



# Handling Emotionally-Charged Customers with Empathic Listening

## CCSMG Spring Conference

May 2017



CHEMICALS & ALLIED  
INDUSTRIES CUSTOMER  
SERVICE MANAGEMENT  
GROUP



Communico

**Tom Larkin**

**Communico Ltd.**

*Leaders in service  
culture change, training  
and development*

**Presentation Outline**  
40 minutes

- ➔ Current reality of customer experience
- ➔ The best approach to emotionally-charged interactions
  - Empathic responses and the language of engagement
- ➔ The Four Levels of Listening
- ➔ Sample responses based on **your** questions (*thank you!*)
- ➔ Ways to increase empathic listening
- ➔ QA and Empathic toolkit support

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Contributions**  
*What situations do you encounter?*

Share a challenging example or suggest a scenario

- 
- 
- 
- 

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

---



Emotion is the chief source of all becoming conscious.  
There can be no transforming of darkness into light and of apathy into movement without emotion.

- C.G. Jung

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Current Reality of Customer Experience

Context:	Problem:	Result:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Websites, automation</li><li>• Increased unfriendliness</li><li>• Greater customer effort</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Employees handle more difficult and hostile interactions</li><li>• Depersonalized indifference</li><li>• We lose the human touch</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Higher burnout and turnover</li><li>• Higher customer dissatisfaction</li><li>• Lower scores on quality metrics</li></ul>

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Responding to the Challenge

- A service culture that reflects human touch
- Sharpen skills to align with **your** service culture through empathic listening



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### First Key Skill

**What is Empathy?**

1. A supportive approach within a dialogue that expresses feelings of concern for the other
2. The capacity to put one's self in another's shoes
3. Working to understand the feelings and issues someone is experiencing
4. All of the above

---

---

---

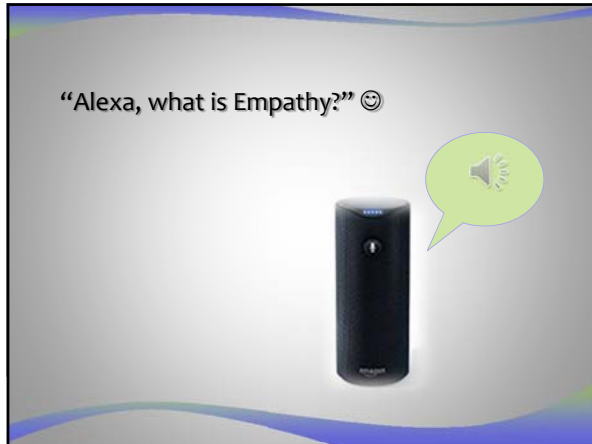
---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

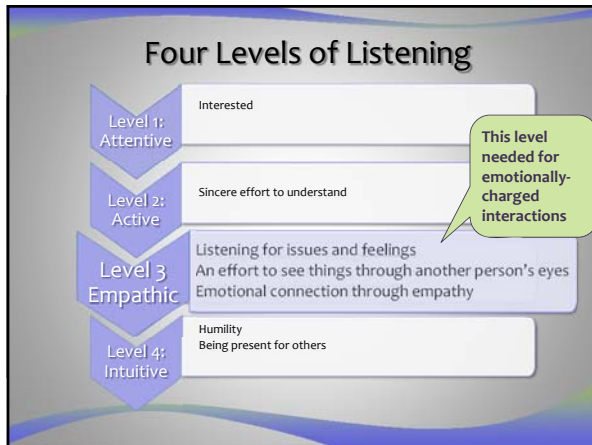
---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

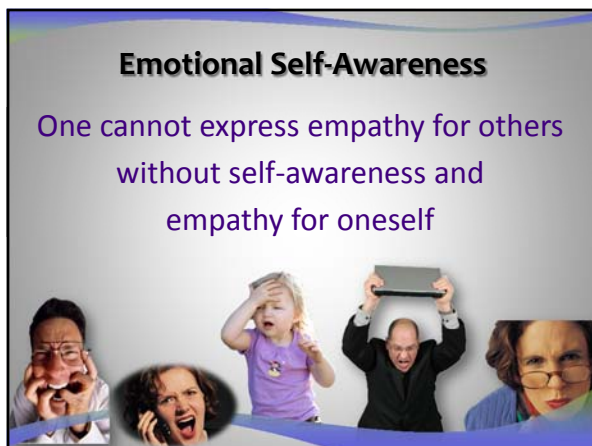
---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Build an Emotional Vocabulary

frustrated nervous hopeful irritable doomed  
cautious adventurous doubtful dejected  
alert drained bored eager concerned  
furious angry thrilled appreciated embarrassed  
mad anxious energetic apathetic excited  
sad grateful helpless overwhelmed  
confused relieved

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

### Sharpen Empathic Listening

1. *Attend*
2. *Perceive* and acknowledge
3. *Respond*



---

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

### Show Caring Accountability



---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

### Show Caring Accountability

- 1) Capture
- 2) Paraphrase
- 3) Collaborate



---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

### Empathic Responses to Submissions

Emotionally-charged challenge (inbound calls):

- 1) Customer does not want to hear 'no' for the answer
- 2) Customer does not agree with the decision
- 3) Customer is irate and asks for a manager at the beginning of the call



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### What to Avoid:

Tragic Phrases put gas on the fire  
Limit catastrophic emotional meltdowns

- I know how you feel.
- Why did you do that?
- I'm sorry you feel that way.

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

**What to Avoid:**  
Tragic Phrases put gas on the fire  
Limit emotionally ballistic meltdowns

- ◆ *That's our policy.*
- ◆ *No, I don't think we can do that.*
- ◆ *I'll have to ask my manager.*
- ◆ *There's nothing I can do.*



---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

**Responses to Submissions**

- 1) At what point do you exert yourself to take control of a call going awry
- 2) How to respond to a customer who is using obscene language
- 3) How to change the direction of an emotionally-charged conversation



---

---

---

---

---

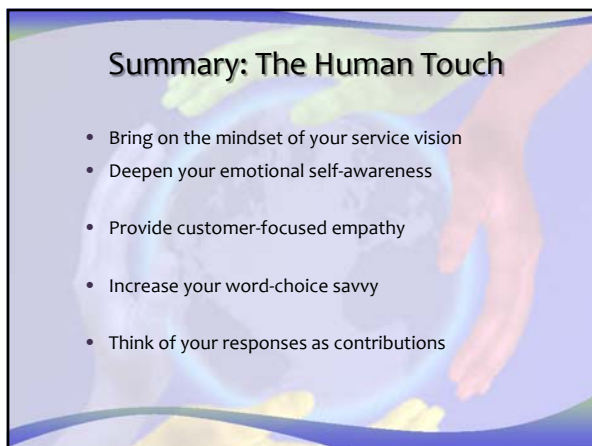
---

---

---

**Summary: The Human Touch**

- Bring on the mindset of your service vision
- Deepen your emotional self-awareness
- Provide customer-focused empathy
- Increase your word-choice savvy
- Think of your responses as contributions



---

---

---

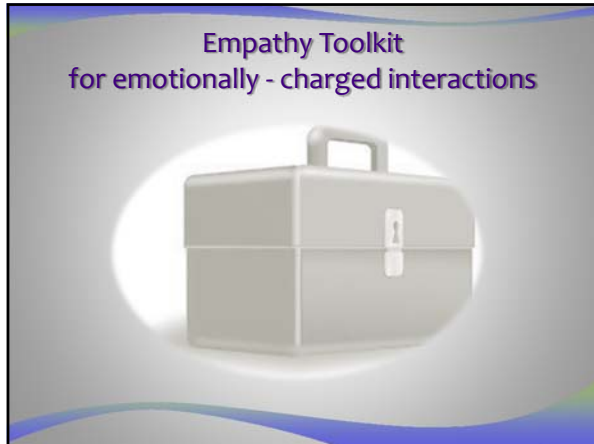
---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---