



Complaint Free Relationships: How to Positively Transform Your Personal, Work, and Love Relationships

By Will Bowen

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A revolutionary approach to improving every relationship in your life, Complaint Free Relationships picks up where the internationally successful A Complaint Free World left off, with all-new methods to help you overcome toxic habits and build strong, successful connections with others.

The original Complaint-Free movement has exploded into an international phenomenon, with 5.5 million people in more than 80 countries taking the pledge to create a complaint-free life, as well as national media attention. As this movement expands, it is clear that the real focus of achieving true complaint-free living lies in our relationships.

People complain to bond with others. It's easy to feel connected by common annoyances. But most complaining is about people, and this leads to negative and unhealthy foundations for our relationships with others--from family, lovers and friends to our more casual connections with people in our daily lives. Complaint-Free Relationships provides insight and helpful tools to see, understand, and engage in our relationships through the lens of complaint-free living. It incorporates new studies about complaining, inspiring and illuminating stories from Will Bowen's experience both as a minister and founder of the Complaint Free movement, and practical exercises at the end of each chapter.

By providing the tools you need to escape the trap complaining creates--feeling unfulfilled and inadequate--Complaint-Free Relationships offers new clarity and encourages you to create happy, stimulating and mutually satisfying relationships.

From the Hardcover edition.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

WILL BOWEN is the lead minister of the One Community Spiritual Center in Kansas City, MO. He has been featured on Oprah, Today, CBS Sunday Morning, the ABC Evening News, Fox News Channel and in hundreds of TV and radio interviews around the world. Stories about him and the movement he created have been written about in over 200 newspapers, People magazine, O, The Oprah Magazine, Self magazine and Chicken Soup for the Soul. In 2007, he was dubbed one of the most innovative Christian leaders in the U.S. by Church Solutions magazine.

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Introduction

Hell is other people.

—Jean-Paul Sartre

Other people are our greatest gift.

Other people can be our greatest challenge.

Do a mental inventory. Better yet, pull out a piece of paper and write down every problem or challenge you are facing, every issue that concerns you—anything about which you have negative feelings or concerns. Then ask yourself, “How many of these problems involve other people?” Chances are the vast majority of struggles you face has to do with other people and could be improved by better relationships with them. Whether it is connecting at a deeper level with your intimate partner, convincing someone at work that your course of action is best, getting your children to do their chores, or explaining your needs to a salesclerk, most of our problems involve other people and could be resolved with successful, productive relationships. Even in support of large-scale global issues or causes, when you are able to build solid connections with others you are better able to influence positive change.

Our relationships with others can enhance every aspect of our lives or create untold stress. Our relationships can bring us pleasure as well as pain, comfort as well as conflict, peace as well as power struggles.

You may feel you are a victim in your relationships and powerless to improve them. You may even feel you are trapped in a spiral of negative, unhappy, and unfulfilling associations with others. But such is not the case. You are not a victim and you are not trapped. Beginning now, you can create the relationships you desire. You can transform your relationships with your significant other, friends, family, coworkers, and even casual acquaintances and begin to experience greater joy in these connections.

As you learn new relationship skills, you will begin to attract people to you who are warm, giving, helpful, agreeable, supportive, positive, and complimentary. And you will begin to draw out these same qualities in your existing relationships. Instead of complaining about how others are treating you, you will begin to create positive experiences that compound themselves and your life will vastly improve.

The genesis of what you will learn in this book began in July of 2006 when I presented an idea to my congregation. I am the lead minister at One Community Spiritual Center in Kansas City, Missouri. While

teaching a series on manifesting prosperity, I handed out purple bracelets to be used as a tool to help eradicate complaining.

Our thoughts create our lives and our words indicate what we are thinking. Most people believe they are positive and optimistic. They think they are holding affirmative visions of ideal outcomes. In actuality, most people's thoughts are negative. Try as they may to think positively, most people's thoughts are decidedly bleak, as evidenced by their constant complaining. This propensity to think negatively plays out as dissatisfying life events and relationship.

The prolific mystery writer Agatha Christie once wrote, "Curious things, habits. People themselves never knew they had them." Truer words were never spoken, especially in regard to people's habitual complaining. Based on the information shared by people who have taken the Complaint Free challenge, the average person complains fifteen to thirty times a day and has no awareness he or she is doing so. Our Complaint Free bracelets have helped millions set a trap for their negativity by catching themselves in the act. Unlike the other ubiquitous silicone bracelets you see in every color of the rainbow, the ones we distribute are not to inform the world that the wearer supports a cause. Our purple bracelets are a tool to help people become aware of how often they complain and to begin to eradicate this negative and destructive form of communication from their lives.

The idea is simple: put the purple bracelet on either wrist and when (not if) you catch yourself complaining aloud, move the bracelet to the other wrist. With each complaint, the bracelet is to be moved from the current wrist to the other. In this process, you became aware of your negativity and, over a period of months, begin to complain less.

The goal is to complete 21 consecutive days without complaining. Scientists believe it takes 21 days for a new behavior to become habitual, so when you have gone 21 consecutive days without complaining, you will have reformatted your mental hard drive and being Complaint Free will be a new and enduring habit.

I first gave out 250 bracelets to my congregation but in short order the idea exploded around the world and what was a simple sermon tool has since become a worldwide movement. We have sent millions of purple bracelets to people in more than 105 countries and continue to send out tens of thousands each month. Thousands of individuals, families, churches, schools, prisons, therapists, hospitals, drug rehab centers, and businesses have embraced this program, with some amazing results.

A Complaint Free World split off from our church and is a thriving nonreligious not-for-profit organization offering resources and tools to help people and organizations move beyond complaining to create a brighter reality.

We have been featured on *Oprah* and on every major television network in the United States as well as on many, many network and cable television shows around the world. Hundreds of newspapers both in the United States and internationally have done stories on us. Stories about us have appeared in dozens of magazines in the United States including *People* and *Newsweek*. Magazine publishers in the Netherlands and South Africa have included our purple bracelets in their magazines and have not only helped spread this concept and distribute bracelets but also seen their magazines' sales increase.

Companies have approached us wanting to distribute our bracelets with their products and have become official sponsors in their product arenas for what has become known as the Complaint Free Movement. My previous book, *A Complaint Free World: How to Stop Complaining and Start Enjoying the Life You Always Wanted*, which I wrote to answer the thousands of questions I was receiving by letter and email, became an

international bestseller and continues to be published and read in more than a dozen countries around the world.

Not a day goes by that I don't receive several Google alerts of people blogging about their experiences with the Complaint Free challenge. I have been invited to deliver keynote addresses at dozens of conventions and conferences for many types of organizations, from federal agencies and Fortune 20 companies to schools, churches, hospitals, and civic organizations. This truly has become a phenomenon that continues to grow and expand and I am touched, honored, and amazed to be a part of it.

This is all very exciting. However, what is most gratifying are the thousands of people who have stayed with the challenge (and challenge it can be) to go 21 consecutive days without complaining. We have a link at our website, AComplaintFreeWorld.org, where people can let us know that they have completed 21 days without complaining, and we have received confirmation from people around the world who have made being Complaint Free a habit.

But one day, as I was sitting on a plane waiting to fly out to deliver a speech to several hundred corporate leaders about developing Complaint Free organizations, I had an epiphany. I was thinking about the Complaint Free program and was struck with what some might call a blinding flash of the obvious.

Yes, our lives are a reflection of our thoughts—this has been said by philosophers and leaders of every stripe for thousands of years. Yes, it's important for us to monitor what we are saying, as it indicates what we are thinking. Yes, this can be accomplished by the simple exercise of switching a bracelet from wrist to wrist until we become Complaint Free. All this is true.

The epiphany I experienced that day was that nearly all complaining is based on relationships.

Complaining is almost always about another person—a person with whom we are in some sort of relationship. The relationship may be formal, such as a marriage or work relationship, or it may be an informal relationship, such as with a customer we are serving or a person living in the next apartment. The relationship may be fleeting, such as with someone we pass in traffic, or it may span decades, such as our relationship with our family.

Because I am a minister, people often come to me for counseling and in nearly every case the challenge they are facing is a relationship challenge. In most of these counseling sessions, I discover that the relationship problems are either created or exacerbated by them complaining to or about the person with whom they share the relationship. As I delved into the subject, I discovered copious research has been done on the negative effects of complaining on relationships.

As early as 1938, a study by Lewis Terman showed that unhappy couples were distinguished from happy ones by the extent to which they reported their partner being argumentative, critical, and nagging (i.e., complaining). And in "A Descriptive Taxonomy of Couples' Complaint Interactions," originally published in the *Southern Speech Communication Journal* in 1989, Dr. J. K. Alberts states, "Diverse research indicates that negativity and negative communication are positively correlated with relational dissatisfaction." In other words, *unhappy relationships are most often distinguished by complaining*.

You may think, "But relationships are challenging, so why not complain?" Complaining gets out our frustrations so we don't have pent-up anger and res...

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Thomas Melendez:

Book is written, printed, or illustrated for everything. You can recognize everything you want by a book. Book has a different type. As you may know that book is important thing to bring us around the world. Beside that you can your reading talent was fluently. A e-book Complaint Free Relationships: How to Positively Transform Your Personal, Work, and Love Relationships will make you to be smarter. You can feel far more confidence if you can know about every little thing. But some of you think that will open or reading a book make you bored. It is far from make you fun. Why they could be thought like that? Have you seeking best book or appropriate book with you?

David Russell:

The reserve untitled Complaint Free Relationships: How to Positively Transform Your Personal, Work, and Love Relationships is the guide that recommended to you to study. You can see the quality of the book content that will be shown to you actually. The language that author use to explained their way of doing something is easily to understand. The copy writer was did a lot of analysis when write the book, to ensure the information that they share to you personally is absolutely accurate. You also can get the e-book of Complaint Free Relationships: How to Positively Transform Your Personal, Work, and Love Relationships from the publisher to make you much more enjoy free time.

Bruce Jackson:

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David Mathews:

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