

COMPLAINING THE RIGHT WAY *to*
— GET RESULTS —
— IMPROVE YOUR RELATIONSHIPS —
— ENHANCE SELF-ESTEEM —



The Squeaky
WHEEL

GUY WINCH, P.H.D.

The Squeaky Wheel: Complaining the Right Way to Get Results, Improve Your Relationships, and Enhance Self-Esteem

Guy Winch

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Although life was physically more difficult in the days of the horse and carriage, we complained much less back then, and when we did, our complaints were more likely to get results. Today we complain about everything--yet do so with remarkable ineffectiveness. Most of us grumble, vent, and kvetch, neither expecting nor getting meaningful resolutions. Wasting prodigious amounts of time and energy on unproductive complaints can take an emotional and psychological toll on our moods and well-being. We desperately need to relearn the art of complaining effectively.

Psychotherapist Guy Winch offers practical and psychologically grounded advice on how to determine what to complain about and what to let slide. He demonstrates how to convey our complaints in ways that encourage cooperation and increase the likelihood of getting resolutions to our dissatisfactions. The principles he spells out apply whether we're dealing with a rude store clerk, a bureaucrat, a coworker, our teenager, or a spouse or partner who's driving us crazy.

Complaining constructively can be extremely empowering and it can significantly strengthen our personal, familial, and work relationships. Applying our new-found complaining skills to customer service representatives, corporate leaders, and elected officials increases the odds that our comments will be taken seriously. If we all complained more effectively, squeaky wheels could change our own lives as well as the world for the better.

The Squeaky Wheel: Complaining the Right Way to Get Results, Improve Your Relationships, and Enhance Self-Esteem Details

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Unwisely says

This seems like a useful book, but, man, about the first half felt like padding. (Did you know that people feel bad or get stressed from unresolved complaints?) There was an awful lot of *reference to a thing*....I'll address that later. Like, why not now? It's not like you were saying anything important.

He also seems to have a greater tolerance for tilting at windmills than most people - he criticizes someone for giving up after they had the cable company out to his place *twice* and failed to resolve it. "Only twice!" he says, as if taking the day off work to sit around and wait for the cable guy who then didn't fix anything was trivial.

So. He has maybe a couple chapters of useful advice in there, most of which is common sense. (Persistence, don't write letters when you're angry, compliment sandwich.) And he did inspire me to bitch about a bad customer service experience I had, which actually was resolved, so yay? But mostly not as exciting as I guess I secretly hoped. Alas.

Robin says

I signed up for the firstreads giveaway on this one because the title made me laugh. Period. I thought "I don't really have complaining problems, but with a title like that this could still be interesting." Well, I was right about the second part. It was very interesting. And I must admit that I whine to friends and family in the name of "venting" just as much as anyone else, but I clam up about my complaints when I have any opportunity to actually DO something about them.

Winch does an excellent job with this book, basing his method on well known and respected psychological theories- backed by extensive research. But he presents it all in a way that us non-Ph.D.'s can easily access. Each concept is presented with an example of some situation he has personally encountered in his years of practicing and teaching the art of complaining, in both his personal life as well as his professional career.

I frequently had to explain to my husband why I was laughing aloud, since Winch has an unexepected sense of humor woven all throughout this book. I also frequently wished I'd had this book in my hands three years ago. I might have saved my friends and family from two long years of hearing me complain about the same problem that I thought I was powerless to change. I now know better, and can hopefully save them from future fruitless whining sessions.

I would recommend this to anyone who has identified a problem in their lives-big or small- but feels powerless to change it.

Carol Brannigan says

There are few books in which I would recommend to anyone and this one falls into that category. I think

everyone should read this and it would be even better if we all put it's principles into practice. Too much of life gets filled with things beyond our control but learning the art of complaining in a productive manner can actually cause change to happen.

This is a very easy and short read packed full of psychological tidbits as to why we complain the way we do and how to adjust that to make it productive. There was enough humor thrown into to also make it interesting and fun to read. The reason I didn't give it a full five stars is simply because I would've liked to have seen more examples of specific complaints broken down into the "complaint sandwich". The tools are provided but more examples always help yours truly.

This will be the book I hope to get several copies to pass out to friends. Happy complaining.

Dahlila says

I found this listening book to be a lot more interesting than I originally imagined. (Also, the reader is delightful). It not only talks about the right way to complain, but also the necessity of complaining, complaining correctly. Plus, it really shows what it's like to be a sales clerk, customer server. I find myself trying to pay attention more when dealing with "servers" especially on the phone. I highly recommend this book. Kids should probably be reading it in school! :)

Susan says

Very clever, witty, writer. Enjoyed this book immensely and gathered many tips on how to complain effectively. Sorry that the book is on hold and have to return it already. I will take it out again later and possibly do a speech on this at Toastmasters.

Victoria says

I listened to *The Squeaky Wheel* by Guy Winch via Libby/Overdrive through my public library. This book helped me understand how and why to complain and receive complaints more effectively and sanely. Now the test is to watch me put it in practice, I guess

Kate Woods Walker says

OK, I'll admit it. I am addicted to self-help books like this one. I like the fact that they are usually one-day books, simple and easy enough to be digested in one or two sittings. I like the fact that often I glean knowledge about tangential topics (in *The Squeaky Wheel*, for example, I learned a few fascinating facts about humorist Josh Billings). And I like the opportunity to learn even a tiny bit about how to be a better person.

Guy Winch has reframed a lot of standard psychology how-to into his "complaint" model, and for the most part, his advice is good. I take exception, however, to a multi-paragraph rant against any acknowledgement of real victimhood. He says admitting victimhood is akin to self-immolation of the soul, and sorry, *he's*

wrong. There ARE crimes of the heart, crimes of the soul and everyday crimes besides. These crimes leave victims. And victims shouldn't be *re-victimized* by the denial of professionals who are, ostensibly, in business to help them.

But as far as the limited scope of this book goes, it's a fine way to pass some time and learn a few things about being a more effective agent of change.

Crystal says

A quick and interesting read about complaining that reads more like fiction. Excellent for complete novices, but still interesting for those who know a bit about the subject.

Admittedly, there were parts that felt very "after-school special", and other sections where I questioned why they were added to the book. But all the stories helped make the information memorable and easy to digest, and the other content was interesting too.

Wan Shoo says

This book is definitely a must read for those who feels shy or sometimes ignorant to care about complaining their dissatisfaction. Winch uses case study, with skillful story telling plot to guide us into the mind of those characters and provides a supposed situation for a change of the end results, supported with real life examples. It is not a book that feeds you with all the boring tips to become a well-greased squeaky wheel but it is well-polished with interesting facts and humors that enlighten you that all these annoyances happen in our daily lives, to everyone. So, if you want to have your squeaky wheel greased, read this book to avoid yourself being the bus stop ranters, making a scene of yourself.

Faithann says

The writing style was fantastic. Guy Winch incorporated stories in with his facts in a way that actually made reading this book enjoyable. I have read self help books in the past that read more like a school text book. Guy was so subtle in his teaching method, that at first I didn't even realize that he had been telling me how to do it. I kept waiting for the text book feel to come in and tell me how to complain, and it never happened. I tend to have the personality, that I don't like to be told that my way is the wrong way, and this book, although it pointed out what I was doing wrong, didn't make me feel that way. I would recommend this book to others. Will be interesting to try out some of these techniques in my daily life, and see what kind of results I can get.

Eric Montag says

Good book. It provided enough of a variety of topics so it didn't come across as repeating the same material over and over. The author talked about complaining effectively by using a "complaint sandwich" to put

people in the mood to help solve problems, rather than go on the defensive. The book covered subjects such as complaining to call center employees (businesses), complaining as social activism, and complaining to loved ones. If you've ever felt that you complain about something and just end up wasting your time because you don't get the results that you want, this book can provide some good food for thought.

Chason says

Got this as a free book from Random House as part of the first reads giveaways. I am really enjoyed the book. It is well-written and extremely honest. The author, Guy Winch, has a PhD in psychology and the book deals with a new-ish field of psychology known as "complaining psychology" or "complaining therapy."

I like how the author illustrates the theories behind complaining therapy with anecdotes from his own practice and dealings with various patients. Winch shows how incompetent we have become at complaining effectively as individuals in our modern society and how the resulting negative psychological effects that incompetence results in has created a society that largely feels ineffectual and taken advantage of, resulting in many people being both paranoid and suspicious of the motivations of others in society.

I can plainly see these theories and their effects at work in the lives of my own family and friends: the feelings of dissatisfaction with the state of our society as a whole and general feelings of apathy and a lack of control over their own lives. Winch's premise appears to be to teach the reader to understand what lies behind that dissatisfaction and to learn skills to complain effectively and, as a result, improve self-esteem and eliminate feelings of powerlessness.

Alfred says

Most of us complain... a lot. Guy has given some tips on making it count. Well written and concise.

Ana says

This was surprisingly good. I expected to skim a few chapters and move on but I enjoyed this enough to read the whole thing. The author was funny and had a relatively simple message about complaining. First of all he didn't tell his readers not to complain and actually advocated for complaining-albeit in a different way than they normally do. According to Guy Winch, the people who are jerks and complain ineffectively are not the ones who get results. He advocates for a balance between kindness and assertiveness which is a bandwagon I can jump on. Don't expect anything too technical but rather a reminder that speaking your thoughts calmly and directly to someone who might help you is better for you and better for them. He also had a nice chapter about why not to be a jerk to service people over the phone.

Crystal says

An interesting and thoughtful look at the effects of complaining, with analysis of what makes a complaint effective or ineffective. Sprinkled liberally with humor and with references to scientific research in case one

wants to look into the ideas in more detail. I found the tone a good balance of human and authoritative, though YMMV. One thing the book doesn't address as much as I'd have liked is the effects of various forms of Internet complaints, and I'm interested in what research on that has been published since the book was. Maybe an opportunity for a future update? Worth re-reading and keeping around as a reference for when one wants to complain usefully and avoid doing damage with unhelpful complaints.
