



HOW TO HANDLE COMPLAINTS WITH CLASS!

I recently took a dream trip to Europe. This was my first holiday in many years. The goal was to go big or go home. The itinerary was a week in an outrageously opulent Roman Palazzo, followed by a posh cruise on the 5-star luxury ship, Queen Victoria. This was a bucket-list, Champagne Odyssey, high times on the high seas! My mantra was: Carpe Diem, Baby!

Yes, I learned a lot about Caesar, Hadrian and Michelangelo. I earned an honorary PHD in gluttony devouring crazy quantities of pizza and Prosecco. But an important take-home lesson I gleaned had nothing to do with geography or gastronomy. My epiphany was inspired by the ship's Purser. In passing, I commented to him that the level of staff service aboard Cunard was outstanding. He explained that the crew were trained to follow a simple 4-step protocol when handling guest complaints. He called this the L.A.S.T. formula: LISTEN- clarify the facts and details; APOLOGIZE- express sincere regret for the inconvenience and distress; SOLVE THE ISSUE- offer an alternative or remedy; THANK- appreciate their business and patience.

This formula radiates class and common sense. It can be successfully applied to healing wounds in domestic situations as well as handling stress in business. In preparation for this article, I tried the L.A.S.T. technique with a client and it worked! This formula diffuses anger and frustration, restores civility and goodwill and helps mend bruised and broken expectations. Presto, the problem is fixed! Brilliant! Try it.

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