G.R.I.P.E.

How to Identify & Stop Complaints

Will Bowen

When it comes to complaining, people have lots of QUESTIONS…

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- ***What, exactly, is a complaint?***
- ***Why do people complain?***
- ***How do I get someone at work to stop griping to me?***
- ***Is there a simple way to remember why people complain and stop the complaints before they happen?***
- ***How do I politely silence a complainer?***

And, the question I seem to get most frequently:

- ***Who complains more — men or women?***

That's why I put together this handy white paper titled ***G.R.I.P.E — How to Identify and Stop Complaints.***

In this guide, you'll learn an easy-to-remember-system for understanding why people complain and getting them to stop.

Remember the acronym **G.R.I.P.E.** and the handful of simple comebacks I provide and you'll find yourself living A Complaint Free Life.

Enjoy Today,

Featured On

G.R.I.P.E.

How to Identify and Stop Complaints

Key Concept

It is **NOT COMPLAINING** to speak directly and only to someone who can resolve the issue you're facing.

Example: If there's something wrong with your food at a restaurant, tell the server. That's not complaining.
Example: If your computer freezes and you call tech support, you're not complaining.
Griping to other people who cannot improve your situation about your bad restaurant experience or how your computer is a piece of junk — that's complaining.

Complain (definition) ***To express grief, pain or discontent.***

By it's definition, a complaint must be spoken. Therefore, the thoughts in your head—however negative they may be at times, are not complaints.

The good news is that, if you take the Complaint Free challenge — attempting to go 21 consecutive days without complaining, you'll discover that over time your mind will think happier thoughts AND you will feel more optimistic.

The 5 Reasons People Complain

True complaining, that is, whining to someone who cannot improve the situation you're complaining about, is always done to get one of five social needs met.

Behind the complaint is a human connection that the complainer perceives to be missing such as getting attention, forgiveness for not doing well at something, or a lack of approval.

When you understand the real reason behind your and other people's complaints, you'll find a way to get social needs met without the toxicity of complaining.

G

G.R.I.P.E. - Get Attention

Connecting to other people is a basic human need.

A person may complain to a coworker, friend, family member or even a stranger in an elevator about the weather, local sports or anything as a means of simply starting a conversation.

Examples:

"Is it hot enough for you? That's four darn days in a row when the temperature's been over 95!"

[TRANSLATION: *Hello, Please talk to me!*]
"The traffic was lousy this morning."

[TRANSLATION: *Now, please complain to me about your commute so we'll have something to talk about.*]

Silence the Complaints: When someone complains to **G**et attention, ask,

"What's going well with (whatever they're complaining about)"?

For example, if they're griping about their job, keep asking, "What's going well with your job?" Or, "What do you like about where you work?"

R

G.R.I.P.E -

R emove Responsibility

When given a task, people complain about the conditions surrounding the task as a way of getting off the hook.

Their intention is to either get you to admit that the task is impossible, or, to prepare you for the fact that they are not going to do good job.

It's excuse-making in advance of even attempting to do something.

Examples:

"I don't think I can fit that into my calendar. I'm so busy with all this extra work the boss keeps dumping on me. I'm overwhelmed as it is. It's not fair."

[TRANSLATION: *I'm not going to do what you're asking. And, I'm using my boss as an excuse.*]

"Mom, Ashley just texted me. She says that our teacher, Mr. Jones, said the project has to be on yellow poster board and not blue! Mr. Jones is always changing his mind and he's never clear. It's not my fault—it's his!"

[TRANSLATION: *Mom, I wasn't paying attention when the teacher gave out instructions. Don't expect me to receive a good grade on this school project.*]

Silence the Complaints: When someone complains to **R**emove Responsibility they are building a case to proved that what is being asked of them is impossible.

They are complaining to be let off the hook.

With every complaint about the assigned task, keep asking,

"If it were possible, how might you do it?"

G.R.I.P.E. -

I nspire Envy

We complain about people who are not like us as a way of making ourselves seem superior by comparison.

And, we complain about things and events as a way of impressing people with our high standards.

Examples:
"Yeah, Cheryl's team did a good job on the project—well, more of an okay job—actually. They were two weeks behind on delivery and I can't believe they let that computer virus slip through!"

TRANSLATION: *My team would have done things on time and better.* by comparison. *Why? Because I'm a better manager than Cheryl.*]

"You thought that was a good movie? You've got to be kidding. The acting was stiff, the story was weak and the music did nothing to move the plot along."

[TRANSLATION: *I know a lot about movies. You should admire me and let me tell you more.*]

Silence the Complaints: Someone complaining to **I**nspire Envy is actually wanting to be complimented and reassured. Therefore,
Compliment them for the opposite of whatever they're complaining about

In the two examples, above, you might say, "You're a great leader and your team produces what they promise on time, every time."

And, "You seem to know a lot about movies, what's the coolest trend you've seen in films recently?"

P

G.R.I.P.E.- Power

There is strength in numbers.

People complain to build alliances with others who agree with them to increase their power.

Others will complain to get you on their side.

Their complaints will seem legitimate but, if you look deeply, you'll see it's a ploy to gain power and you're just another pawn they are trying to get on their side..

Examples:

"Jim is a good guy but he's not supervisor material. Half the time he's late and I really don't think he's that smart. "

[TRANSLATION: *I want that supervisor job! So, help me spread negativity about Jim because he's my competition.*]

"Dad! Scott and Megan are playing and they won't let me play. And, they're using your hammer and you told us not to play with your tools"

[TRANSLATION: *Dad, I feel left out. You're bigger than all of us. Please make my brother and sister play with me.*]

Silence the Complaints: There is an old saying, "When two gorillas are fighting in the jungle, stay out of the jungle."

When someone complains to get you on their side and gain power over someone else, refuse to get involved.

Put the problem right back in their hands.

Keep telling the complainer,

"It sounds like you and he (or she) have a lot to talk about."

You might even offer to set up a meeting between the two of them. This will clearly show them that you choose not to get involved with their complaining power struggle.

E

G.R.I.P.E. - Excuse Poor Performance

Excuse Poor Performance is past tense version of **R**emove Responsibility (the R in G.R.I.P.E).

Both are about being let off the hook.

When someone complains to **R**emove Responsibility, they are telling you why they are either not going to do something you ask, or, they are going to fail and it's not their fault.

When someone complains to **E**xcuse Poor Performance, they have already failed and are complaining to justify what happened—and, as before, it's not their fault.

Examples:

"I know I said I'd bring home salad but I got caught up at work in some of Jim's last minute nonsense and it just made me forget."

[TRANSLATION: *I'm blaming my forgetfulness on something totally unrelated but if you buy it, I'm off the hook.*]

"I tried to get the report in on time but I didn't get the numbers from n the accounting department soon enough."

[TRANSLATION: *I actually waited until the last minute to ask the people in accounting for what I need. But, technically, they didn't get it to me so it's their fault not mine.*]

Silence the Complaints: A person complaining to Excuse their poor performance has already messed up or not done something you've asked.

If you start asking, *Well, why didn't you think of this?* or, *Why didn't you plan for that?"* he or she is just going to defend their poor performance with more complaints.

Instead, ask,

"How do you plan to improve next time?"

This removes their defenses and opens them up to making plans to do better in the future.

And now the BIG question **“Who complains more — men or women?”**

Studies vary but, on the whole, research suggests that men and women actually complain about the same amount.

But, here’s an interesting fact: men tend to *hear* women complaining even when they aren’t.
In other words, men’s brains sometimes hear neutral statements said by women as complaints.
One conclusion might be that, perhaps, women don’t so much “nag” as men hear them wrong.

Take Your Complaint Free Journey to the Next Level

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by Will Bowen

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Test G.R.I.P.E for Yourself

1) **Who complains to you frequently?** _____

2) **Based on what you've learned, what is this person's real reason for complaining to you?**

❏ **G**et Attention

❏ **R**emove themselves from Responsibility

❏ **I**nspire Envy

❏ **P**ower

❏ **E**xcuse Poor Performance

3) **What might you say to him / her to silence the complaints?**

❏ "What's going well with (whatever they're complaining about)"?

❏ "If it were possible, how might you do it?"

❏ Compliment them for the opposite of whatever they're complaining about

❏ "It sounds like you and he (or she) have a lot to talk about."

❏ "How do you plan to improve next time?"

4) **Plan of Action:**

"Whenever _____ complains to me, I will say, "_____

_____."

The 5 Reasons People Complain

Get Attention

Remove Responsibility

Inspire Envy

Power

Excuse Poor Performance

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COMPLAINT FREE ZONE

If you wish to ***complain, criticize or gossip*** please step away.

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