rules for working with all people in all situations.

Copyright © 2016 Don R. Crawley. All rights reserved.

C’Est Bon Press
Seattle, Washington
United States of America

ISBN: 0-9836607-7-8
ISBN-13: 978-0-9836607-7-4
Library of Congress Control Number: 2016911770

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the millions of talented and hardworking IT people in the world, without whom we would not have the data networks that make possible worldwide sharing of knowledge. This worldwide collaboration has resulted in a global awakening the likes of which the world has not experienced since the Renaissance. If the world survives, it will be thanks, in large part, to the geeks and nerds.

In memory of Michael J. Costello.

CONTENTS

Preface 10

Acknowledgments 12

Chapter 1: An Introduction to Service 14

Introducing The 5 Principles of IT Customer Service Success 21

Chapter 2: The Principle of Competence 24

What Defines Deep Technical Competence? 25

How Much Technical Competence is Required? 26

The Necessary Level of Technical Competence Also Depends on the Individual 26

Our Actions Reveal The Truth of Our Desires 28

What Should You Take Away From This Chapter? 30

Chapter 3: The Principle of Compassion 32

Express Gratitude 35

Look for Commonality Instead of Differences 36

Look for Ways to Help 36

- Practice Being Kind 37
- Slow Down 37

Chapter 4: The Principle of Empathy 40

- Imagine How You Would Feel 42
- Listen 43
- Allow Human-to-Human Connection 43
- Use Empathetic Language 44
- Don’t Be Judgmental 44
- Practice Curiosity About Others 45
- Challenge Your Own Prejudices 45
- Look for Commonalities 46
- Lose the Labels 46

Chapter 5: The Principle of Listening 48

- Ignoring 50
- Pretend Listening 50
- Attentive Listening 51

Chapter 6: The Principle of Respect 54

- Eight Ways to Show Respect for Others 56
- Each of Us Represents All of Us 60

Epilogue 62

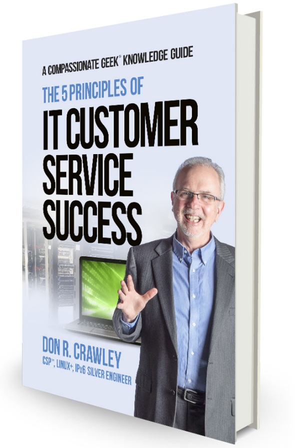
References 65

About the Author 66

Get the complete version of this book!

3 additional chapters and 7 bonus essays
on IT customer service

THE 5 PRINCIPLES OF
IT CUSTOMER SERVICE SUCCESS


A COMPASSIONATE GEEK® KNOWLEDGE GUIDE
THE 5 PRINCIPLES OF
IT CUSTOMER SERVICE SUCCESS
DON R. CRAWLEY
CSP™, LINUX+, IPv6 SILVER ENGINEER

The complete version of *The 5 Principles of IT Customer* Service offers a new and refreshing approach to IT customer service. Instead of prescribing rigid scripts and protocols, it shows the reader how to live a more compassionate and empathetic life as a pathway to delivering exceptional customer service. Ignoring the dictates of most customer service books, *The 5 Principles of IT Customer Service* focuses instead on the timeless principles of pride in your work combined with compassion and empathy for customers and colleagues, excellent listening skills, and an ability to treat all people with dignity and respect. It gives the reader credit for being able to think for her or himself without being burdened by phony sounding scripts or rigid protocols and teaches how to become an intrinsically more caring person, better equipped to understand the frustrations of an end user struggling with a computer or software problem.

In *The 5 Principles of IT Customer Service*, you'll learn:

- The importance of technical competence and how to achieve it
- How compassionate people know the right words to say in tough situations
- The power of empathy to defuse emotionally charged situations
- The top 10 ways to be a better listener
- The critical difference between feeling respect and showing respect and dignity

The 5 Principles of IT Customer Service manifests the author's firmly rooted belief in the basic goodness of all people and the ability of all people to grow, adapt, and achieve excellence in every aspect of their lives

**Get your copy at
www.doncrawley.com/5principles**

Also available for Amazon Kindle!

CONTACT DON CRAWLEY, CSP • PROFESSIONAL SPEAKER

Call (206) 988-5858 • **Email: don@doncrawley.com**
P.O. Box 48094, Seattle, WA 98148

CRAWLEY
INTERNATIONAL, INC.

PREFACE

This is *perhaps* my fourth IT customer service book. I say perhaps because I've been writing about IT customer service for about ten years in the form of workbooks, blogs, and books. This book, unlike my earlier books, attempts to deal only with point of view. It is not about scripts and protocols for dealing with IT customers. Instead, it focuses exclusively on how we see ourselves within an organization and within the context of human interactions.

I heard a speech by R. Robert Cueni in which he seemed to speak directly to me. After his talk, I asked him, only half joking, how he managed to direct his comments to me specifically. He replied that he writes speeches for himself and hopes that the lessons are relevant for others, too. So it is with my books. This book is written about my process of self-discovery, transformation, and growth. I hope the lessons I'm learning on this journey are as relevant and useful to you as they have been to me.

I developed the 5 Principles of IT Customer Service Success over a period of about ten years as I traveled through the United States, Canada, and other countries working with IT staff on both customer service skills and technical skills. I observed that there are two broad groups of IT people. In the first group are people who are enjoying interesting and satisfying careers and lives. In the second group are people whose careers and lives leave them bored and dissatisfied. The former are positive, upbeat, and a joy to be around. The latter are cynical, negative, and soul-draining. As I taught and worked with various groups of people, I began to wonder whether certain identifiable traits were associated with people in the first group that would be valuable for me to share with my students. As I continued my work with IT people, I saw five traits begin to emerge among people in the first group. These provided the foundation for the 5 Principles of IT Customer Service Success.

I've created boxed text at various points throughout the book to highlight key points and ideas for you to consider.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks, as usual, to Janet, my wife. Thanks, also, to Paul Senness and Sandy Brown who probably don't even realize how they model compassionate living for everyone around them.

CHAPTER 1:

AN INTRODUCTION TO SERVICE

People in the IT world ask whether technical skills or customer service skills are more important for someone working in IT. That's the wrong question. The right question is whether technical skills or *people* skills are more important. Not everyone who works in IT is involved in customer-facing jobs, but most of us are involved in jobs that require varying levels of human contact—and thus people skills. Even tenured coders must occasionally use people skills to persuade others of their ideas, to negotiate terms of employment, or to navigate an interpersonal issue with another human, perhaps a coworker or a boss.

Still, that doesn't tell us which is more important.

Harvard social psychologist Amy Cuddy suggests that when someone meets you for the first time, that person quickly answers two questions about you:

> *Can I trust this person?*
>
> *Can I respect this person?* (Cuddy 2015)

These two questions allow us to assess warmth and competence. Warmth is related to your people skills, and competence is related to your technical ability. The most successful people tend to have both.

My son, Jon, worked as an inside technical recruiter at Google. He observed that job candidates' technical skills would get them interviewed, but their collaborative skills would get them hired. The same phenomenon has been described by Dr. Daniel Goleman in his work on emotional intelligence. Goleman noticed that a person's IQ (intelligence quotient, or raw cognitive ability) would get him or her a job, but that person's EIQ (emotional intelligence quotient, or people skills) was the best predictor of long-term career success. (Goleman 1995)

Another way of looking at this is through the competence/charisma four-quadrant model.

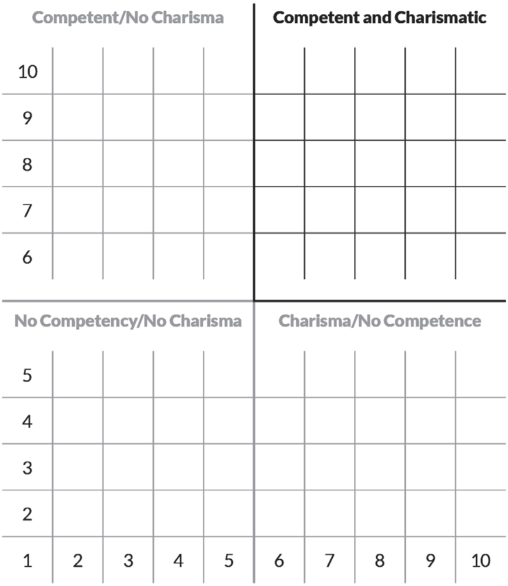

Competent/No Charisma
Competent and Charismatic
10
9
8
7
6
No Competency/No Charisma
Charisma/No Competence
5
4
3
2
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

Figure 1. The Competence/Charisma Four-Quadrant Model
© 2013, Don R. Crawley. All rights reserved.

In this model are four quadrants related to technical skills (competence) and people skills (charisma). For the purpose of this discussion, we will define competence as your ability to perform the core aspects of your job. If you are a surgeon, for example, your competence is your ability to perform surgical procedures. If you are an accountant, it is your ability to understand and implement tax laws, to abide by the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, and to balance books. If you are a server administrator, it is your ability to successfully design, configure, and manage a Linux file server or a Windows Domain Controller. For the purpose of this discussion, we will define charisma as your ability to understand, get along with, and influence people.

In the lower left quadrant are people who have neither competence nor charisma. These are people who have given up on themselves as well as on society. They don't pursue knowledge, they blame everyone else for their problems, and, in the worst cases, they exhibit extreme antisocial behavior, such as murder-suicides or terrorist acts. You certainly don't want to be in the lower left quadrant!

In the lower right quadrant are people who have no technical skills but who are good at dealing with other people. They are skilled at manipulating people, but they bring nothing of substance to the relationship. In extreme cases, these are con artists. You don't want to be in the lower right quadrant, either!

In the upper left quadrant are people who are competent but who lack charisma. They have technical skills—sometimes extremely well-developed technical skills—but they have trouble getting along well with others. The fictional character Dr. Sheldon Cooper from the television series *The Big Bang Theory* comes to mind.

We also see this sometimes with professional athletes. An athlete might perform exceptionally well on the gridiron or a basketball court but get in trouble with the police for antisocial behavior when the game is over. In the workplace, you might see a highly skilled computer programmer who is very good at coding but who lacks people skills. When I worked as a radio station program director, we had a chief engineer who was very talented and knowledgeable about electronics, but he was brusque and rude and had poor personal hygiene. He was so good at electronics that we tolerated his antisocial characteristics for a while. Ultimately, however, he became so difficult to work with that we replaced him with another highly competent engineer who was much easier to work with. The problem with people in the upper left quadrant is that they frequently have an unrealistic and inflated view of how good they are at their jobs. They overestimate their value to the organization or to other people. When it is time for layoffs or furloughs, their names are often at the top of the list. They might be surprised when the organization terminates their employment. They might blame the organization and its managers for incompetence and then go through the same experience with their next employer. Similarly, they might blame other people for not including them in social activities when the real reason why they are excluded is because they are so difficult and unpleasant to be around. There are very few people who are so technically skilled that people and organizations will tolerate bad interpersonal behavior over the long term.

A joke often told by professional speakers describes how a speaker asked his spouse how many truly great speakers were in the world. The reply? “One fewer than you think.” Be careful not to overestimate your value to an organization and not to underestimate the importance of people skills to your career success. Genuine humility and a sense of service to others are traits of many successful people.

In the upper right quadrant are people who have both competence and charisma. These are the leaders in our society. Several names may come to your mind, but I will mention three: Bill Gates, Mary Barra, and Elon Musk. (It is purely coincidental that two of the three are involved in the automotive industry.) These people combine high levels of technical competence with the ability to understand, get along with, and influence people. It is important to note that likeability is not necessarily part of this equation, although there are certainly times when it can be helpful. Characteristics of people in the upper right quadrant include a strong work ethic, an unquenchable thirst for knowledge and enlightenment, curiosity, and an understanding of the psychology of human relationships. The three people mentioned as examples of successful leaders are well known, but fame is not one of the requirements for making it into the upper right quadrant. You probably know individuals who are both technically gifted and who have an ability to understand, get along with, and influence other people.

Here’s how to use the model in your own life and career: Consider where you are at this moment in terms of both your competence (technical skills) and your charisma (people skills). It really doesn’t matter where you place yourself. What matters is that you honestly assess your personal strengths and weaknesses and then make a personal commitment to do something every day to move toward the upper right corner in the upper right quadrant. You might want to ask for input on your strengths and weaknesses from a mentor or similar person who is successful and whom you respect.

(Many of us are our own worst judges!) Your goal is to strive every day to be as good as possible with both your technical skills, or competence, and your people skills, or charisma.

You may be asking yourself which is more important—technical competence or people skills. Both are critically important. An accurate and thorough job description really answers the question. Having said that, however, in a technical job, your technical skills must come first. Without deep technical skills, you simply can't do your job. How deep depends on the job. We certainly wouldn't want an aircraft mechanic who was great with people but who was technically incompetent working on our airplane right before a flight. Nor would we want a neurosurgeon who had a great bedside manner but who had lousy surgical skills operating on our brain. That suggests that your technical skills are the most important skills to have. Remember, however, the Google principle of interviewing based on technical skills but hiring based on collaborative skills. Also, recall Daniel Goleman's ideas about IQ being the minimum cognitive ability (brainpower) required to do the job but EIQ being a better predictor of long-term career success. Again, the job description will define the level of technical competence required. Additionally, some organizations may hire based on a candidate's having a minimum acceptable level of technical competence with the idea that he or she can be trained on the job to a higher level of technical competence.

Some managers say they hire people based on their customer service skills because technical skills can be taught on the job, or vice versa. Although I've heard managers say that you can't teach people skills, this is simply wrong. The key is whether an individual is willing to invest the time and effort required to master people skills. Frankly, the same thing applies to technical skills.

An unwilling student is unlikely to learn. A willing and committed student can and will learn the needed skills for success.

INTRODUCING THE 5 PRINCIPLES OF IT CUSTOMER SERVICE SUCCESS

Let's begin by defining *principle*. A principle is a fundamental basis of something—in this case, IT customer service. It is also defined as a fundamental truth. The fundamental truth of customer service, IT or otherwise, is that it involves service to others: it is caring about your brothers and sisters, your fellow human beings.

In my previous books, I have described the four traits of customer service masters. Those four traits revolved around people skills; I took technical competence for granted. But as I have continued my work with people in technical positions, I realized that I was wrong to make that assumption. Thus I will speak of five traits, or principles, including technical competence.

The 5 Principles of IT Customer Service Success map to the competence/charisma model. The first, as I've mentioned, is the hard skill principle of deep technical competence, which obviously maps to the competence component of the model. The second through fifth are the soft skill principles of compassion, empathy, listening skills, and respect, which map to the charisma component.

Deep Technical Competence

From the customer's perspective, our deep technical competence is measured by our abilities to troubleshoot problems quickly, solve them permanently, and design systems that work seamlessly with minimal interaction.

Compassion

Compassion is combining a profound awareness of another's suffering with a desire to alleviate it. Compassion is noticing people who are hurting—then trying to help them.

Empathy

Empathy is the ability to put yourself in another's shoes, feeling what another is feeling. If you have ever wanted to jump through the phone and strangle a customer service representative for not understanding what you were going through, you have encountered a lack of empathy. On the other hand, if you have ever felt that a customer service representative really understood you, your problem, and your frustration, then you were encountering empathy.

Listening Skills

The ability to listen—*truly* listen—to our sisters and brothers is one of the greatest gifts we can give each other. When we focus on the other person and what he or she is saying instead of focusing on ourselves and what we want to say in response, we are telling the other person that he or she is important. We are saying that the other person's words, thoughts, and feelings matter.

Respect

Respect has two aspects. One is when we feel respect for another person because of his or her words and deeds. The other is when we treat people with respect and dignity. In the former instance, people must earn our respect. It is about how we feel about them; it is internal to us. In the latter instance, it is about our behavior toward other people. It is external to us. We need not feel respect for someone to treat him or her with dignity and respect.

THE 5 PRINCIPLES OF IT CUSTOMER SERVICE SUCCESS

HARD SKILLS	Deep technical competence
SOFT SKILLS	Compassion
	Empathy
	Listening skills
	Respect

In the following chapters, you will learn how the 5 Principles of IT Customer Service Success can shape your career, your relationships (both personal and professional), and even your life.

You can watch a video of my keynote address at which includes the 5 Principles at this link: http://www.doncrawley.com/KeynoteVideo.

CHAPTER 2:

THE PRINCIPLE OF COMPETENCE

Now let's explore the 5 Principles of IT Customer Service Success, the first of which is deep technical competence.

WHAT DEFINES DEEP TECHNICAL COMPETENCE?

Deep technical competence will be defined differently based on the job requirements, the organization, and the environment. The technical competence level required of a desktop support technician, for example, will be considerably different from that required of a database administrator working for a large ecommerce site or of someone developing encryption algorithms. Similarly, the technical competence requirements of someone working for a large enterprise organization will be different from those of someone working in a small business. This is not meant to suggest that one competence level is greater or more important than the other. It could be—or it could just be a different set of skills. Certainly the technical competence requirements for someone who is responsible to protect nuclear missile launch codes will differ from the requirements of someone whose job is maintaining a retail point-of-sale system. All jobs are important.

It is not a matter of valuing one type of job, organization, or environment over another but simply a matter of different situations' requiring different competencies at different levels.

HOW MUCH TECHNICAL COMPETENCE IS REQUIRED?

This question has a two-part answer. Certainly you must have deep enough technical competence to fulfill your job description. (Obviously, that will vary from one job to another.)

> *It is a good idea to occasionally review your job description to ensure that you are maintaining sufficient technical competence to meet (or exceed) the requirements of the description.*

THE NECESSARY LEVEL OF TECHNICAL COMPETENCE ALSO DEPENDS ON THE INDIVIDUAL

But also consider yourself, your career goals, and your personal commitment to excellence. Suppose that your job description requires that you have a technical competence level of (say) 60. It's an arbitrary number, but think of it as the minimum level of technical expertise required to do your job. Some people will be satisfied to perform at a level of 60, but they won't be able to solve more complex and interesting problems. They won't receive merit-based pay increases or promotions—and, frankly, they probably won't win much respect from their peers. They may even feel as if they know more than they actually do and might occasionally (although perhaps unintentionally) provide inaccurate information to customers, clients, colleagues, and end users. If you are satisfied with a minimum skill level similar to what I just described, you should be aware that your job is at risk thanks to automation and outsourcing.

Some other people might see 60 as the minimum skill level required for their job and then strive for higher levels of performance. Their natural curiosity leads them to use the minimum skill level as a launching point for learning as much about their work and the products they support as possible. Perhaps they strive for a technical competence level of 70. These individuals are more likely to get promotions and merit pay increases and to gain the respect of their peers.

Still others might strive for a technical competence level of 80. These individuals not only work to improve their technical competence but also are curious about the overall workings of the business. They are interested not only in IT systems but also in accounting, marketing, production, and all the various other systems and departments that contribute to the performance of the organization.

Still others may strive for a competence level of 90 or even higher. These individuals not only strive for excellence in technical competence but also branch out beyond their particular areas of specialization into all aspects of IT. They work to understand how the business works overall, and they are insatiably curious about how the world works. They are voracious readers, and their hobbies and interests stimulate them mentally. They are curious about other people, and they spend more time asking questions than making statements when in conversation.

The more valuable you make yourself, the more secure you will be in your job and career. This point is becoming more and more relevant as we see the growth of automation, including robotics, and outsourcing. The people whose jobs will be most secure in the future are those who strive to make themselves as valuable as possible to employers and customers.

OUR ACTIONS REVEAL THE TRUTH OF OUR DESIRES

A *New York Times* reader once commented, “We seem to get the life we want, whether or not we realize we want it.” Our actions reveal the truth about our desires. Those of us who focus our efforts, our time, and our lives on becoming the best we can be in every pursuit, whether technical, moral, academic, or otherwise, demonstrate what we really want in life. Oddly, even if we don’t feel compelled to achieve excellence, the act of pursuing excellence can reframe our innermost wants and desires and transform our lives. As we think, so we act—and, paradoxically, as we act, so we think. American football coach Vince Lombardi once said, “We are going to relentlessly chase perfection, knowing full well we will not catch it, because nothing is perfect. But we are going to relentlessly chase it, because in the process we will catch excellence.”

A good way to think about this is that you must have sufficient technical competence to solve technical problems quickly and permanently. In addition, your technical competence must be deep enough to allow you to anticipate and prevent future problems. You gain this deep level of skill through education, reading, experimenting, and experience. Attend seminars, workshops, and conferences. Go back to school to take courses related to your field. Work on professional level certifications such as those offered through CompTIA, Microsoft, Cisco, LPI, and other organizations. Set up test labs at home or in the office using virtualization tools such as VMWare, HyperV, or VirtualBox. Strive to be the best in the world at the technologies you support.

I once attended a day-long workshop on the Linux boot process to learn more about Linux-based operating systems. Although I learned a great deal about how Linux boots, I also learned about other operating systems. The instructor commented that the more you know about one operating system, the more you know about them all. In my experience, the more knowledge you have, the better you understand all things.

Many IT people, especially in the early stages of their careers, will build complex data networks in their homes for the purpose of experimenting and gaining practical, hands-on experience. I once had a client who wanted me to develop a workshop on VoIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol). Although I had a good understanding of VoIP, I didn’t have much hands-on experience with it. I decided to build an Asterisk server for my home and deployed extensions for my wife, each of my children, and myself. (The kids didn’t care for it at all, but they rolled their eyes and tolerated it!) The experience I gained in the process was invaluable in developing the training program for my client.

In the same way, even if you don’t become the best in the world, the act of striving for that type of performance will make you exceptionally excellent.

WHAT SHOULD YOU TAKE AWAY FROM THIS CHAPTER?

At the end of each of the five chapters in which I introduce the 5 Principles of IT Customer Service Success, I will provide one takeaway. Consider it an action item for you to work on.

Takeaway #1

Take personal responsibility to strive to be the best in the world at whatever it is you do. Your company and colleagues might not support you in your endeavor, but this is not about them. It's about you. Regardless of whether you become the best in the world, in striving toward that goal, you will achieve excellence.

CHAPTER 3:

THE PRINCIPLE OF COMPASSION

The second principle is compassion, the act of caring about the well-being of another.

In customer service, there are two distinct approaches to compassion. The first approach involves teaching people compassionate-sounding words and phrases to use when dealing with customers. Though well meant, this approach can make customer service providers sound stilted and phony. Even so, it is a widely used approach in customer service training. You've probably experienced a customer service or technical support representative saying memorized or scripted words such as, "Mr. Crawley, I'm sorry you are having a problem with our product, and I will get it taken care of for you." But there's no feeling behind the words—they are merely being recited verbatim, because the representative has been trained to use those exact words and phrases. But when words have no feeling behind them, they ring hollow. Customers can perceive the difference, even if they don't say anything about it.

It is understandable why companies might choose to use a scripted approach to customer service. Scripting provides consistency of support. Additionally, if a company's front-line support staff members must work with people from a different culture than their own, scripting provides a means of overcoming cultural differences. Although I understand why some companies choose a scripted approach to customer service, it is not a way to build positive relationships with customers, and it can be off-putting when executed poorly.

The second approach involves helping people develop an innate sense of compassion. When you are able to truly feel compassion, you don't need to be told the words to say or the actions to take. They come naturally.

Being compassionate means combining a profound awareness of another's suffering with a desire to alleviate it. When our end users and customers place themselves in our care, they are first of all human beings—our brothers and sisters. We might not like their political views, and we might not like how they look or act. Even if we don't like anything about them, they are still human beings deserving of our care, understanding, and respect. When you genuinely care about what happens to other people—when you are truly compassionate—you instinctively look for ways to better their experience.

There is a large body of anecdotal evidence to suggest that living a life filled with positive emotions can have a positive physiological effect on our bodies. Like most people, I enjoy hearing stories that reinforce my preconceived notions about the world. I also recognize that anecdotes are often great stories, but they are not scientific, and they can often lead to poor decision-making.

Perhaps like you, I've heard stories about how living a more compassionate and empathic life can improve our health, so I thought I'd see whether there's any research to back up the stories. I found that in 1997, the journal *Integrative Psychological* *and Behavioral Science* conducted a study of forty-five healthy adults. The adults in the experimental group experienced significant increases in positive emotions and significant decreases in negative emotions. Additionally, the experimental group experienced a 23 percent reduction in cortisol levels and a 100 percent increase in levels of the hormone DHEA. According to research conducted by the National Institutes of Health, DHEA is possibly effective for, among other things, countering the effects of aging on skin and bones. Cortisol is often cited as the “stress hormone,” for it is released during periods of high stress to help us deal with stressful situations. When present in the body for long durations, however, cortisol is associated with several negative effects, including impaired cognitive performance, decreased bone density, decrease in muscle tissue, higher blood pressure, and lowered immunity. It seems clear, then, that living a life filled with positive emotions, including compassion and empathy, can have powerful positive effects on our bodies and our minds. The question, then, is how we can become a more compassionate and empathic person. Here are five practices that can help you become even more compassionate and empathic than you already are.

EXPRESS GRATITUDE

Start by expressing gratitude. We’ve all been blessed in our lives. Certainly some people might seem to have been blessed more than others, but each of us has gifts for which we can be grateful. A gift might be something big and complex, such as a college education, or it might be something as simple as a beautiful day. Think of those things; reflect on them—focus on them.

LOOK FOR COMMONALITY INSTEAD OF DIFFERENCES

Practice thinking of what you have in common with others. As different as we all are, we are also quite similar. In a June 2007 article in The Optimist magazine (formerly *Ode Magazine*), writer Tijn Touber suggests an exercise. When you meet someone or even just see someone on the street, discreetly go through a reflection similar to this:

- *Like me, this person seeks happiness.*
- *Like me, this person wants to avoid suffering.*
- *Like me, this person has a history that includes suffering, loneliness, despair, and sadness.*
- *Like me, this person wants to fulfill his or her needs.*
- *Like me, this person is still learning about life.*

None of us has it all figured out.

LOOK FOR WAYS TO HELP

Look for ways to relieve suffering. They don't have to be anything big, although they might be. You might do something as simple as feeding a stranger's parking meter, picking up a piece of trash, holding the door for another person, or paying the toll of the driver behind you.

PRACTICE BEING KIND

Practice being kind, especially to people whom you don't like or trust. It is easy to be kind to your friends and to people whom you trust. It is a much greater challenge to be kind to people whom you find disagreeable. To really put yourself to the test, practice being kind, compassionate, and respectful, even (or especially) to people who mistreat you.

SLOW DOWN

Finally, slow down. I've noticed that I'm the least compassionate when I'm in the greatest hurry.

In a well-known experiment conducted at Princeton Theological Seminary (Batson, 1973) (Darley and Batson, 1973), several students were told to go to a different building to deliver a speech that was to be recorded. Half the students were assigned to give a talk on the Christian parable of the Good Samaritan, a story about compassion. The other half were given a different topic. The students were given different deadlines for completing the assignment. The students came from different moral and religious backgrounds. On the path to the second building, the students encountered an actor portraying a victim, slumped in a doorway, needing assistance. The objective of the study was to identify the conditions under which a student would stop to render aid.

The students who were in the greatest hurry were the least likely to stop and help.

The lesson seems obvious: slow down. To the best of your ability, slow down to allow yourself to become more compassionate.

Make compassion a daily practice. When you wake up in the morning, think of what you can do that day to be kinder and more caring—not only to your fellow humans but also to animals and the world around you. At the end of each day, pause and reflect on what you did during the day to be kinder and more compassionate. In short, *be intentional about being kind and compassionate.*

Of course, compassion is only one part of the formula for being great at serving others—but it is a great start. Not only will having a sense of compassion help us as we strive to improve our customer service, but it will also help make us better humans!

> *The best way to show compassion for customers is to handle their issues quickly, accurately, and efficiently in a positive, respectful, and professional manner.*

Takeaway #2

Being compassionate means that when others are hurting, you notice—and you try to help.

CHAPTER 4:

THE PRINCIPLE OF EMPATHY

The third principle is empathy—the ability to connect with another individual emotionally, to feel what he or she is feeling. It is often known as “putting yourself in someone else’s shoes.” In my customer service workshops, I recommend the use of empathetic phrases such as “I’d feel that way, too, if it happened to me” or “I can hear how frustrated you are, and I don’t blame you.” However, as with compassion, scripted or memorized words and phrases can seem hollow when they don’t come from the heart. For that reason, it is important to be authentic in your empathy. If you simply can’t relate to the other person’s situation, it is okay to say so when you combine it with honest human understanding. For example, you can say things like “I’ve never been in your situation, so I’m not going to tell you I understand. I can’t even imagine what that’s like, but I am going to do everything possible to help you.” Be careful though; if you are simply saying the words without trying to understand what the other person is going through, you’ll come across as phony or condescending. Your objective is to show sincere human-to-human empathy.

> *Paradoxically, the overuse of scripted empathetic words and phrases can convey a lack of empathy. Think about a time, for example, when you might have been trying to take care of an issue with a company and you just wanted to get the issue resolved. Unfortunately, the customer service rep might have kept reciting scripted and insincere (but well meant) empathetic words and phrases over and over, thus delaying the resolution of the problem! Offer a quick word of empathy and then take care of the issue.*

Empathy is the ability to put yourself in the other person's position, to feel and understand what he or she is are experiencing. Empathy, combined with technical competence, is a powerful formula for success at work.

Here are some ways to be more empathetic.

IMAGINE HOW YOU WOULD FEEL

Think about how your user or customer must feel when she or he is preparing a last-minute report for a boss and the printer dies. Imagine how an executive feels when he or she is getting ready to give an important presentation to a group of high-level execs and the computer locks up or the projector fails. Imagine the frustration of a researcher who has been collaborating with another researcher by working remotely—and then the Internet goes down. Imagine how you would feel if the same thing were to happen to you. Recall how you felt the last time you were working on a project, perhaps editing a long router configuration file, and your computer bluescreened.

LISTEN

Being a good listener shows compassion and helps establish empathy. When we truly listen to other people, we learn their story. Listen with the intent of understanding the speaker. Stop your mental chatter, put down your smartphone, and really listen to the other person. To make this work, when we listen, we must focus our attention entirely on the other person and avoid the temptation to mentally prepare our response, to interrupt, or be dismissive. (We'll talk more about this shortly—listening is also the fourth principle.)

ALLOW HUMAN-TO-HUMAN CONNECTION

Dr. Edward Hallowell coined the term human moment to describe a time when two people connect with each other. (Hallowell, 1999) According to Hallowell, technology has made it possible to do business without human contact. Yet it is through human contact that we develop human connections, which are a necessary ingredient of healthy living. If you are working in an IT department in which all customer contact is via telephone, chat, or email, find a way to connect in person with other people, even if they are not your customers. In Hallowell's human moment, you turn off the iPad, close the book, and give your full attention to the other person, and you do it in person.

USE EMPATHETIC LANGUAGE

Using phrases such as “I’m sorry that happened to you,” “I don’t blame you for feeling that way,” or “I’m sure I’d feel the same if I were in your position” can help us reflect on the other person’s experience. Of course, the words and phrases themselves don’t do the trick. You must be sincere in saying them, but the act of saying empathetic words and phrases can serve to make us more aware of what our sisters and brothers are experiencing. Sincerely expressed empathy can also help to defuse emotionally charged situations.

Be very careful about saying phrases such as “I know how you feel.” Even if you’ve had similar experiences to the person with whom you are speaking, you can’t know exactly how he or she is feeling. Even saying “I know how you feel” has the potential to devalue what the other person is saying and feeling. It makes the conversation more about you than the other person. Conversations with customers must be more about the customer than about you. Empathetic language can be very powerful. Used incorrectly, it can be powerfully bad.

DON’T BE JUDGMENTAL

As one human to another, it is not our job to be judgmental. Yes, we all do it, but within the context of a customer support interaction, being judgmental can create barriers to support. Understand that we all approach life from a unique perspective—that no one’s experience is the same as another’s. Sure, most of us are judgmental at times. In fact, being judgmental is part of our evolution. It allows us to escape threatening situations when we judge them to be dangerous. Still, our twenty-first-century world has become polarized and filled with judgments: *If you disagree with me, you are obviously wrong and not worthy of my time.* That sort of judgmental behavior can undermine relationships and even careers. Remember the words of author Tom Kida: “Don’t believe everything you think.” (Kida 2006)

PRACTICE CURIOSITY ABOUT OTHERS

Part of being empathetic is being interested in other people. Ask questions about where they are from, their work, and their background. Let them talk without jumping in with your own perspective. You can’t learn about other people while talking about yourself. Don’t force this type of conversation. Remember that your customer’s time is valuable and that his or her primary goal is to quickly resolve whatever the problem is. It’s also important to remember that your company’s time is valuable. In addition to respecting your customer’s time, you must also remember to respect your employer’s time.

CHALLENGE YOUR OWN PREJUDICES

Just because you believe something doesn’t mean that it is true or that it is the only truth. Author Tom Kida, as mentioned previously, says it very well in the title of his book *Don’t Believe Everything You Think*. Put yourself in situations in which you might hear philosophical or political discussions that differ from your beliefs and just listen. Seek to gain an understanding of the opinions of people whose beliefs are diametrically opposed to your own.

Recall Stephen Covey's fifth habit from the *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*: "Seek first to understand, then to be understood." (Covey, 1989, 2004)

LOOK FOR COMMONALITIES

As with compassion, look for commonalities instead of differences. Yes, each of us is unique, and we have many differences among us—but we also have a lot in common. You can't learn what you share with other people when you focus on your differences.

I have a good friend who believes that the Earth is 6,000 years old. I believe that it is about 4.5 billion years old. If I focused on his belief about the age of the Earth, I would miss the opportunities we enjoy to spend time together pursuing our shared interests.

LOSE THE LABELS

Avoid labeling people. It is a lot easier to hate a label than a person. When we get to know each other as people, not as liberals or conservatives; Democrats or Republicans; Christians, Jews, or Muslims; blacks or whites; men or women; or any other labels, we realize that in spite of our differences, we are all connected in many ways.

Being empathetic with customers builds trust, helps build stronger relationships, and reminds us that people are not machines; they have feelings.

Building empathy has all kinds of benefits. There are many studies showing that children who are taught empathy are less aggressive, have lower levels of stress and depression, and do better academically. (To learn more, search the Internet for “benefits of teaching children empathy.”)

Empathy is a foundation for morality. In the presence of empathy, it is difficult for cruelty to exist (Baren-Cohen 2011). Empathy heads off some conflicts before they start, prevents other conflicts from escalating, and is a key component in conflict resolution. If we are going to be masters at customer service, whether in IT or in any other field, our ability to empathize with our fellow humans is key to success in today’s workplace.

> *As with compassion, the best way to show empathy for customers is to handle their issues quickly and efficiently in a positive, respectful, and professional manner.*

Takeaway #3

Having empathy means that you try to understand and feel what others are feeling. Being empathetic means that you can relate to their frustration and anger even if you don’t agree with their reasons for being frustrated or angry.

CHAPTER 5:
THE PRINCIPLE OF LISTENING

The fourth principle is the ability to listen, meaning that your sole focus is on what the other person is saying. Being a great listener takes practice, so don't expect to master this skill the first time you try it. Effective listening means focusing on the other person instead of on yourself. Many of us listen attentively—and, while listening, prepare our response. To be a great listener, focus entirely on understanding what the other person is saying. Recalling Stephen Covey's wisdom in *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (Covey [1989] 2004): Listen with the intent to understand, not just respond. A technique that can help is to listen as though you are going to be tested on what is being said. If you know there's a quiz, you'll find a way to sharpen your focus on the speaker!

We listen at five different and distinct levels. How you listen to your end users and customers will significantly affect your success and that of the overall IT support team—and, for that matter, your entire organization. As important as how you actually listen is how you are perceived as listening.

Here are the five levels of listening.

IGNORING

The lowest level of listening is called ignoring—not listening at all. If you are distracted by anything while talking to users, they can get the impression that you are ignoring them. For example, suppose that while the user is speaking, you start a conversation with a colleague at work. You are ignoring your user. In your personal life, you may have experienced a time when you were trying to talk with someone who was Facebooking or engaged with his or her smartphone. You were in the same room with the other person, but you might as well have been a thousand miles away. That person was ignoring you. It didn't feel good, and that's exactly how our customers feel when we do other activities while they're trying to talk with us.

PRETEND LISTENING

Pretend listening is most easily explained in the face-to-face conversation when a person makes sounds as though he or she is listening but actually is not. On the phone it happens when you say things like "I see" and "okay" while working on an unrelated email, checking social media, or playing a computer game. People can tell when you are distracted.

SELECTIVE LISTENING

During selective listening, we pay attention to the speaker as long as he or she is talking about things we like or agree with. If the speaker moves on to other things, we slip down to pretend listening or ignore them altogether.

> *For years, I spoke of how teenagers were masters at the art of selective listening. Then it dawned on me where my teenagers had learned that skill. They had learned it from me! At that point, I began to work on changing my own listening behavior.*

ATTENTIVE LISTENING

Attentive listening occurs when we carefully listen to the other person, and while he or she is speaking, we decide whether we agree or disagree, determining whether the speaker is right or wrong while preparing our response.

At all four of these levels, it should be evident that we are listening to our own perspective—in most cases, intending to respond from our experience. Our focus is on ourselves, not the speaker.

EMPATHIC LISTENING

Empathic listening, also known as empathetic listening, is the highest level of listening. To be successful in providing IT support to end users, you must teach yourself to treat every call as though it is the first time you have ever heard of such a problem, even though you may have heard similar ones many times before. Discipline yourself to see it through the eyes of the user. Similarly, when a colleague is explaining a problem or an issue, you must listen closely, aiming to understand what he or she is saying. Empathic listening is the highest level of listening, and it is the hardest to accomplish.

To achieve empathic listening, slow down, be patient, talk less and listen more, ask questions when you do talk, and paraphrase what was said to ensure you that didn’t overlook anything.

At the end of the call or visit, briefly recap what you have discussed, what approach you are suggesting, and any follow-up needed on your part or the customer’s part. Be specific about how you will follow up, what you will do, what the customer can expect, and when it will happen.

A great way to evaluate whether you are doing empathic listening is to ask yourself *Where is my focus?* Is your focus on the other person, or is it on yourself?

As you think about the five levels of listening, consider that the first four levels are self-focused, whereas the fifth level (empathic listening) is focused on the user. When your focus is completely on the user and not on yourself, your level of service will be much higher.

Because many of us love lists, here is a top-ten list of ways to be a better listener:

10. Lose distractions.
9. Don't finish thoughts or sentences for the other person.
8. Don't get defensive.
7. Paraphrase what you just heard.
6. Listen to understand, not just respond.
5. Make good eye contact.
4. Allow natural pauses in the conversation.
3. Ask relevant and open-ended questions.
2. Keep an open mind.
1. Stop talking!

Being a good listener is one of the great gifts we can give to our brothers and sisters. When we listen—truly listen—to another person, we are saying that the other person is important to us and that we value what he or she says and thinks, even if we don't agree with it.

Takeaway #4

Being a good listener means focusing on what the other person is saying, not on what you want to say in response. You strive to understand the meaning of what is being said regardless of whether you agree with it.

CHAPTER 6:
THE PRINCIPLE OF RESPECT

The fifth principle is treating all people with respect, regardless of how we might feel about them. In fact, it is not necessary to respect someone to treat him or her with respect. Respecting someone is a matter of how you feel about that person and whether he or she has earned your respect. It is internal to you. Treating someone with respect, however, is external. It is about your behavior—and, frankly, is often a reflection of how you feel about yourself. People who have a high level of self-respect tend to treat everything around them more respectfully.

In our roles as providers of service to people, we can find ourselves dealing with people we don't like or respect. We maintain our own dignity and self-respect when we treat all living things respectfully. In Viktor Frankl's landmark book *Man's Search for Meaning*, he says that the true measure of an individual lies in his or her ability to maintain a sense of dignity in all circumstances (Frankl [1946, 1959, 1962] 1984). In short, even when we are treated disrespectfully by others, we must rise above the fray and act in a respectful and dignified manner. We are setting an example for others through our actions and behavior.

Sometimes doing this might seem difficult, especially when you don't like or respect the other person or when you feel that person has disrespected you in some way. But the act of treating someone with dignity and respect is about you and your behavior, not about the other person.

> *It is not necessary to respect someone to treat her or him with dignity and respect.*

EIGHT WAYS TO SHOW RESPECT FOR OTHERS

Be Punctual

If you say you are going to be somewhere at 2:00, then be there at 2:00. If you find yourself frequently saying things like "Sorry I'm late, the traffic was awful" or "Sorry I'm late, there was a train blocking traffic"—or "Sorry I'm late" followed by any other excuse—you need to leave earlier. We are not late because of traffic. We are late because we didn't leave early enough. Even more than that, Bernard Roth, in his book *The Achievement Habit: Stop Wishing, Start Doing, and Take Command of Your Life* (Roth 2015), points out that the real reason we're late to a meeting, for example, is because we did not consider that meeting important enough for us to be on time. If it is important enough, you'll leave early enough.

Consider this: If you have an opportunity to meet one of your heroes, but you must be at a certain location at exactly 10:00 a.m. or you'll lose the opportunity to meet him or her, you'll be there on time. No excuses!

I used to be perpetually late for almost everything. Then my boss at the time pointed out that it was rude and inconsiderate. I know it seems obvious, but I hadn't thought of it in those terms before. After that I began focusing on being punctual.

Put simply, being late is rude and disrespectful. It says that your time is more important than everyone else and that it is okay for other people to wait for you.

Lose the excuses, and start leaving earlier. My sons had a football coach who told his players, "If you are not fifteen minutes early, you are late!" That is good advice.

Compliment the Achievements of Others

It is important to be sincere in this. We're all better than we used to be at spotting phonies. If you are not really impressed by what the other person did, you can certainly be excited that he or she is excited. It's called *positive empathy*, and it's about another person's positive emotions. Here's an example: My wife, Janet, doesn't care a thing about computers or networks, but when I come running upstairs excited because I got an IPSEC VPN tunnel to work between two disparate devices, she gets excited for me. She doesn't give a rip about IPSEC VPNs, but she cares about me, so she shares in my excitement. Your customers and end users are important to you, too. Share in their excitement.

Be Sincere and Authentic

As I just mentioned, we're pretty good at spotting phonies. Avoid using a lot of the typical business clichés. You can certainly say things like "It is good to see you" or "I'm glad to help," but you should avoid automatic apologies. If you find yourself automatically saying "I apologize" to your customers, especially over and over, that is a sign that you are falling into cliché and insincerity.

Do What You Say You'll Do

It is really pretty simple. Just do what you say you'll do. If you are not going to be able to do it—whatever *it* is—don't say that you will.

If you commit to doing something and circumstances beyond your control prevent you from completing it, proactively get in touch with everyone who will be affected by the change to let him or her know about it. Deliver the news as quickly as possible.

Lose Sarcasm

Sarcasm is off-putting. It is condescending, and there's really no place for it in human relationships. Sure, it's fine if you are a standup comedian—but otherwise, don't do it.

Be Polite

Say "please" and "thank you." Follow the rules for being a good listener. Be gracious in your dealings with your fellow humans. Remember—this applies to everyone. One of the ways to measure a person is in how he or she treats people who have nothing to offer.

Respect Other People's Time

Much as with being punctual, this is about not wasting other people's time.

When you are speaking with other people, be aware of their schedules and time constraints. We all know people who talk on and on. Perhaps they are under the mistaken impression that they are fascinating conversationalists, but they are not. Being a good conversationalist is about listening as much as, or more than, you are talking. Perhaps these people are nervous and talking on and on is just nervous chatter. Regardless, remember that people have schedules, obligations, and work to get done. Though some light conversation is often okay, be careful about letting it go on too long, and watch for signs that the other person wants to get going.

Don't Make Fun of Other People

Some people feel that it is okay to laugh at other people and make fun of them. I wonder how they would feel if the tables were turned.

We all make mistakes, we all have struggles, and we all have our quirks and unique combinations of personality traits. When we make fun of other people, what we are really saying is *You're different from me. I'm right and you are wrong, so you need to change to be more like me*. That seems awfully presumptuous. Don't make fun of other people, and don't make jokes about other people, either to their face or behind their back. Instead, try to understand them, even if you don't agree with them.

Making fun of other people, joking about other people, and name-calling are all signs of small-mindedness.

EACH OF US REPRESENTS ALL OF US

In 2015, I had the honor of working with a group of IT staff members in the Sultanate of Oman. One of the people in my group pulled me aside during a break to tell me that Omanis are taught at an early age that each one of them represents the entire population of Oman. Think about it. If you meet only one person from Seattle, that person's behavior is a reflection on the entire population of Seattle. It's not fair at all, but it is often true that we form an opinion based on a single experience. If we IT people are rude, disrespectful, or condescending, we run the risk that others will form an opinion of all IT people as being rude, disrespectful, and condescending. However, if we are polite, helpful, and respectful, we go a long way toward helping people see all IT personnel as being polite, helpful, and respectful.

Each one of us represents all of us.

Takeaway #5

You need not respect someone to treat him or her with respect. The act of respecting someone is internal to you; it is how you feel about the other person. The act of treating someone with respect is external—it is about your behavior. It is also a reflection of your character and how you feel about yourself.

EPILOGUE

You are part of something very big and very important.

Today, there is a global awakening taking place, the likes of which we haven't seen since the Renaissance.

It started in 1959 when Paul Baran conceived the idea of packet switching networks. His idea was to create a fault-tolerant communications network which could withstand a Soviet Union first nuclear strike.

Over the next 10 years, people conducted research which led to the launch in 1969 of the ARPANET, the predecessor of today's global Internet. The goal of the ARPANET was to facilitate communication and collaboration among researchers.

Many people were and are involved in the development of the Internet. Some of the best known names include Vinton Cerf and Robert Kahn who created the TCP/IP protocols, Sir Tim Berners-Lee who created the World Wide Web, and Marc Andreesen who, with Eric Bina, created the first graphical point and click browser.

There are, of course, many other people who have contributed and continue to contribute to the amazing global communications and collaboration project known as the Internet. (You can learn more about the birth and growth of the Internet and the people involved by searching on “history of the Internet”.)

Today, people from across the globe can quickly share information and ideas. The Internet provides the opportunity for people in one part of the world to learn about people in another part of the world, to study art, science, or philosophy, to start businesses, to video chat with grandparents, and yes, to watch funny animal videos. Crowdsourcing makes it possible for an inventor to get funding for an invention that might change the world and for musicians and artists to get funding for new works that could make our world a better or more beautiful place. The Internet allows authors to connect directly with fans. New ideas can quickly spread worldwide.

This amazing phenomenon is possible thanks to the geeks and nerds of the world, people like you and me who have a fascination and knack for technology. Today’s data networks provide the foundational fabric that underlies all communication and which makes possible the sharing of ideas and information. It makes possible global collaboration. Whether you are a coder writing apps, a network manager in a small business, a database manager, a help desk technician, an enterprise solutions architect, or any other person involved in information systems and technology, your job is very important. Your skills are critical to the success of the organization you support. It is your technical knowledge that allows the other people in your organization to do their jobs more productively, effectively, and creatively. Never question the value of what you do.

You are extremely important to both your organization and to the world.

I'm honored to be a small part of the information systems and technology field. I wish you tremendous success and happiness in your life.

REFERENCES

Baren-Cohen, S. 2011. *The Science of Evil: On Empathy and the Origins of Cruelty*. New York: Basic Books.

Covey, S. R. (1989) 2004. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. New York: Free Press.

Cuddy, A. 2015. *Presence*. New York: Little, Brown, and Company.

Frankl, V. E. (1946, 1959, 1962) 1984. *Man's Search for Meaning*. New York: Pocket Books.

Goleman, D. D. 1995. *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*. New York: Bantam Dell.

Hallowell, E. 1999. "The Human Moment at Work." *Harvard Business Review* (January): 58–66. https://hbr.org/1999/01/the-human-moment-at-work.

Harris, S. 2013. *Lying*. Vancouver, BC: Four Elephants Press.

Kida, T. E. 2006. *Don't Believe Everything You Think: The 6 Basic Mistakes We Make in Thinking*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books.

Lally, P. v. 2010. "How are habits formed? Modelling habit formation in the real world." *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 998–1009.

Roth, B. 2015. *The Achievement Habit: Stop Wishing, Start Doing, and Take Command of Your Life*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

Runion, M. 2010. *Power Phrases: The Perfect Words to Say It Right and Get the Results You Want*. New York: Morgan James Publishing.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Don R. Crawley is a lifelong geek. He holds multiple technical certifications and has written eight books for IT pros on topics ranging from Cisco firewalls and Linux servers to compassionate customer service. He lives with Janet, his wife, in Seattle, Washington, where he enjoys watching the ships on Puget Sound and laughing with his family. In his spare time, he plays the pipe organ.

Learn more about Don at www.doncrawley.com. Follow him on Twitter: @DonCrawley, Facebook: www.fb.com/DonRCrawley, and LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/doncrawley.

Book Don for your next meeting, conference, or convention: www.doncrawley.com/info or call him at (206) 988-5858. Watch his demo video at www.doncrawley.com/demoreel.

THE COMPASSIONATE
GEEK®

CSP · MEMBER NSA® NATIONAL SPEAKERS ASSOCIATION

Customer Service Skills for Tech People

PROGRAMS

- *Keynote: How to be a Compassionate Geek* (20 to 90 minutes)
- *Training: Customer Service, Compassion, and Computers: Making Them Work Together to Enhance Customer Relationships* (3 to 12 hours)

www.doncrawley.com/presentations

WHAT CLIENTS HAVE TO SAY:

"Don was very approachable and helpful ... He knew the material well and seemed to personally be interested and into it."

—Facebook, Navid Mansourian

"His thought-provoking testimonies, suggestions and advice given during his presentation were eye opening, even though I thought going in that I knew how to show compassion to my 'customers' when providing technology support. I would highly recommend Don."

—DISC Conference, Rc

www.doncrawley.com/customer-reviews

HOW TO BE A COMPASSIONATE GEEK

Success strategies for you and your IT staff

- Improve collaboration and productivity
- Implement the five principles of IT customer service
- Develop emotional intelligence skills
- Learn solid skills for dealing with difficult customers
- Build excellent listening skills
- Uncover ways to show you care
- Master communication through email and other text-based communication tools
- Learn how to say "no" without alienating your end user
- Learn how to manage your stress

www.doncrawley.com/presentations

Request information online at www.doncrawley.com/info

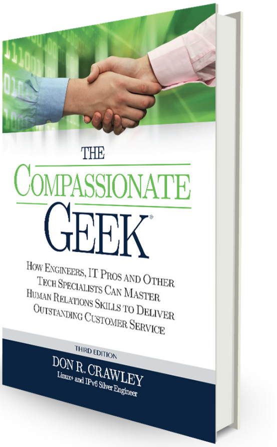
CONTACT DON CRAWLEY, CSP • PROFESSIONAL SPEAKER

Call (206) 988-5858 • **Email: don@doncrawley.com**
P.O. Box 48094, Seattle, WA 98148

CRAWLEY
INTERNATIONAL, INC.

THE COMPASSIONATE GEEK:

How Engineers, IT Pros, and Other Tech Specialists Can Master Human Relations Skills to Deliver Outstanding Customer Service


THE
COMPASSIONATE
GEEK
How Engineers, IT Pros and Other Tech Specialists Can Master Human Relations Skills to Deliver Outstanding Customer Service
THIRD EDITION
DON R. CRAWLEY
Linux+ and IPv6 Silver Engineer

Now in its third edition, *The Compassionate Geek* is the definitive guide for delivering amazing customer service to customers and end-users. Filled with practical tips, best practices and real-world techniques, *The Compassionate Geek* is a quick read with equally fast results. Each chapter contains a reflection and discussion section to help improve customer service skills. Inside are lots of personal stories and examples of mistakes made and lessons learned in addition to an entire chapter on overcoming personal and professional obstacles. All of the information is presented in a straightforward style that can be understood and used right away. There's nothing foo-foo, just down-to-earth tips and technical support best practices learned from years of working with technical staff and demanding customers and end-users.

Available in both paperback and Kindle editions!

READER COMMENTS

"I highly recommend this concise book to anyone providing customer service in any field—it's that good and that helpful."

—S. Wilde

"*The Compassionate Geek* is a guide to better customer service, and to leading a better life."

—C. Gebben

"I cannot say enough good things about this book! It delivers exactly what it promises. I highly recommend this book for ANY customer service rep, especially those in IT."

—M. Johnson

Get your copy at www.doncrawley.com/tcg

Order today and save $5.00. Use the promo code WSE2FQY8 when you check out.

CONTACT DON CRAWLEY, CSP • PROFESSIONAL SPEAKER

Call (206) 988-5858 • **Email: don@doncrawley.com**
P.O. Box 48094, Seattle, WA 98148

CRAWLEY
INTERNATIONAL, INC.

Business & Economics / Customer Service

A COMPASSIONATE GEEK® KNOWLEDGE GUIDE

THE 5 PRINCIPLES OF IT CUSTOMER SERVICE SUCCESS

Bringing Humanity Into The World Of Technology

In this simple guide, noted IT author and speaker Don R. Crawley explains the five skills required for success in an IT career. Based on years of work as a technical trainer and writer, combined with extensive travel and dealing with IT people from a variety of different cultures, *The 5 Principles* gives today's IT person (and any other technical person) insights into not only the technical parts of their job, but also clues for dealing with their customer and colleagues.

By adopting *The 5 Principles* in your career and in every aspect of your life, you'll learn how to lead a richer and more fulfilling life and career.

Don R. Crawley, CSP™, Linux+ and IPv6 Silver Engineer is a lifetime geek, plus speaker and author of six books ranging in subject from Cisco to Linux to compassionate communication. His focus is on helping IT and other technical staff to master the arts of customer service and communication. He has more than four decades experience working with workplace technology and automation and holds multiple technical certifications.

Visit Don on the Web at www.doncrawley.com