

Replace Negative Words With Positive Words



How Words Affect Us

Words can incite anger or invoke passion. They can bring people together or tear them apart. Words can uphold the truth or nurture a lie. We use words to encompass history, to describe the natural universe, and even to conjure realistic visions of things that exist only in fantasy. By Esther Lombardi



Jackson Drew explores the impact of positive and negative words on ourselves and others. — What if the words we say to ourselves and others impact not just our feelings, but our physiology? As Jackson Drew explains, our brains are wired to respond more favorably to positive words. And in this delightful talk, Jackson gives us a peek into his research.

Click the link to view the video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WGapwV3Kw8Q>

Negative Phrases That We Should Not Say to Members

AVOID...	REPLACE WITH...
"We regret any inconvenience this may have caused"	"I'm sorry that your experience was... [reflect the customer's language – so long as it wasn't rude!]"
"Our records indicate..."	"I have reviewed your online account and I see that..."
"Please do not hesitate to contact us"	"Please contact us if you have any questions about your... . We're happy to help."
"Your feedback will be shared with the appropriate department"	"I will share your feedback about... with our [insert name of relevant department]."
"Please do not reply to this message as the mailbox is not monitored"	"For questions about... contact: xxx.blah.com or call: 01234 567 890."

"We regret any inconvenience this may have caused"

The use of the words **may**, and **any** can sound passive-aggressive; it is as if we are casting doubt on the fact that there was a problem in the first place. Using the word "**inconvenience**" for something that was supposed to be convenient but just did not turn out that way is perfectly acceptable. But it is better to reframe from using the word "inconvenience" as a blanket term.

We should not respond to a member who is expressing a great deal of worry and emotion, with "I'm sorry for the inconvenience"

It is better to say- "I'm sorry that your experience was... (insert the word that the customer used to explain their experience- so long as it is not rude "

"Our records indicate"

When we use this generic phrase, we miss the opportunity to demonstrate that we have just acted on the member's behalf. It is better to use first person and active verbs in these scenarios, because it helps to reassure the members that you, as the ERS representative, are looking at current information.

It is better to say- "I have reviewed your account and I see that ..."

Negative Phrases That We Should Not Say to Members

AVOID...	REPLACE WITH...
"I'm sorry that you've felt the need to complain"	"I'm sorry, I can appreciate how {insert problem] must have been frustrating for you."
"You may find it quicker to get the answer you need from our website at blah.com"	"Let me direct you to the page o the website that gives you the information/Let me ping you a link to the information."
"I don't know"	"To find out, what I'm going to do is ..."
"Is there anything else that I can help you with? (when the customer hasn't had their original query resolved)"	"I'm sorry that you've had to contact us. I will raise the issue with the [insert] team to ensure that this doesn't happen again in the future."
"It's our policy. There's nothing else I can do...."	"What I can do for you is..."
"I don't need to pass this chat to a manager. I can help you!"	"Can you tell me a little more about it, please?"

"I don't know"

This reflects badly on the agency, as it implies that you, as the agency's representative, are ill-informed. Instead, you can highlight what you do know, what you have done, or are doing to solve the member's query.

It is better to say- "I will find out." "What I am going to do is ..."

"I don't need to pass this chat/call to a manager. I can help you"

The members are likely stressed if they wish to speak to a manager right away, so we need to first show empathy and ask probing questions to find the underlying cause of the issue ourselves.

It is better to say—" Can you tell me a little more about what happened, please?"

A Little Empathy Goes A Long Way



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5m7JWiVCx7k>

Click the link to view the video

Emotional Intelligence is the skill behind empathy. While anyone can show empathy through acknowledging the caller's issue, taking ownership of the member's problem and offering reassurance, only someone with high Emotional Intelligence will know how much of each is required, for each caller.

Key Ingredients of Showing Empathy:

1. Active listening and asking respectful questions to understand the full extent of the query
2. Acknowledging how the member feels (now you know the full details)
3. Reassuring the caller that you will help to resolve the issue
4. Taking ownership of the issue/ taking the burden away from the member
5. Providing a sense of immediacy
6. Making a commitment to the member