

Sanding Off the Rough Edges

Sure, I still have a few rough edges, and maybe a quirk or two that needs to be sanded off, but overall I'd consider myself a fairly likeable guy. I don't cuss on purpose anymore, I take regular showers, and I always cover my mouth when burping at the table. I'm pretty much fitting right in with regular society these days.

My wife Angie has been a major proponent for my improvement over the years. She's always encouraging me to use better manners, and something she calls social eddie-cut; whatever that is. She's likes to remind me of how little things, like grooming, can affect your success in life. In fact, she was the first to suggest I ditch my mullet.

Angie's always taken a particularly keen interest in my job too. She's very concerned with how well I treat my customers. She's even gone so far as to offer to personally cash my commission checks so she can better gauge my progress. She always quick to offer correction while it's still hot on her mind, many times right there on the spot, no matter where we are.

Angie would've flipped out if she'd seen the e-mail I sent to the purchasing agent of my largest account last week. It was really embarrassing, and the evidence I'd been looking for all my life that proves sometimes you really can get in trouble by accident.

You know how computers are. Grasping a person's mood through an e-mail can be trickier than taking a Hummingbird's temperature with a rectal thermometer. In the long run you're just going to end up guessing. However, this time, after an unusually frank reply from someone I know to be friendly and chatty, I decided I'd better re-read the original message I'd sent. I was shocked. This is the way it was supposed to read:

[Hello Sarah. The manufacturer is holding us to a 100 piece minimum. This is not a common size bushing. Could you possibly bump up your quantity? Thanks, Guy]

Now that's seems perfectly proper and polite, right? It's all in accordance with the guidelines found in my handy dandy account manager's handbook. Yet this time my trusty old Spell-Check failed me, and I accidentally left out one little bitty letter, albeit, an important one. You can imagine my surprise when I realized the 'o' was missing in 'Hello'. OOPS!!!

Don't you dare do it, but if you were to revisit that message again, considering the way it was actually sent, you'd see where my gentle inflection might have been ratcheted up a bit.

Naturally I quickly shot over an apology. To my relief Sarah graciously accepted. It was a close call. I could have lost the account. But in the end we all had a good laugh. Well... I think we did. Her next e-mail seemed to suggest she was laughing. Surely she would've been. I wonder if she really was? Maybe I need to go back and read it over again?

But anyway- It all just points to why we should always follow God's standards when communicating others. If we do, any misperceptions and confusion will have a hard time tripping us up. At least we'll always know we tried to stay in the right. (*Don't repay evil for evil. Don't snap back at those who say unkind things about you. Instead, pray for God's help for them, for we are to be kind to others, and God will bless us for it. 1 Peter 3:9* Living Bible.)

God's way always works, and though sometimes I still come up "o" so short, I sleep a lot better knowing I'm at least trying to love others unconditionally like Christ loves me. I also sleep a lot better in the house, so don't go telling Angie about what happened, or I'll have to grow my mullet back and come over and whomp you one.

- Guy Sheffield 2-22-07