

Action Tip 6 – Bite Your Tongue Before Interrupting

I feel like I've never had a problem with interrupting people while they are speaking to me. I've always been a fairly patient person and willing to let people finish what they are trying to say before responding. I never really thought this would be a bad thing until I worked for UPS customer service. Part of their job performance was to maintain an average call length of so many seconds, usually around 180 or 3 minutes. I found it difficult to meet this expectation because I would always give the customer a chance to talk and express themselves to make sure that they were satisfied I understood their problem and what I was doing to resolve it.

So, I was placed in the position of balancing ending the call quickly and efficiently but still leave the customer feeling satisfied and that I had listened to them and resolved their problem. My high call time average held me back from getting raises and promotions. Eventually I found myself not listening to the customers because I was so preoccupied with worry about how long the call was taking, trying to figure out how to politely cut into the conversation and steer it back in a direction I wanted it to go which was ending the call. I was no longer caring about them or their problems. I was worried about my problem and the inconvenience they were causing me by talking so long.

I look back on the experience and hope that some of the habits I picked up working there still don't take place in my conversations with other people today. I don't like it when people tune me out when I'm talking to them. I like to know that my feelings are understood and that the person I'm talking to can either sympathize, provide me with answers to my questions, or help me solve my problem. I want to make sure I do the same as well when someone is speaking to me, and you can't do that effectively if you're interrupting and not getting the entire message clearly.