



Tips for Dealing with ANGRY People

By Audie McCarthy, Marrek Solutions Inc.

Dealing with our own anger is one thing. Dealing with another angry person is another. When we are angry we feel we have every right to be angry. We can justify our feelings. When someone else is angry, we just can't figure them out. We don't understand what is wrong with them.

Dealing with angry people requires a combination of strategies and techniques including:

- Communication skills
- Problem Solving skills
- Relationship building

However, sometimes you just don't have time to build a relationship. Such is the case when you are in a customer service position. You only have a few minutes with each customer whether you are on the phone or face to face. Dealing with the angry customer has to be quick to avoid escalation of the anger.

Here are some suggestions.

1. Be as empathetic and understanding as you possibly can. This will help diffuse the anger. It is hard to stay angry at someone who agrees you have a problem.
2. Don't take it personally, take it professionally. They are not angry at YOU. They are angry with the company, the product, the process – not YOU.
3. Respond in a positive, self - controlled way. Assure them you will do your best to help them. Responding with the same attitude they have will only make them angrier.
4. Listen to them. Maintain eye contact. Paraphrase what they are saying. Determine what the real issue is and try and respond to it.
5. Solve the problem right away, if you possibly can. If you can't, then get help.
6. Don't be judgmental. It is not up to you to decide whether the individual has the right to be angry or not.
7. Find something to agree with them on. E.g., "Yes, I agree. The wait is far too long; however we are short staffed today and will do our best to serve you promptly"
8. Negotiate a win – win whenever possible.
9. Use the person's name.
10. Slow down and lower your speaking voice.
11. Sit down if possible.
12. Allow the person to talk – don't interrupt
13. Deal with feelings first, then issues.