

22nd March, 2008

SECRET SHOPPER

DEAR DIARY, I sent my children to buy some clothes for my cousin's christening. I hate shopping and normally buy my clothes on line so the thought of shopping with two teenaged boys made me feel quite ill so I gave them the money and sent them on their way. They're normally quite good when it comes to selecting what they need but that's when it's casual clothes. I was a little nervous because they had to purchase smart items, but I was still unwilling to accompany them thinking they're old enough to buy a shirt and a pair of trousers that don't have a sport logo on it.

I think they spent a total of five hours shopping; which must have consisted of looking at trainers and/or skimpy dressed braced teeth teenaged girls because out of the seven items that were purchased, five had to be returned.

I was as mad as hell because I knew I'd be the returnee which defeated the object entirely. Kids!

The following day I went to Debenhams to get a mixture of refund and exchange. I thought this should be no problem considering the clothes were in good condition and I had a receipt. I went to the desk and gave the items to the woman behind the counter. The lady standing next to her who had nothing to do with it said to me we can't take this shirt. It's not folded in the manner that it was purchased and we can't resell it. I looked at her like who the hell are you? I then looked back at the woman I approached in the first place and it looked as if she was going to listening to Miss Nosey Parker. So I said to Miss Nosey Parker who the devil can re-pack a shirt in the condition it came in. She said to me but we can't resell it. I said to her I'm not taking it back home. I then said I'll tell you what, let's take it out while this queue's forming behind me and I'll attempt to get it re-packaged in the condition it came in, just like the manufacturer, I'll do that shall I? She then turned the woman who was supposed to be serving me and said something to her in a foreign language. They both spoke rapidly for about 30 seconds. I interrupted them and said ring the bell, call the manager, do something, all I know is that shirt is not coming home with ME! Nosey Parker said OK and stretched out her hand. I don't know who she was stretching her hand out to because I wasn't offering her anything. I left the package on the counter. She then picked up the shirt and started inspecting it in an exaggerated way. I

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really ought to walk around with a mock up version of the Oscar statue in my handbag so that when people are going over the top with exaggerated drama like Miss Nosey Parker, I can clart them over the head with the Oscar and shout and the prize for being extra goes to... (drum roll) you, you overacting son of a b*tch.

I said to Miss Nosey Parker, by the way, you failed. I'm a Secret Shopper. I got closer to her and read her name badge, I said alright Fadilah, I'll be sure to send your name, description, a date and time and your behaviour to my manager who will get a report which will then go to your manager and your head office. Maybe you'll think twice about the way you approach customer relations.

I'm not really a personal shopper; I just wanted Miss Nosey Parker to have something to think about. Feisty!

August Mayfield