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Try a Little Tenderness

WHY ARE some customers so rude? Cheryl Cran, a consultant specializing in communication, sales skills and conflict resolution, offers these reasons: They might be in a bad mood because of earlier problems. You may be the tenth salesperson who called in the last half-hour. These could be rude people by nature.

Before becoming defensive with irate customers, Cran advises, remember this can jeopardize future relationships. When someone speaks rudely, pause, gather your thoughts and respond calmly, positively and assertively. For example, if a client says, "I am way too busy to discuss this with you," give an assertive response: "I appreciate that your time is valuable. When would be a better time to call?"

The key in assertive communication is to watch your tone of voice. Stay calm, positive and polite. "We lead by example," says Cran. "We will always encounter rude people. We can either respond calmly and be stress free or allow rudeness to make us cranky and grouchy for the rest of the day. Why give that kind of power to anyone?"

Cran's motto is simple: Kill Them with Kindness.

Cheryl Cran is president of C. Cranspeak International Inc. For information, call 1-877-900-5010 or 604/552-8515, email ccran@direct.ca or visit www.cherylcran.com.