



Karen Anderson

## I'm sure my regular readers (that's you) would give me five stars. Right?

*Club columnist Karen Anderson considers what it would be like if the tables were turned.*

Complaining – about a late delivery, a lousy meal or bad customer service – is going out of style. It's not that people are getting less fussy, however. We still grouse, but now we plop down in front of our keyboards, go directly to one of the review sites, and pour out our opinions, along with a rating.

This approach is passive-aggressive, but it's also very tempting, especially when you've ordered online and the only other way to complain is to dial a customer-service number and spend the rest of your weekend on-hold. Shooting off an online review offers instant gratification.

So, there I was, glaring at a gadget that had arrived two weeks late and broken, and flexing my fingers above the keyboard as I selected just the right words to describe my customer experience. Oh, there would be zero stars for these people, believe me.

And then it occurred to me: What if people were reviewing me? I can only imagine what they might say ...

### **My little niece Kaylee:**

[Four stars] "Aunt Karen is the best. She makes homemade lemonade with real lemons instead of a mix. She'd get five stars if she'd buy me a kitten."

### **My cleaning service:**

[Three stars] "Good scheduling, prompt payment, and good holiday bonus. On the other hand, just how many cats do these people own? There's fur everywhere! Note that we do not agree with the previous cleaning service's review that claims there's a polar bear hiding in the basement on cleaning days."

### **My plumber:**

[Five stars] "Outstanding customers. Nearly every part of the plumbing system in their 90-year-old house will need to be replaced in the next five years."

### **My dentist:**

[Four stars] "Mild phobias, good about brushing, insists she flosses. Brought in a pile of contemporary R&B and Latin CDs and begged our hygienist to stop playing 1980s stadium rock, for which the rest of us are grateful."

### **My new neighbors:**

[Two stars] "Four stars for the new paint job on the house, but just how long do these people plan to wait before mowing their lawn? The Christmas decorations were nice, but that faded patio umbrella last summer? Total eyesore!"

### **My hairstylist:**

[Five stars] "Tips really well, but hasn't changed her hairstyle since 2005. Bo-ring! When you see her, suggest a nice Day-Glo purple stripe to set off the gray."

### **My Zumba instructor:**

[Three stars] "Attends class regularly but doesn't like to learn new routines. Should ditch the dorky outfits."

### **My farmer's market:**

[Two stars] "Lacks commitment to organic produce. Seen sneaking out of the market with her tote bag filled with mini-donuts, chocolate truffles and one measly bunch of lacinato kale."

### **The local possum:**

[Five stars] "Best dining in the neighborhood. Arrive by 6 p.m. to get the last of the cat food before they bring it in for the night. In the winter, heated cat beds available in the garden shed."

### **The local raccoon:**

[Zero stars] "Hostile to native creatures! New fence system has openings too small for a mature raccoon."

### **My pet store:**

[Five stars] "Among our top customers for cat products."

### **My editor:**

[Four stars] "Highly creative, especially when explaining why she turned in her column a day after deadline."

