

Hello there,

This month's 'Happy Client' is a continuation of last month's musings where I compared managing the relationship you have with the small children in your care, to the relationship with your clients. If you're new here, you can read last month's edition [here](#).

Listening and acting on what you hear

My boys do not listen, and it drives me crazy, but I know it's par for the course with young children! Imagine if you're paying for a product or service and your provider doesn't listen to you – how frustrated would you feel? As well as the proactive client listening programmes that you may be running at certain points in the year, it's a good idea to let your clients know how to give you feedback when it suits *them*.

This could be as simple as having a feedback form on the bottom of email signatures or in a prominent place on your website so clients can easily let you know how you're doing, when *they* have something to say.

Similarly, there's no point in listening to your clients if you're not going to act on what they tell you. Responding to the feedback by making changes or improvements is a brilliant way of showing your clients you value their opinion. After all, if nothing changes, they may feel you've wasted their time by asking for feedback in the first place. Closing the feedback loop and talking publicly about the actions you've taken demonstrates integrity and a commitment to excellent client service.

Managing conflict

As well as not listening, my other bugbear is my boys' incessant bickering. "He did such and such / He started it." Grrrr!

It may not happen very often but, on occasion, you may need to deal with an unhappy client or an unfavourable entry on a review site. It's advisable to have some forward planning in place. My advice would be as follows:

- Don't panic
- Don't be tempted to fire off an emotional response in the heat of the moment
- Contact the client (when you've calmed down) and listen to what they have to say without interrupting or being defensive
- Give your client a timescale for when you'll get back to them with a full response and start investigating the issue straight away
- Make any necessary changes and go back to the client or leave a response on the review site detailing your actions.

It's always important to bear in mind that the complaint may be completely unfounded. Maybe someone doesn't like the advice you've given, or they may be insisting on unreasonable timescales for dealing with their complaint. Keeping a cool head, standing your ground politely and demonstrating how you're being proactive will go a long way to diffusing a potentially tricky situation.

Whatever you do, don't get into a spat on social media or a review site – no bickering please! You see it happen from time to time, and it doesn't do the businesses involved any favours.

For the November edition, I'd love to know what you'd like me to cover – do you have any questions about client listening or client retention, or would you like me to cover a particular element of these wide-ranging topics? Please do [email me](#) with your suggestions.



Best wishes,

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