

# When Bad Feedback Happens to Good People (4 Star Reviews + How to Deal)

Hello there and welcome to the School of Sellers Podcast. I am your host Erin Waters, and I would just like to welcome you to the very first episode of 2022. I took a much-needed break during the month of December. And when I say that I am back and ready more than ever to just make the most out of this new year, I am not exaggerating. So let's get right to it. I hope you had a great New Year, I hope you had a great relaxing holiday season with your family, and you are also ready to get back to it. Because today we are talking about one of the hot topics in the School of Sellers community and also, just the TpT world in general, and that is the bad feedback. And that unfortunately happens to all of us and specifically we've been hearing a lot lately about those pesky three and four-star reviews when the feedback is otherwise positive. So it really just doesn't match up a lot of the times which can be incredibly frustrating. And because it's an issue that so many of us face and it's just a reality of this business, I thought what better way to kick off the new year with maybe some mindset shifts about this whole feedback situation and also some ways to combat those not-so-great feelings that come along with the feedback side of our business?

So the first thing that I want to dive into is the way that we respond to that bad feedback because that's part of the battle that wages within ourselves when we get that ding on our phone, we see someone has left a comment on one of our resources, and then we check and then we see that it is either a low number of stars or they've also left an actual comment in which they were not pleased with the resource. It's an awful, awful feeling. And then we are posed with the challenge of responding to that feedback. So here's what I would like to recommend because I have had eight and a half, almost nine years of experience dealing with all kinds of feedback, really, really bad to really, really good. So I like to use this show to hopefully save you some time and stress and avoid some of the same mistakes that I made especially when it comes to feedback.

So my first piece of advice is to always respond tactfully. You should never ever, ever respond the way that you initially want to. And this is actually true of many things in life. With your negative feedback in your store, I recommend walking away and coming back to the feedback a little later before you actually respond. And never ever, ever respond with your first instinct unless, of course, your first instinct is to be super-duper polite and friendly which is usually not the case in this situation. So I definitely recommend taking a moment to walk away, maybe even several hours, maybe even a day and come back to it with a fresh set of eyes after you've given yourself time to think about it and really talk yourself down from reacting with what you really want to say. Because we all know that what you really want to say is probably not even safe for this podcast. And you know that I'm not afraid of bad words, but the internal monologue that happens sometimes when I get bad feedback is certainly not safe for work. So don't ever respond with your first instinct.

And then another trick that I learned from Katie from team SoS which I've used on countless occasions not only for feedback but for other not-so-fun business experiences is to sit down, if you're still feeling heated about it, sit down and write out a message about what you really want to say, how you really want to respond to them. And don't send that message. Maybe if you have a few trusted friends, you can send them the message and be like, oh my gosh, can you believe what this person said? This is what I really want to respond. Just get it out of your system, and then respond to your customer professionally and respectfully. Because the most important thing to remember here is that other buyers are watching and will see how you respond. So it always, always, always pays to take the high road. Nothing good will come out of you being sassy in your reply. Okay? I mean it just won't. There is literally nothing that will come out of it that is a benefit. You'll eventually feel bad about it, the person on the other end is going to be offended, they will be possibly hurt, they probably definitely won't buy from you again. So you stand to lose a lot more than you have to gain in this situation. So keep it professional. I know it's hard, but that's truly the best way to do this.

And it's really important to remind yourself, and this is where I think this big mindset shift occurs is you need to focus on the things that we can control. And we certainly don't have a whole lot of control over the way that people are responding to our products, right? The only things we can do are to create high quality products, and then we have control over the way we respond to the feedback surrounding those products. So we need to keep that in mind, that we can't ever stop people from responding the way that they're going to be responding to your product. So it's our responsibility to do the best with what we can control. And you also have to remember too that the person on the other end of that comment could be having one of the worst days of their life. Okay? You just never know what someone else is going through. And I know that's kind of a drastic way of looking at it, but I like to give people the benefit of the doubt especially in situations like this. I am the type of person who nine times out of ten, I am like Mary Poppins. Like I'm an idealist. I think that's a word. But I like to assume the best. I like everyone to be happy, and I like everything to be good. But there is like that one out of ten times where I'm having just the worst day or it's that time of the month or I am just like the opposite of positive. And I hate to say it, but maybe I would leave a bad feedback. I mean I probably wouldn't at this point in my life because I know how bad it feels. But all I'm saying is that when people are in the moment and they're just not feeling it, they might say things and do things that they typically wouldn't do or say. So just always think about that. They might not actually have mean intent. They might just be having a really bad day.

Also, this is a good time to point out that it's really important to kind of spin this positively. Use this experience of you receiving this bad feedback, remember how it makes you feel, and use it as a formative experience in your own life and your own personality. So if you're someone who will leave a bad review if you have a bad experience, that's fine. But maybe also make it a point to be someone who leaves a good piece of feedback too. I honestly think this world would be a much better place if we all lived our lives by this one-to-one ratio. Like for every negative piece of feedback we leave, we also have to leave a positive piece of feedback. But that's a whole other thing. So just keep that in mind as you go about your daily life too. Because like I said, we can't control what people are going to say, but we can control how we respond. And one of the ways we can respond in the long term is changing the way that we leave feedback. So just try to get as much positive out of it as you can because there's only so much you can do.

Now I will say after so many years of receiving feedback, it has paid off a ton for me to have what I like to call canned responses so that I have just basically templates of things to say when I'm faced with a situation like we are discussing. So it might be beneficial for you to have a go-to list of responses, and it can be for various scenarios. Maybe you want to craft an example response about how you will respond when someone leaves let's say a three-star review but then in their feedback says something like great product. Okay? That type of messaging is going to have to be different than the messaging you use when you reply to a situation where let's say someone left you bad feedback because of a technical difficulty that they had with that product, right? The way you respond would be different for either situation, but the way you respond is going to be pretty similar across the board in terms of responding to various buyers. So you can use the same response for many different buyers, and it is really helpful because it eliminates a little bit of the emotions that pop up during these situations. So even if you are mad or feeling frustrated, at least you don't have to sit down and take the time to craft this thoughtful response because you already have some go-to responses ready. I like to keep mine in a Trello board, but you could also do it in your notes app, a Google Doc, whatever.

Also, I'm not endorsing you to let people walk all over you. So if you truly feel like you need to respond in a way that explains why this feedback is problematic, then that's okay too. But again, I can't stress enough that you need to be kind respectful and tactful about the way you respond. So just as an example, here's something I might say if someone, for example, left me three stars but said the product was excellent. I might say something like, thank you so much for taking the time to leave this feedback. I strive for five-star products so I'd like to know more about your review. In the product description, it states blah, blah, blah, whatever. Maybe I would quote the exact wording from my product description to show that they were in fact receiving what they paid for. And then I might say something like, I understand your initial disappointment, but it seems as though there may have been a misunderstanding. Low ratings like this have a huge impact on my business overall so it's important that I make things right. Please let me know how I can further help in this matter. And then I might say something like, and if I've already been helpful, please consider updating your review, Erin. And if you're like me and will avoid conflict at all costs, you'll probably throw in about 10 smiley faces throughout that message because I hate when people are mad. I don't like being around conflict. Like I will be on the outskirts of conflict looking in. That's fine. But like I don't ever want to be a part of that conflict. It is so bad. So just do what feels right for you. But again, you should really err on the side of being respectful versus being reactive and emotionally charged in that response.

All right. Well, let's kind of spin the tables a little, and let's talk about how we can celebrate our positive feedback because that is another thing we can control. And it's important to spend more of our energy celebrating the good things than worrying about the stuff that is just going to lead to negativity. So we have tons of good feedback in our store, and people leave comments regularly about how much they've enjoyed our products or how much they love our store and so on. So I wanted to also make sure touch on the ways that you can be benefiting from the positive feedback in your store. The first thing I would recommend is to make it a point to maybe monthly, maybe quarterly go through your feedback and take screenshots of testimonials that really stand out to you, like really great comments that people said about your products. And then you can use these screenshots and Facebook ads, you can use them on social media, you can use them in your emails or on your website even as like a carousel of testimonials. And you can either use the actual screenshots themselves or you can just use the actual wording and change it a little more so it matches your branding. But I would recommend if you are going to use the screenshots to make sure that you blur out any identifying information like their profile photo if there is one and also their name.

And then also make sure that you are responding to the really great feedback. If you have been around for a while and you have a pretty large store and you get pretty regular feedback, you know it's not realistic or sustainable to respond to every single piece of feedback, but I do think it's important to respond regularly to at least some of the feedback because I think it's motivating for sellers to not only buy from you in the future but to leave more reviews in the future when they get that feedback. Whether they're for you or feedback for another seller, it's just a good sort of behavior to encourage by responding to some of your feedback in your store.

And finally, guys, I'm going to leave you with just a little dose of reality because I feel strongly about this. Most of all with your feedback woes, keep in mind you're not the first person that this has happened to. It sucks. Plain and simple. I'm not saying it doesn't suck. It does suck, and nobody should receive a bad review that you don't deserve. But unfortunately, it's part of the TpT gig. So go ahead, get mad, but get over it. There are so many other things that are worthy of your time and energy, and this just isn't it. With that being said, I hope that 2022 is the year of the five-star review for all of you and that hopefully this won't even be a worry because we will be so busy getting five-star reviews that we won't even know what to do with ourselves. Thank you so much for listening, guys, and I hope you have a great week. And I will see you again next week. Same time, same place.

# Welcome to the School of Sellers

## What is the School of Sellers?

We are a group that is committed to helping teacher sellers in all stages of their business. We like to provide tips, tools, and resources that aid in building your business while making it feel doable every step of the way.

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