

JOURNEY WORDS™

52 Strategies to Achieve Great Service

Dee Dee Raap

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PRAISE FOR JOURNEYWORDS™

“Dee Dee articulates so well much of what we all should know but we easily forget as we get busy in our work. Each JourneyWord gives solid ideas we can implement. This is a great addition to my customer service resources!”

Mary Johns - Director at Siouxland Libraries

“Dee Dee’s gift to all of us is a simple message with a powerful impact: we all serve, and our service matters. This book will inspire you to give your best service, every day.”

Steve Erpenbach - President & CEO at SDSU Foundation

“JourneyWords defines what we are about in health care and how we go about creating the very best patient experience possible. When I finished the book, I found the quotes, your insights and even the pictures popping into my mind. Good books stay with you and yours does.”

Rex Walk - Healthcare Executive

“I love Dee Dee’s book! It gives you simple, effective strategies and tips for creating the kind of service that builds the kind of loyalty we strive for at BankWest.”

Kristin Brost - Vice President/Marketing Development at BankWest

“The strategies and insights in JourneyWords will set you apart from the competition. Your employees will get it—they’ll know the role service plays in building customer loyalty, and they’ll love the encouragement Dee Dee gives them to deliver great service.”

Jackie Haggart-Tuschen - Executive Director at Avera McKennan Fitness Center

“As my supervisor while I was developing South Dakota’s first official Film Office, Dee Dee Raap was always in search of the best methods to most effectively provide customer service. In my case, some of those tips helped in successfully luring films such as ‘Dances With Wolves,’ and ‘Armageddon’ to our borders. Her support was critical to the success of the program, which brought hundreds of jobs, thousands of dollars in economic benefit, and millions of dollars’ worth of international tourism attention to our state.”

“Moving forward, Dee Dee has carved a successful career for herself in customer service training for one simple reason...she lives what she teaches and organizes it in a useful way for the rest of us. On any given day, as she herself well knows, we may simply need to put one foot in front of the other as we find our way on the paths of our own journeys. Simply taking a moment to reacquaint ourselves with the advice, techniques and encouragement she provides in this book may just provide that spark of needed inspiration or value. And then to pass that spark on to our “customers,” whoever they may be. That’s the real value of these ‘JourneyWords.’”

Gary Keller - Smith & Keller Communications



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OTHER BOOKS BY DEE DEE RAAP

Dear Mom:
Remembering, Celebrating, Healing

Find Your Pink Flamingos:
Celebrating the Gifts of a Mom

Customer Service For Kids:
Simple Strategies to Achieve Great Service for Children
(e-book)



FOREWORD

Authentic. That word best defines Dee Dee Raap. I'm glad it's one of her 52 JourneyWords (see page 18) because you'll be able to see how she defines it in her own words. Now I want to take a moment to define Dee Dee in my own words.

She has an insatiable appetite to help people and organizations improve. Her secret? She cares. In my journeys through television, politics and marketing, I've worked with my share of consultants. Authentic never defined my experiences... until I met Dee Dee.

We've worked together almost from the day we met in 2003. I've had her:

- **Facilitate opinionated city councilors**
- **Organize non-profit goal setting**
- **Keynote large professional groups**
- **Counsel employees one-on-one**
- **Coach for customer service as a marketing strategy**

She approaches each assignment with passion and determination to deliver. Her results are measurable. SDN Communications raised its customer satisfaction scores by seven points under her coaching!

Dee Dee knows words matter. That's the beauty of this book: one meaningful word a week to make you and/or your organization better.

Dee Dee is right. Life is a journey. I'm grateful that our professional paths crossed, not only because of how she's improved me and the organizations in which I work, but most importantly because of the authentic gift of friendship she's given me. I treasure that.

Vernon Brown



INTRODUCTION

I once heard someone say if information was all we needed to succeed, we'd all be skinny, healthy and rich. We all need “how-to” information to achieve great service: how to communicate, how to solve problems, how to authentically connect with the customer. But we also need “why-to” inspiration if our goal is to achieve really great service.

The “why” is simple. We all serve, regardless of title or job function, and how well we serve matters. Today's customers have many options, and they expect, want and deserve a great experience when they choose to do business with you. After all, it's what you promise on your web site and in your marketing materials—what I call your Service Brand Promise, and delivering it builds your credibility and transforms service into an effective, affordable marketing strategy. The results? Customer loyalty. And loyal customers stay with you, tell others about you and buy more from you—all factors that help grow your business, all related to customer service.

Great service has a wonderful bonus: every strategy that creates great service also creates great internal service, the teamwork critical for service success. The same strategies that achieve great service help build a culture where employees are fully engaged, solve problems and practice core values that connect with customers and co-workers. A culture focused on service gives you more than just great service and customer loyalty—it creates an environment where employee satisfaction is high, and that, in turn, helps sustain great service.

JourneyWords™ is my set of inspirational strategies that are designed to give you both the “how-to” and the “why-to” for great service. This book also showcases 52 inspirational photos and 52 motivating quotes. Plus, it offers more than 135 tips to take action on those strategies.



INTRODUCTION

One of my favorite photos in the entire book is the cover photo of Land's End, the very southern tip of the Baja peninsula. Land's End has served as a compass in my life for 10 years, a place I go to restore my sense of balance and direction. Land's End has given guidance to mariners for centuries. Its solid arch, known as “ los arcos” or “the tip of Baja” reminds me of the strength of values that guide us in all we do.

Another favorite photograph in this book is the World War II picture of my aunt and uncle. I hope it inspires a sense of gratitude for service at all levels—customer, co-worker, community and country—as a reminder that we all serve, and that our service is meaningful.

Service is a journey. We navigate it every day with JourneyWords™ like Compass of Values, Attitude, Communication and Teamwork that bring out the best in us, which in turn, helps us deliver great service and build customer loyalty. It's my goal that this little book encourages you to take a big journey of being your personal best, every day. The “why-to” is simple: it's good for the customer, your co-workers and you!

My best wishes for a great service journey!

Dee Dee Raap

☙ ACCOUNTABILITY

Being accountable means delivering to the customer that which was promised: the product they purchased **AND** great service.

When you are accountable, it means the customer can trust you to deliver both, and if something goes wrong, you can be trusted to make things right.

Accountability says “You can count on me!” It implies responsibility for our actions and our products.

You can offer that accountability to customers by simply being your personal best every day.

It’s a personal connection that makes service great.

TIPS:

- A very simple way to show you are willing to be held accountable is by giving the customer your name—and a telephone number/ e-mail address. Business cards, name badges and a handshake with a *“Hi! I’m Jenny. How may I help you?”* all work well.
- Offer the highest level of service by following up with a phone call to ask questions and let the customer know you are available to answer any questions.



**“TO GIVE REAL SERVICE YOU
MUST ADD SOMETHING WHICH CANNOT
BE BOUGHT OR MEASURED WITH MONEY,
AND THAT IS SINCERITY AND INTEGRITY.”**

— DONALD A. ADAMS 15

COURAGE

The courage to show up every day being your personal best is courage in action. Life gets complicated and life can be hard. Some days, making a decision to work with a positive attitude and tackle the projects before you takes courage.

When we point a finger at someone, the other fingers

point back at us. Instead, let's have the courage to change what we can about ourselves. We can always improve our attitude, our communication, our desire to listen and our willingness to serve.

When something isn't going quite right, have the courage to look within and change what you can.

TIPS:

- Know that you are a competent, caring person and your service makes a real difference to your customers.
- Don't procrastinate. Be confident in your ability to find solutions. Gear up and tackle the hard stuff right away.
- Decide every day to aim for personal excellence. You deserve it, and so do your customers and co-workers!



**“COURAGE ISN’T ALWAYS A LION’S ROAR.
OFTEN IT’S THE QUIET VOICE IN YOUR HEAD
SAYING ‘I’LL TRY AGAIN TOMORROW.’”**

GRATITUDE

Oprah Winfrey once said if the only prayer we said was “*thanks*,” it would be enough.

We tend to value that which we appreciate. Show appreciation to your customers by saying ***thank you***.

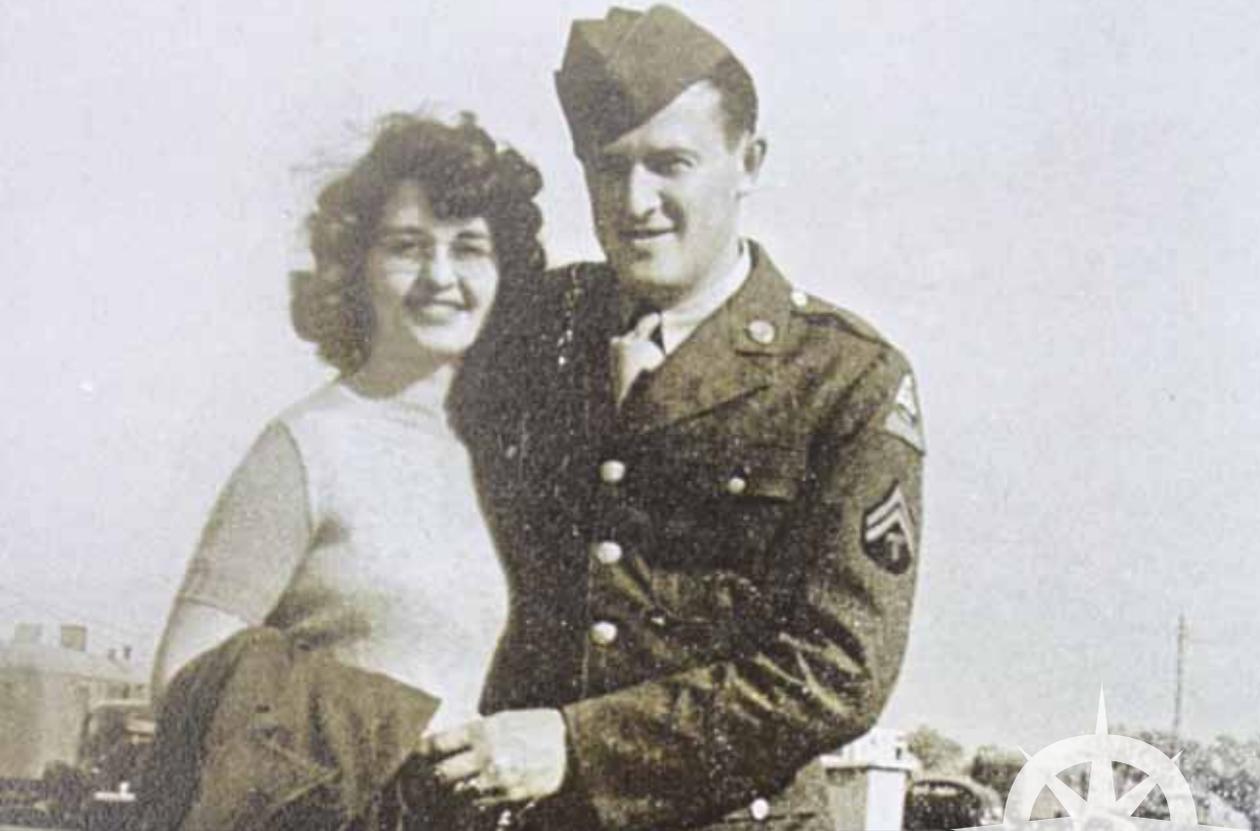
I’ve conducted more than 50 employee and customer focus groups and hundreds of surveys

in my career. Never once has a customer or employee told me they left an organization because they were thanked too many times.

Counting your blessings is a great way to create “an attitude of gratitude.” Saying thank you to customers is critical to adding value to their experience.

TIPS:

- Count your blessings before you even get out of bed.
- When you face burnout or something ugly in life, find one thing that has gone right, focus on it, and express gratitude.
- When you experience loss, look at what you have left, rather than focus on what you’ve lost.



**“OF ALL THE ATTITUDES WE CAN
ACQUIRE, SURELY THE ATTITUDE OF
GRATITUDE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT AND
BY FAR THE MOST LIFE-CHANGING”**

— ZIG ZIGLAR 69

HUMOR

In a focus group, I asked a woman who had survived serious brain surgery what the hospital could have done to have made her stay a “WOW.” When she replied, “Well.... *they could have made it fun,*” I decided there’s room for more humor in customer service. Laughter is a healthy response to life because laughter decreases stress.

Laughter lightens the load and connects you to customers. When you laugh at yourself, you set a positive tone that says, “*This is going to be fun—not painful!*”

Time flies. It might as well fly with some humor.

Make a customer’s day with a smile and a bit of humor.

TIPS:

- Lighten the service journey with laughter to create a positive tone and make service fun.
- Humor connects us to others—as long as we laugh WITH them, not AT them.
- Take time to read the Sunday comics and watch your favorite TV sitcom. Soak it up, then use good-natured humor to make service fun.



**“HUMOR IS THE SHORTEST
DISTANCE BETWEEN TWO PEOPLE.”**

— VICTOR BORGE 79

OPTIMISM

Optimism is something we can learn. It's also something we were probably taught, but we just didn't know it.

Did your mom tell you to find the silver lining in every cloud? Or to count your blessings? I didn't want to hear either of those when I was in a grumpy mood as a child, but she was right. Now I look for the good even in the negative, and try to

remember to count my blessings to remind myself how much good I have in my life.

In service, optimism is a mindset and a value that helps you find solutions to problems, concerns and issues that surface. It's a mindset that says there is always a way, always an idea that can make a difference for a customer.

TIPS:

- Practice optimism by waking up with a smile on your face and seeing the world as a pretty amazing place.
- Look for the good in the bad. Find a way to resolve an issue in a way that leaves room for a positive relationship.
- Memorize Helen Keller's words: ***“Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement.”***



**“AN OPTIMIST SEES THE OPPORTUNITY IN
EVERY DIFFICULTY.”**

— WINSTON CHURCHILL 97

QUALITY

Your organization is committed to quality. Quality service, quality products, quality people. The commitment to quality gets tested many times every day. Each interaction with each customer is an opportunity to serve with quality.

What is quality? Giving things your best effort at that time, in that place, at that moment with that customer.

It's easy to focus on quality. It's a mindset, an attitude that says the customer is the focus.

The customer is important.

Quality is the active communication that says with words, tone of voice and body language that this is what you're doing and it's very important.

It not because of who you are or your title, but because of the person you are serving.

And that kind of quality service creates customer loyalty.

TIPS:

- Always be on the lookout for a better way of doing things.
- Remember that what you do says a great deal about you, and that quality is always in style.
- Product knowledge is a big part of quality. Learn as much as you can about your organization so you can easily share with customers information that will help them buy more from you.



“QUALITY IS EVERYONE’S RESPONSIBILITY.”

— W. EDWARDS DEMING 101