



How to Approach Noisy Neighbors & Still Remain Neighbors!

by Ray DiZazzo

Dear Couples Company:

I live in an apartment building and the people directly upstairs are very loud. They pace the floor with their shoes on, move furniture and sound like they stomp and jump up and down at all hours of the day and night. How should I go about getting them to be a little more considerate?

Should I go through the building manager or should I pay them a visit? They will obviously know which apartment the complaint came from if I do not go to them directly, and I do not want them to react negatively toward me in the future.

*SMACD
(F) 22, Newark, NJ*

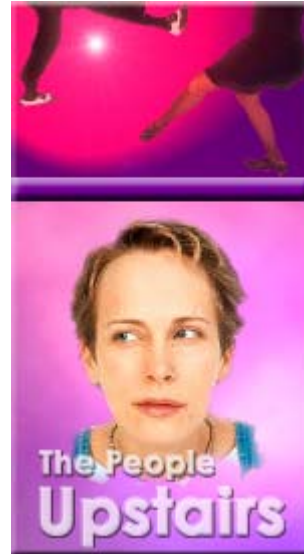
Dear SMACD:

You should definitely visit your neighbor in person as a first effort. Reporting it would only create animosity. But don't think of it as a confrontation, think of it as a friendly visit to ask for a favor. This will start things out on a positive tone.

Next, remember the Clarity Factor Focal Points: FOCUS, MAGNIFY, PENETRATE and LISTEN. Focus your message by simply thinking through what you want to say and what kind of response you want. I think with this type of situation a short version of your thought process might go something like this:

Forming Your Strategy, Counsel Yourself:
"If I get angry and say something antagonistic, that might do more harm than good, but if I can make them understand how the noise disrupts our household, and create a friendly relationship, maybe they'll make an effort to keep it down."

Now add some specifics to that. What are worst times of day? What does the noise do that's disruptive -- drown out the TV?



Does the noise cause your children cry? Your dog bark? Wake your baby? The bottom line is get very clear in your own mind about what you want to say -- that's FOCUS.

The next Focal Point is to MAGNIFY THE LISTENER'S ATTENTION, in other words remove any distractions and be sure he or she is focused on you. In this case, I don't believe that will be a problem, but I would still preface what I had to say with a phrase like:

The Approach:

"Do you have just a few minutes? It's really important that we talk."

At that point you'll have two things: a clear message in your mind (FOCUS) and the listener's full attention (MAGNIFICATION). Next you have to use that wonderful opportunity to penetrate your listener's personal barriers -- the unconscious filters people use to reshape what you say into what they think you said. How do you do that? With clear, concise language. I think an abbreviated version of your initial message might go something like the following (keep in mind that since I don't know the details of your situation, I'm going to make up some facts, simply as examples):

The Script:

"Hi. Do you have just a few minutes? I'm from downstairs and it's really important that we talk. First, I hope you'll understand that I'm here as a friend, not to cause problems. But, in fact, I do have a problem. For some reason, at certain times of the day we get very loud thumping and banging coming from overhead. I do understand that some of that is simply because we live close together in an apartment complex, but around 9:00 every night it actually wakes up my daughter, and my dog gets crazy, too. Getting her back to sleep and getting things calmed down is major effort.

Like I said, I know some noise is the nature of the beast, but I wonder if we could work together on maybe keeping it down during some periods? Especially in the evenings? I'd be forever grateful, honestly."

Having said this, you will have been very clear and positive. It would be difficult for the listener to distort what you've said into something negative or threatening. You will have managed to FOCUS, MAGNIFY and PENETRATE. Now comes the final Focal Point -- LISTENING WITH CLARITY. And that means dropping your own personal barriers so you don't misconstrue their feelings. Instead, empathize, put yourself in their shoes and then begin to look for common ground.

All communication situations are different, of course, but this is one example of how a few simple rules applied to a common problem can change a negative confrontation into a clear and friendly exchange of ideas.

About the Author: *Ray DiZazzo is a communications consultant and author from Southern California. [The Clarity Factor](#) is DiZazzo's sixth book. His clients have included Acura Motors, GTE, J.D. Power and Associates, ITT and other major companies.*



About The Clarity Factor:

The Clarity Factor goes to the heart of verbal communication in a completely unique way. Covering the essential skills in Business and Personal Communications, this book lays out in an easy to understand and easy to implement the critical elements to effective communication. Most people take for granted. By implementing and learning the simple steps outlined in this little 107 page book, you can dramatically effect the quality of your business and personal relationships for years to come!

