



**The “Coach”**

Greetings Flooring Success Systems Member,

I developed the *e-Neighborhood Advisor* system to give Platinum members a powerful tool to stay in constant contact with their past clients with **fun, informative, welcome, value-added communication**. Using this system, you will be able to “touch” contacts on your list every single week with virtually no cost.

**WARNING:** The *e-Neighborhood Advisor* does not replace mailing the printed *Neighborhood Advisor* each month to your list. It’s a *supplement* to the printed newsletter. I’m a big believer in using email as part of an overall marketing mix, along with direct mail and other marketing. However, if you rely strictly on email, your results will suffer. So I’ll say it again: the *e-Neighborhood Advisor* is a supplement to, not a replacement for, the printed *Neighborhood Advisor*. Ignore this advice at your own peril.

Having said that, just between the *e-Neighborhood Advisor* and the printed *Neighborhood Advisor*, you’ll touch the contacts on your list 64 times per year! There are a LOT of benefits in doing this, including:

* You’ll make more money
* You’ll get more referrals
* Total “top of mind awareness”
* Differentiates you from all the other floor dealers
* Positions you as a Trusted Advisor
* Helps lock your clients in an “iron cage” away from competitors

The e-Neighborhood Advisor is designed to help you profit from many segments of your list:

* Past clients
* Referrals
* Prospects
* Delayed leads
* Joint Venture partners

Everyone who comes through your business should be subscribed to the *e-Neighborhood Advisor* as well as the printed *Neighborhood Advisor*. Many of the prospects that leave without buying *will* buy from you in three to twenty-four months…*if* you stay in front of them.

**Audio Tutorial**

To learn how to maximize profits with the e-Neighborhood Advisor, as well as get tips on setting it up to run on auto-pilot, listen to the “E-Neighborhood Advisor” coaching calls on the Platinum members-only site.

**Instructions**

1. **Email manager.** If you don’t currently have a system for managing bulk email, you need to get one. A couple of free/inexpensive options are Constant Contact and Mail Chimp. I’ve used Constant Contact, it works well, and I’m familiar with its functions.
	1. To make email marketing easier, your email manager should be able to send out bulk emails on dates you specify ahead of time. For example, you should be able to create four e-Neighborhood Advisor emails for December. Then specify which date each email will get sent. Constant Contact does this.
2. **Copy and paste the tips into the blank email editor.**
	1. You’ll notice that the e-Neighborhood Advisor email messages are formatted so they are only about 1/3-page width, and they are broken up into 1-3 sentence paragraphs. This is done on purpose so the emails are easier to read. If someone opens your email and sees big blocks of text, they are less likely to read it.
	2. Always use Ariel font or another sans serif font. Sans serif fonts are easier to read on computer, and marketing tests have shown that marketing messages get better response when using this kind of font.
3. **Import the *e-Neighborhood Advisor* graphic.**
	1. Use this as the email header
	2. An easy way to do this is to create an e-Neighborhood Advisor template in your email manager. Paste the graphic into the template and save it. Now you can just copy this template each time you create a new e-Neighborhood Advisor message.
4. **Subject line.** The subject line is the “ad for the email.” These function as attention-grabbing headlines, just like you’d have in a good direct response sales letter. These should make the contact curious, so they open the email. We’ve included subject lines with each installment.
5. **The P.S.** The Postscript contains a different U.S.P. each week. Feel free to change these as the situation warrants.
	1. Use testimonials in your P.S. Include photos and a link to an audio of the testimonial.
6. **Special offers.**
	1. You can put in a special offer for the P.S. instead of the message we’ve provided. Keep in mind that the e-Neighborhood Advisor is using the “infotainment” strategy. It should be a mix of 80% fun, informative, valuable information, with 10%-20% about your services. If you make it into 100% sales pitch, your contacts will get bored and simply delete the messages. That’s why the special offer is in the “P.S.” Keep the special offers about the same length as the P.S. we’ve provided.
	2. Option: Refer them to your printed Neighborhood Advisor when making an offer. For example, “P.S. Don’t forget that until November 15th you get every fourth room of flooring FREE! See the insert in the November Neighborhood Advisor for details.”
7. **Sending it out.** The easiest way to do this to take 30 minutes and load up an entire month’s worth of e-Neighborhood Advisor messages into your email manager and schedule them to go out automatically. Do this once per month.
8. **Managing your subscriber list.** There are lots of ways to do this, so I’ll outline how I did it when I used Constant Contact (before I switched to specialized software for managing my marketing campaigns).
	1. Create an “E-Neighborhood Advisor” subscriber list in your email manager.
	2. Import all the contacts that you want to get the e-Neighborhood Advisor.
		1. Past clients
		2. Referrals
		3. Prospects
		4. Delayed leads
		5. Joint Venture partners
	3. Work directly in this list whenever you add or delete subscribers.
	4. Again, there are other ways to manage your list, but this is the simplest without getting into using specialized software.
9. **SPAM compliance.** There are two parts to SPAM compliance:
10. **Permission.** Whenever you send out bulk email messages, you have to have permission from everyone on your list to email them. If someone gives you their email address, this constitutes permission. (i.e. when you get their email address during the Design Audit, or if someone opts in to get the Consumer’s Guide via your website, or if someone signs up for a contest and gives you their email address, etc. These all constitute permission.)
11. **Opt out method**. You must provide a method for them to opt out. The nice thing about Constant Contact is it manages opt outs for you. It includes an opt-out link at the bottom of every message you send. It also manages the opt outs in the database. For example, let’s say a person with the email address Grumpy@Grump.com opts out. Constant Contact tags this email address as having opted out and blocks emails from ever being sent to it. Even if you don’t delete this contact, or if you accidentally upload it again, Constant Contact recognizes this address and blocks emails from being sent to this address. Bottom line: the SPAM management happens automatically so you don’t have to mess with it.

**Send Out An E-Mail Version Of The Monthly Insert**

Another effective way to market to your list is to convert the *Neighborhood Advisor* insert into an email and blast it out to your list.

Platinum Member, Mike Phoenix of Orange Connecticut, took a November *Neighborhood Advisor* insert and converted it into an email campaign. He sent me the following message:

*Jim, this is an email version of this month’s Neighborhood Advisor insert. So far we have $31,365.51 in sales on ten orders. We still expect to write more sales as we have until 11/19.

We give everyone that shops our store a copy of the Neighborhood Advisor along with the insert and tell them about the promotion which helps close orders by putting a sense of urgency on it.

In a time when I have had several sales reps come in and tell me how bad business is throughout Connecticut, we are up 44% over last year.

Thanks,

Michael J Phoenix
Flooring Design Specialist
Floor Décor*

Think about this… so far Mike has made over $31k with a marketing strategy that cost him ZERO! Way to go, Mike!

Below is the email Mike sent out. This is a virtual word-for-word email version of a Neighborhood Advisor insert. He used Constant Contact for this.

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| ***Floor Decor's*** *Thanksgiving for All* |

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| ***Floor Decor***363 Boston Post RoadOrange, Connecticut 06477203-298-4081 |

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| **Dear Michael,**Thanksgiving is one of my favorite holidays, but for some less fortunate families, Thanksgiving is not so great. While the rest of us are enjoying turkey, sweet potatoes, gravy, and stuffing there are many families going hungry.This holiday season, Floor Decor has teamed up with the Connecticut Food Bank for their annual **"Thanksgiving for All Food Drive."** The good people at CFB are collecting hams and turkeys to distribute, but they need side dishes and other fixings.Now you can get a Thanksgiving Discount on Gorgeous New Floors for the Holidays **AND** Help a Family in Need at the Same Time!Your Friends at Floor Decor |

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| Anchor

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| ***So for every 5 canned food items you bring to Floor Decor from******11/1/11 through 11/19/11******you'll get a special appreciation discount on your flooring purchase:*** Donate 5 Cans - Purchase $ 997 in New Flooring - Get a $103 Discount. Donate 10 Cans - Purchase $1997 in New Flooring - Get a $211 Discount. Donate 15 Cans - Purchase $3997 in New Flooring - Get a $327 Discount. Donate 20 Cans - Purchase $5997 in New Flooring - Get a $451 Discount. Donate 25 Cans - Purchase $6997 in New Flooring - Get a $583 Discount.**All the food will be donated to the Connecticut Food Bank's East Haven Warehouse. We need your food donations in time for Thanksgiving, so you must bring your donation to our showroom by Saturday November 19th****to get the discount!****Don't need new floors right now? You can still help! Just bring your canned food items to Floor Decor by November 19th and we'll make sure it gets delivered to the Connecticut Food Bank.** |

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| *Happy Thanksgiving*!  |

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|  | Any Friend of Yours Is A Friend of Mine!! Who is the next person you know who is in need of new flooring for the Holidays? You'll be doing them a really big favor by recommending a flooring professional that they can trust. Plus, I'll send you your choice of a gift certificate for two passes to the Connecticut Post 14 Cinema De Lux or a $50.00 Gift Certificate for dinner for two. |
| **Offer Expires: November 19th, 2011** |

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TIP: If you send out a promotional email like this and get good results, send it out again a few days before the deadline, but include the following message above the original email:

Subject line: Did I forget you?

Hi <first name>,

I sent out an important, time-sensitive message last week explaining how you can help a family in need this Thanksgiving AND get a big discount on your holiday flooring. Here’s the message again in case you missed it.

Mike

**Message I sent last week:**

(original email)

**This Month’s e-Neighborhood Advisor Installments**

**Begin On The Next Page**

# Week #1

# *Subject line*: Beginner’s Guide to Bird Watching

The weather is getting nicer and it’s time to get outside. Bird-watching is a four-season activity that will not only extend the amount of time you spend in parks or other green spaces, but also make you feel a little bit like a treasure seeker as you try to spot birds you know should be around (and find others you may not expect).

**Migration Periods**
You can go birding any time of the year, but a good way to get hooked is to take advantage of the spring and fall migrations. During those bountiful times, hundreds of neotropical bird species rest and refuel in urban green spaces on their way to and from countries south of the U.S. Outside of the migration months, you can find resident birds in cities, too.

So whether you think all the little brown birds on your lawn are sparrows or are comfortable identifying a handful of common backyard birds, *Field & Stream’s* guide to bird-watching in any US city will elevate your bird-spotting abilities.

The first step on the path to birding is understanding which species are in your city at any given time. If you only take one thing away from this story, let it be this: bird knowledge is essential. Try [eBird’s web-based Explore feature](https://ebird.org/explore/). You can search by species, region, or hotspot—a location where lots of birds have been observed—and can click on any listed bird for identification clues, photos, songs, and calls. Knowing the difference between complex songs and simple calls is like having a special tool in your kit; one that can help you predict a bird’s behavior.

Once you’ve become familiar with the species in your city at the time you’re planning to go out, decide whether you’ll be birding alone or not. You can also use social media to see what’s been spotted locally. Birding groups and organizations often post photos on Instagram and Twitter, and some birders tag their images with [#birdtwitter](https://twitter.com/search?q=%23birdtwitter&src=typeahead_click/). Make sure to search using #yourlocation (replace with your actual location) to get the most relevant results.

**The basic tools** for birding are not that expensive. You don’t necessarily need binoculars for your first casual birding experience, but you may want to purchase a pair if bird-watching will be a regular pursuit. You want binoculars that let in a fair amount of light because you will see objects (and birds) more clearly, but larger lenses mean heavier binoculars. The goal is to strike a balance between lens size and overall weight.

You’ll also want to purchase a field guide. Get a regional one; it’ll be geared toward the birds you are most likely to see and weighs less than a comprehensive North American guide. The most recent edition of the National Geographic guide contains more than 1,000 species, while the Sibley guide has 650. If you don’t want to buy a guide right away, check to see if your local library has any. To go paperless, try the free [Merlin Bird ID app](https://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/download/).

You don’t even have to leave the comforts of home to bird-watch. If you have a yard, you can bring birds to you by creating a bird-friendly garden. Choose native plant species, which will act as a food source for native birds. They’ll also attract insects and the birds that feed on them. Planting native flora is a benefit on its own, as human activity has significantly reduced global plant diversity. Because plants are the backbone of many bird habitats, their loss has contributed to a massive 3 billion drop in the North American bird population since 1970. For just-right species for your locale, check out Audubon’s native plant database. The organization also provides tips for assessing your space and designing your garden.

Bird-watching can also help you reap the benefits of being outdoors, which has been shown to improve human physiological and mental health. In general, viewing and spending time in nature can lead to lower blood pressure and a slower heart rate, shorter recovery times after surgery, and increased attention and focus, so get outside!

*Your Flooring Consultant for Life,*

*Jim Armstrong*

*President of Jimbo’s Floors*

**P.S. When you buy floors from us, you are protected by our Installer professionalism guarantee!**

**Our installers are neat, clean, well-groomed, well-spoken and professional. They are trained and certified. They are guests in your home, and they conduct themselves as such. They respect your home by using wall and corner guards, shoe covers and drop cloths.**

**You’ll receive the highest-quality installation in the business. And after they’re finished, they will leave your home as neat and clean as when they arrived!**

Jimbo’s Floors

479 Park Ave., Yuba City, CA 95993

530-790-3338

**Week #2**

# *Subject line:* How to Eat Like a Nutritionist

When in dietary doubt, we ask nutrition experts to show us how to leverage our food for optimal performance. This time, *Outside* magazine asked seven sports nutrition gurus to dish on their go-to meals. Their choices may surprise you.

### Eggsplosions

#### Yoni Freedhoff, Assistant Professor at University of Ottawa and a Doctor Specializing in Obesity Treatment

Yoni Freedhoff wears many hats. When he’s not practicing medicine or teaching, he’s playing the roles of author and dad, so cooking healthy meals for his family needs to happen fast. To get it done, Freedhoff turns to eggsplosions—grilled cheese sandwiches with eggs cooked into the bread, similar to the classic “egg in a hole” breakfast dish.

**Ingredients**

* 2 tablespoons butter, divided
* 2 slices sandwich bread
* 2 eggs
* Salt and pepper
* 2 slices American, cheddar, or Monterey Jack cheese

**Directions**

1. Using a small empty can, cut a circle in the center of each slice of bread.
2. In a nonstick skillet over medium heat, melt 1 tablespoon butter.
3. Place both bread slices into skillet, break an egg into each, season with salt and pepper, and cook, swirling occasionally, until golden brown on bottom side (about two minutes).
4. Add remaining butter and flip bread slices. Place cheese slices on top, close sandwich, and cook until golden brown (about one minute).

## “Amasian” Egg Scramble

#### Allen Lim, Founder of Skratch Labs

Exercise physiologist and coach turned chef Allen Lim understands how important it is to treat food as fuel, even when you’re crunched for time. Enter his favorite “Amasian” food—part Asian, part American. It’s delicious and packed with healthy ingredients

**Ingredients**

* 1 cup dry sushi rice per person
* 1.5 cups water per person
* Vegetable or olive oil
* Bunch of spinach
* 3 eggs
* Spices to taste

**Directions**

1. Rinse the rice to remove excess starch. Add to pot with water and cook according to package directions.
2. While rice cooks, sauté a bunch of greens like spinach
3. Once the spinach wilts, remove it from the wok and scramble the eggs.
4. Pile the spinach and eggs on top of the rice. Season with your favorite spices for extra flavor.

## ****Banana Omelet****

#### Stacy Sims, Co-Founder of Osmo Nutrition, Exercise Physiologist, and Triathlete

Stacy Sims’ alarm clocks goes off at 5:30 every morning—even on weekends—to let her know it’s time to train. How does she do it? Sims will tell you that good coffee gets her out the door, and the breakfast she knows is waiting for her makes her hustle through workouts.

**Ingredients**

* 1 banana
* 1 teaspoon vanilla paste
* 3 egg whites or 2 whole eggs

**Directions**

1. In a bowl, combine banana and vanilla paste and heat in microwave until mushy.
2. Stir in the eggs.
3. Pour the mixture into a hot skillet and cook it like a pancake. For more protein, eat the omelet on a piece of toast smeared with almond butter.

## DIY Prerace Breakfast Sandwich

#### Matt Fitzgerald, Author of The Endurance Diet and Marathoner

Before marathons, Matt Fitzgerald chows down on a sausage, egg, and cheese breakfast sandwich with extra sausage. Feel free to play with his template if you’d rather go the way of, say, turkey bacon and Swiss or avocado and mozzarella.

**Ingredients**

* 2 eggs
* 2 pork sausage patties
* 1 slice American cheese
* English muffin, toasted

**Directions**

1. Scramble the eggs.
2. Cook sausage patties in skillet.
3. Stack eggs, sausage patties, and cheese on top of toasted English muffin.

## ****Fish Chowder****

#### Nancy Clark, Sports Nutritionist and Author

Nancy Clark, the team nutritionist for the Boston Red Sox, has an exceptionally surprising go-to dinner: a quick fish chowder. Plus, it’s even better the next day.

**Ingredients**

* 1 tablespoon olive oil
* 2 large onions, diced
* 4 large potatoes, peeled and diced into 1/2-inch cubes
* 1 pound whitefish (such as cod, tilapia, sole, or haddock)
* 1 can evaporated milk
* Salt and pepper

**Directions**

1. In a large saucepan, heat olive oil, and then sauté the onions until transparent.
2. Add potatoes, plus just enough water to cover. Bring to a boil and cook until almost tender (about 10 to 15 minutes).
3. When the potatoes are almost tender, place the fish on top; cover and cook about five minutes or until the fish is done.
4. Stir in evaporated milk; add salt and pepper to taste.

## Applesauce Parfait

#### Matthew Accarrino, Executive Chef at SPQR and Team Chef for the Hincapie Cycling Team

Matthew Accarrino is an avid cyclist by day, Michelin-starred chef at night, and team chef during race season, so his entire life revolves around fueling, depleting the tank, and repeating the cycle. For dessert, Accarinno mixes no-sugar-added applesauce with a touch of yogurt, a spoonful of almond butter, and fresh fruit, then tops the whole thing with homemade granola.

**Ingredients**

* 1 cup no-sugar added applesauce
* 1 tablespoon plain Greek yogurt
* 1 tablespoon jam of your choice
* 1 tablespoon nut butter of your choice
* 1/4 cup granola
* 1/2 banana, chopped

**Directions**

1. In glass jar or cup, begin with a layer of applesauce at the bottom. Continue alternating all ingredients to create parfait. If preferred, you can stir to eat. Serves one.

## Big Burger Bowl

#### Elyse Kopecky, Co-Author of Run Fast, Eat Slow

Elyse Kopecky lets her body tell her what she should be eating. Following her book’s principle of “indulgent nourishment,” Kopecky doesn’t believe in skimping or deprivation; instead, she votes for meals (like this burrito bowl) that feel like a treat but are jam-packed with nutrients.

**Ingredients**

* 2 cups short-grain brown rice
* 1 egg
* 1/2 cup crumbled feta
* 1/4 cup almond flour
* 2 cloves garlic, minced
* 1/4 teaspoon salt
* 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
* 1 pound ground bison, beef, lamb, or turkey meat
* 1 bunch asparagus, drizzled with olive oil
* 1/2 red onion, drizzled with olive oil
* Salsa, guacamole, and cilantro (optional)

**Directions**

1. Cook rice according to package directions.
2. Preheat grill to medium-high. Meanwhile, in a large mixing bowl, combine egg, feta, almond flour, salt, and pepper. Add meat and mix without overworking. Form into four equal-size patties about one inch thick.
3. Grill burgers about three to four minutes per side, or until a thermometer placed in the center reads 160 degrees Fahrenheit and the meat is no longer pink.
4. While burgers are cooking, grill asparagus and red onion; chop when cooked.
5. Divide rice into four servings. Top each with a burger, grilled veggies, and generous scoop of guacamole, salsa, and cilantro (if using).

# *Your Flooring Consultant for Life,*

*Jim Armstrong*

*President of Jimbo’s Floors*

**P.S. End the headache of shopping for new floors with our FREE Design Audit!™**

**The Design Audit™ is a diagnostic tool that allows my expert floor consultants help you choose the right floor for your decorating taste and lifestyle.**

**They’ll walk you through a series of questions that will help narrow down the thousands of options to the two or three that exactly match your unique situation.**

**They’ll also give you a written, customized “maintenance” plan with their professional recommendations for getting the longest life and beauty out of your floor.**

**Call or visit us today for your FREE Design Audit!™**

Jimbo’s Floors

479 Park Ave., Yuba City, CA 95993

530-790-3338

**Week #3**

# *Subject line:* Why Venting Doesn’t Work

Many of us think venting will make things feel a little better, whether it’s complaining to co-workers about a micromanaging boss or airing frustration with your partner and kids. But while blowing off steam often feels like it works to extinguish negative emotions, *State of Mind* says that academic papers and clinical work with patients show it doesn’t. In fact, it often makes things worse.

The idea of venting can be traced as far back as Aristotle, but Freud is the one who really popularized the notion of catharsis. Most of what we assume about the need to “let it out” comes from his assertions about the danger of unexpressed feelings.

**Neuroscience**—specifically, neural plasticity—explains why venting reinforces negative emotions. You can think of our brain circuitry like hiking trails. The ones that get a lot of traffic get smoother and wider, with brush stomped down and pushed back. The neural pathways that sit fallow grow over, becoming less likely to be used. Kindergarten teachers are thus spot on when they say, “The thoughts you water are the ones that grow.” This is also true for emotions, like resentment, and the ways we respond to them, like venting. The more we vent, the more likely we are to vent in the future.

**Why do we still do it?**

For starters, venting can be like scratching a mosquito bite. It feels like it works at first. Studies have shown a drop in diastolic blood pressure of 1 to 10 points after venting. But they show no attendant drop in hostility. It feels like we release anger or frustration, but we don’t. Even if we didn’t experience this temporary alleviation, there’s the fact that negative feelings naturally dissipate over time. People who do nothing assume the abatement owes to time; people who vent believe venting did the trick. And our choices can be self-reinforcing. If it seems like venting worked, we’re less likely to abide by social norms around holding back in the future.

Another culprit reinforcing the “catharsis hypothesis” is media messaging. Emotional awareness is on the rise, with more Americans understanding concepts like trauma and toxic positivity. We’ve gotten the message that we need to acknowledge our emotions and set boundaries in our workplaces and relationships. But complaining to co-workers about your office manager switching muffin brands isn’t the same as whistleblowing, and an occasional gripe is different from constant negativity. In more general terms, embracing our feelings isn’t the same as expressing them, and not all forms of expression are created equal. Realizing “I’m angry” (always OK) is a different beast from telling someone “I’m angry” (sometimes OK), and it’s even further from berating someone for causing your anger (not OK).

We want to give in to the urge to wallow, to do damage, to invite company into our misery. We also can feel closer to others when we expose them to our raw emotion, and if there’s one reliable truth about human psychology, it’s that we desire connection so much that we’ll take it in negative forms when we can’t get positive ones. But venting often doesn’t work to enhance intimacy; it can even isolate us further, whether we’re talking about getting a bad rep among our colleagues for being a negative Nancy, undermining our partner’s sense of trust and safety, or having people in our social circles associate us with stress.

None of this means you should repress your emotions or never grouse to your loved ones. In fact, studies on “social sharing” show that the productiveness of this type of venting depends on how it’s done. According to a 2019 paper, “When Chatting About Negative Experiences Helps—and When It Hurts,” recounting a negative experience takes you right back there emotionally and physiologically, just like the grievance narrative research shows. That leads to an increase in negativity.

**Restructuring**
Chatting with friends can bring closure when they help you reconstrue an event, rather than just recount it. What does that look like? Asking why you think the other person acted that way, prodding to see whether there’s anything to be learned from it all, and just generally broadening your perspective to “the grand scheme of things.”

There are lots of other things you can do when overwhelmed by negative emotion. Try “square breathing,” four breaths in and four breaths out, in order to take your body out of fight-or-flight mode. If that doesn’t work, there’s another schoolteacher trick: Cross your arms in front of you like steps five and six of the macarena; make fists, pretending one holds a bouquet and the other a candle; breathe in the roses; and blow out the flame. Psychologists call techniques like this “psychological distancing,” and studies show that they’re an effective way to defuse upsetting emotions like anger. When a modicum of calm descends, try to identify the root of your frustration by asking yourself: “Why am I so upset about this?” Ultimately, anger is like smoke. You have to get at what’s feeding the fire. After sitting with your emotions, move forward by problem-solving, scheduling a future time to discuss underlying issues, or using any number of other healthy coping mechanisms.

Just stop counting venting (without any reconstruction following your vent) among them.

***Your Flooring Consultant for Life,***

*Jim Armstrong*

*President of Jimbo’s Floors*

**P.S.** **Who is the next person you know who needs new flooring right now? Can I count on you to pass my name along to them? You’ll be doing them a tremendous favor by referring them to a professional they can trust. Plus, you’ll be rewarded for your referrals! Thank you!**

Jimbo’s Floors

479 Park Ave., Yuba City, CA 95993

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**Week #4**

***Subject line:* Phrases Great Leaders Never Say to Employees**

Writer Maya Angelou was only half right when she said that people won't remember what you said, but they’ll always remember how you made them feel. True, unless you're talking about toxic things that careless leaders say. People will remember the exact words, and exactly how they made them feel—and it’s not good, according to *Inc* magazine.

## 1. “Person X is doing better.”

Ugh. Never make comparisons like this. The only reason to use this phrase would be to motivate someone to improve (which it absolutely won’t) or to berate them (shame on you).

## 2. “Bring me solutions, not problems.”

Baloney. Real leaders want problems surfaced and don’t want to shoot the messenger. Yes, the employee should think through options for solving the problem, but sometimes they need your help. This absolute a statement leads to problems buried versus brought forth.

## 3. “I don't have any feedback for you.”

You don’t have any or you can’t have any, because you’re not in tune with the employee’s strengths and opportunities or weren’t paying enough attention to the specifics of their performance?

## 4. “You don’t need to know why—just execute.”

Actually, they do need to know why. Surveys conducted for Make It Matter revealed 58 percent of employees ranked “Not knowing why I’m asked to do what I do” as a top three de-motivator.

## 5. “I'll do it myself.”

And you’ll be by yourself, on an island, without support. This is horrid on two fronts. First, it’s the opposite of granting autonomy, which employees crave. Second, it says, “I know better than you” and “I'm a control freak” -- both are debilitating.

## 6. “Because I’m the boss.”

So what? It's about personal power, not position power. This phrase is a cop out and a weak way to hide behind authority. You might get compliance. You’ll never get commitment. You'll get followers by hierarchy. But never by heart.

## 7. “Why did you do it that way?”

This phrase is an accusation by nature. If you use it, be clear it’s inquisitive in nature. If the intent is to point out flaws, instead ask, “How might things have been done better?”

## 8. “Good job.”

Bland feedback is like white bread -- it’s not nutritious. Instead, get granular and let them know what about the job they did was good, and why.

## 9. “You need to do more with less.”

A platitude. And an offensive one. No duh, we should do more with less. How about giving insight as to how, or what you’ll do to help us be more efficient? It’s a frustrating, never-ending quest to just keep producing more with less resources. Even if it’s true, it requires more context and aid offered.

## 10. “That’s your problem.”

Wrong. If you’re a leader, it’s your problem too. There’s no faster way to ditch accountability than to use this sentence.

## 11. “Don’t take this the wrong way, but...”

But you’re beating around the bush. This says “I haven’t really thought through the feedback I have for you” or “I'm too timid to be direct with you.”

## 12. “I don’t have time right now.”

Or is it that you won’t make time? The best leaders I had always did. Or even if they truly didn’t, the refusal was properly couched, with an explanation of why and a counteroffer of when and where they could connect.

## 13. “Are you questioning my authority?”

This smacks of insecurity and the inability to handle debate or conflict. Great leaders welcome questioning; they know it makes them, the idea, and the outcome stronger.

## 14. “Our boss is a moron.”

So unprofessional. If you show the troops you’re willing to talk about your boss, how do they know you won’t throw them under the bus? Don’t bash your boss, peers, or anybody in front of the troops. It’s not what real leaders do.

## 15. “My predecessor was terrible.”

This one is related to the previous and may even be more despicable because it comes across as a veiled attempt to pump yourself up. Disrespect and self-promotion are a sour mix.

## 16. “I’m disappointed in you.”

Ouch. As with children, it’s never about the person, it’s always about the behavior. You can be disappointed in the work they did or the outcome but making it about them as a person is something they often don’t recover from.

## 17. “It’s not my fault.”

If you’re a leader, it’s definitely at least partly your fault. Own it. Be accountable. Look to the room to give credit and in the mirror for blame.

So choose your words wisely—but not these words.

*Your Flooring Consultant for Life,*

*Jim Armstrong*

*President of Jimbo’s Floors*

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