

Give 'Em Some Suga: The Recipe for Speaking Up and Standing Out, Even As An Entrepreneur Who Feels Guilty Saying "No" by Jessica Bonner

Introduction

Sometimes you gotta give some "suga" in times of conflict.

Now you may be thinking, *Doesn't "suga" mean "kiss" when you say that phrase?*

Based on research of southern slang (yes, this Alabama girl had to research to be sure), you're 100% correct!

I grew up hearing older women from my family and church saying it when requesting a kiss: "Come ova' here and gimme some suga."

Interestingly enough, at the time of me writing this book (August 2023), I recently

witnessed one of these same women (a church elder) request some "suga" from an adorable 2-year-old after service ended. The little one raised her arms and was lifted off the floor by the church member who then kissed the girl's small cheek.

Precious.

There are just some things I will never get tired of seeing. And this expression of love is one of them.

It's the sweetness of it all that gets me. And I can understand why a simple kiss would be considered sweet like "suga" (sugar).

With that said, it is not my intent to encourage you to go out and give people random kisses.

Actually, I'm not encouraging that at all. Could cause a lot of unwanted problems. And I don't want to be remembered like that. [Cue nervous laugh].

Rather, I want to encourage you to go out and spread sweetness more often when working through conflicts.

You may already know this, but I'm gonna say it anyway.

You deserve the love, happiness, and fulfilling life you've always desired. Don't you believe so? I don't know you personally, but I'm not backing down from my statement.

Why?

Because I honestly believe we were all placed on this earth for a specific purpose,

one that allows for an ultimately rewarding life.

Now, we know life will never be perfect. However, I'm almost certain we would find life less stressful if we did this one thing that we don't do enough: stand up FOR and TO ourselves.

Think about it. Have you ever walked away from a conflict simply accepting the outcome yet wishing you'd said *something* since NOT saying anything left you more stressed?

Also, have you ever found yourself taking out the bottled up frustrations behind your stress on almost anybody? I'm talking family, friends...maybe even co-workers.

Or, assuming you're an entrepreneur, maybe you've taken out frustrations on your employees (if applicable). How about your customers?

I've been guilty. I know. I know. Definitely something I'm not proud of.

All I have to say is this. You also deserve to not have your company's reputation wrecked by preventable mishaps connected to your own stress level or the stress level of your employees (assuming they're the ones dealing with overwhelming life stressors).

And while I've never reached the point of having my reputation wrecked, I've been involved in enough situations that it could have easily ended up that way. Phew.

I so don't think we should take such chances with our reputations.

Believe it or not, but speaking up can resolve many (if not most) of the stressful situations within our control.

No. Really.

Actually, it is one of the wisest moves we can make in life because then we're more likely to possess the energy, focus, and even health needed for situations that are out of our control.

And we all know that those types of situations can pop up at any time. Ugh.

If you've ever felt like one bad situation was stacking on top of another and you were losing control, you're not alone.

I can totally relate. I remember feeling like there was absolutely no way out. But you know what?

When I reached the point of not being able to tolerate the overwhelming stress and resulting depression anymore, that was

when I started investigating my situations and making changes (e.g., going to therapy, distancing myself from toxic environments and people as much as possible).

Can you believe making this move made a *huge* difference in my life?

Because I stood up *to myself* with these changes, I could then stand up to others. Now I can handle situations within my control with much more ease than I ever have.

If this is not your reality, it should be. I totally believe you are deserving of it.

You've probably worked extra *extra* hard to develop the image of yourself and/or your business over time. Just imagine experiencing much more enjoyment related to all your hard work and a lot less stress. A. Lot. Less.

Did you feel like a weight lifted from your shoulders just now...even a little bit?

Good.

Oh, and I want you to definitely imagine this smoother life for yourself if you fall in the category of someone who feels guilty about setting boundaries or saying "no."

As someone who's a recovering "people pleaser," I very much love my life now vs back in the day when I drove myself crazy trying to make everyone else happy, whether "everyone else" was deserving of all my goodness or not.

Can you relate?

Well, if so, I invite you to join me on this journey, one that is easier than you may think.

Did I mention that you can speak up and still stand out in a way that moves people (the ones that matter most anyway) to see you in a favorable light?

All you gotta do is give the folks some "suga."

Is my southern slang getting on your nerves, yet? Haha.

Sweet wins against bitter.

At least that's what I learned my mom means when she says, "You catch more flies with honey than vinegar."

Now in my late 30s, I've come to realize that I'm more likely to come away from a situation satisfied with the outcome if I approach it patiently and non-defensively instead of impatiently and defensively.

Most times during conflict, from my experience, choosing this route results in the other side actually listening and taking necessary action to resolve the conflict.

That's what I like.

Don't you?

No more drama. No more mess or stress.

And you can walk away super confident and ready to take on future conflicts...not continuing to avoid them.

How does that sound?

Truth is I've experienced this feeling of confidence and readiness multiple times in 2023 to my pleasant surprise.

Also true is that practice builds confidence and helps produce more positive outcomes more often.

You might be thinking, *Yeah, things work out sometimes, but what about the times when bringing my "sweetness" to the situation doesn't work?*

Well, the three-level formula I present in this book offers an answer to that very question. I can honestly say I've almost always walked away with what I've wanted using this very formula. Yes, I mean it when I say "almost always."

And since we don't always get what we want in life, can't we agree that "almost always" getting what we want is the next best thing?

I absolutely *love* this formula.

So, I'll be breaking it down while discussing specific businesses I've had conflicts with in 2023 (including a former employer and a well-known company that generates billions in revenue yearly).

Some of these conflicts were resolved within the "Give 'em some suga" level, the nicest level of all. More intense conflicts were resolved within the "Shower 'em with grace" level. Finally, the most intense conflicts of all (like the ones with my former employer and the billion-dollar company) were resolved within the "Make 'em an offer they won't want to refuse" level.

As you can imagine, the higher the level, the more sweetness is removed...in a strategic way, of course. I imagine that a bruised ego is often the most "bitterness" the other party experiences with the third level. That's not too bad, is it?

Sometimes, money is lost, assuming carelessness or dishonesty is at play within the company.

Interesting stuff, huh?

For those of you wondering, there's a specific reason for me emphasizing within this book how businesses go about resolving conflicts.

Since the COVID pandemic, I've personally noticed a shift in customer service with several companies. If nothing else, a lack of accountability for wrongdoing seems to be more widespread today than ever. Or is it just now more noticeable since many more companies are pressed to simply fill job positions with the closest possible fit for the job, whether the worker is of good quality or not?

I honestly don't know.

But I do know that it would be great if most interactions with companies were at least above subpar. So why aren't they? Also, for business owners reading this, can you say your business provides a positively memorable experience most times?

Definitely something to think about.

We're aware that some companies will provide good service, while others will provide bad service. Some companies are just doing the best they can. That's just the way it is, right? So, why bother saying to anything to them?

First, as I previously mentioned, your own interactions with businesses as a consumer and/or employee can build your skills in advocating for yourself within your own business and life. If you consider yourself a people pleaser, shy person, or introvert not comfortable coming out of

your shell, then these interaction types are a great way for you to gradually build the courage to stand up for yourself when necessary.

Second, communication is key. While we've heard this phrase multiple times, I believe our society doesn't take it seriously enough. And that includes staff members at some companies. Because of lacking or non-existent communication, multiple businesses lose business and employees regularly.

And I know, because I've been on the sides of not providing proper communication as a business owner and not receiving it as a consumer or employee. If you know you've always wanted to improve your communication skills, your interactions with businesses may be one of the easiest ways (if not the easiest) to accomplish this goal.

Third, with bad customer service seeming to become the norm, now more than ever is the perfect time for small businesses to stand out with customer service that many customers will consider stellar. We already know that customers typically return to conduct business with companies that provide service that reflects true concern for customers. Don't you want your business to be considered a top choice in your industry all the time and not just sometimes because of *how* you serve?

If nothing else, my interactions with various businesses in 2023 alone have brought to my attention concerns I know I should be working to reduce or prevent within my own business NOW.

Importantly, based on my experiences, I've learned lessons that I can apply within my business, one focused on effective communication and self advocacy. I consider these lessons easy to pick up

because there will always be a time when it's necessary to resolve some type of conflict with a business. After all, we don't go our entire lives and never deal with a business.

We just don't.

So, wouldn't you agree it makes sense to practice your speaking up skills with businesses?

Remember what I just mentioned about the practice helping to build confidence and increase a sense of readiness for future conflicts...even conflicts in other areas of life (e.g., personal).

Finally, I realize I can also use these lessons to noticeably stand out as an entrepreneur.

So can you.

What a *huge* advantage.

That's why I can't wait for you to read *Give 'Em Some Suga*.

Other than the introduction and conclusion, I've broken the book down into three parts, each one dedicated to each level of my three-level formula.

Each part contains two chapters, which I refer to as "Ingredients" (e.g., "Ingredient 1" instead of "Chapter 1" and so on).

With each chapter title, I wanted to emphasize what makes a business stand out from others, as I've learned from my own experiences standing up to companies in 2023 alone.

You'll note within each of the book's three parts that I ensure you know what action

steps take place when "giving folks some suga," "showering folks with grace," and "making folks an offer they won't want to refuse."

Also, while I don't include all screenshots from the email conversations I discuss, I do reveal some to help make my points clear.

You'll start to see a pattern within each part of the book.

It's my desire to make the discussions as simple as possible.

And, if this book helps add just even a little more sweetness to your life, then I'll be more than grateful.

Disclaimer: Though I discuss conflicts I experienced earlier in 2023, I am not making any claims regarding the quality of

the mentioned businesses as they operate today. For all I know, they could have created or improved a process to reduce or eliminate conflicts like the one I had with them.