

# Brenda Jean Patrick

The Customer Care Teacher

BRINGING CHARISMA TO TRAININGS. BRINGING STYLE TO PRESENTATIONS. BRINGING HOPE TO AUDIENCES.

## Parent Contact Casualty

**Teacher: Ms. Pride**

**Parent: Mrs. Finn**

**Principal: Mr. Cool**

**Setting the Scene:** Ms. Pride has scheduled a parent contact for after school with Mrs. Finn. It is the fifth week of the six week grading period. Her daughter is having difficulties, her grades are slipping, and she seems withdrawn. Ms. Pride has sent her to see the counselor, to see if she can help. She greets the parent in the hallway after school.

**Teacher (Ms. Pride):** "Good afternoon, Ms. Finn. Thank you for coming."

**Parent (Ms. Finn):** "Hello."

**Teacher (Ms. Pride):** "Right this way, follow me. We will meet in the conference room down the hall. I am glad you could make this meeting. I have been concerned about Julie, so much so that I sent her to the counselor to talk."

**Parent (Ms. Finn):** "Let's not talk until we are behind closed doors. People are listening."

**Teacher (Ms. Pride):** "Of course." *Behind closed doors* "Well, Mrs. Finn. I started seeing changes in Julie's behavior about four weeks ago. I didn't think too much of it at first, but it has gotten clearly worse."

**Parent (Ms. Finn):** "What kind of behavior? She's a polite, honor student."

**Teacher (Ms. Pride):** "Well, at first she was just kind of quiet and that is not like Julie. Then she started zoning out. She stopped talking with her friends. I noticed she was not getting her work completed and the work she was turning in was just not up to standard. Her homework is almost non-existent. Her grades have really slipped these six weeks."

**Parent (Mrs. Finn):** "Excuse me Ms. Pride, but why I am only hearing about this now?"

**Teacher (Ms. Pride):** "Mrs. Finn, you're an attorney and I know you have your hands full with three children. I didn't want to worry you unnecessarily."

**Parent (Mrs. Finn):** "Ma'am, I take care of my family and I love my children. I am doing the best that I can." *[Surprised at being upset and on the verge of tears]*



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### Parent Contact Casualty

**Teacher (Ms. Pride):** “Mrs. Finn, there is no need to get defensive. I am here to be your friend and to help. I am simply concerned. Is there something going on at home that we here at school should know about?”

**Parent (Mrs. Finn):** “Are you insinuating that I do not know what is going on with my own child?”

**Teacher (Ms. Pride):** “No, of course not, but I just assumed with your busy schedule that Julie’s behavior might have been overlooked.”

**Parent (Mrs. Finn):** “My husband moved out a month ago. I am doing all I know how to do to keep the family intact and keep life as normal as possible for the kids. Julie has had to step up and really help with her younger siblings. It’s been hard on all of us. I cry myself to sleep at night so that the children will not see. I have to be strong for them.”

**Teacher (Ms. Pride):** “Oh, I was wondering if that might be it. Several people have noticed that your husband has not been in church for the past month. I was hoping I was wrong. Why didn’t you send a note or tell us? The handbook states you should contact us if there is an emergency or life changing event. I could have gotten Julie into the counselor sooner.”

**Parent (Mrs. Finn):** “I will determine what information needs to be shared with Julie’s teachers and the campus.”

**Teacher (Mrs. Pride):** “Well, at least we know what has been bothering Julie. I hope everything works out for your family. Hopefully she will get her head back in the game and get her grades up. Thank you for coming in.”

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*Ms. Pride stands up signifying the conference is over. She extends her hand. Mrs. Finn leaves and goes straight to the principal’s office. She is appalled by the teacher’s condescending attitude. She recounts the meeting to the principal.*

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**Principal (Mr. Cool):** “Oh, Mrs. Finn, I am so sorry to hear about your situation. I can only imagine how hard it has been. Weren’t you and your husband law partners? I am so glad that you took time to bring this to my attention. Ms. Pride is a personal friend and she is one of our most dedicated, loving, caring teachers. She is always involved in helping the community. I am sure it is just a misunderstanding and of course you’re still very sensitive.”



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### Parent Contact Casualty

**Parent (Mrs. Finn):** *[Crying]* “Of course I am sensitive, but that has nothing to do with how Ms. Pride handled the conference. She just assumed a family issue was to blame and was not willing to look into any other possibilities. I do not believe Julie’s father moving out would cause this kind of behavior. Perhaps, if Ms. Pride has been as insensitive with Julie, as she was with me today, that would be a concern.”

**Principal (Mr. Cool):** “Mrs. Finn, would you mind if I called in the counselor, Ms. Care? I would like to see if we can come up with a plan to help Julie and your family.”

**Parent (Mrs. Finn):** “Are you listening to me? This is a sensitive time, but this is not something that would drop Julie from being an honors student. Besides my sister is a school counselor and they are nothing more than glorified administrators and test givers. They do not have time to meet and counsel with students.”

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*Mr. Cool now seems uncomfortable. He looks at his watch.*

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**Principal (Mr. Cool):** “It is my duty to dismiss the after school programs at this time. Why don’t I call you in the next day or two after you have talked to Julie and confirmed that Ms. Pride is correct.”

**Parent (Mrs. Finn):** “I’m not sure what the benefit of today’s meeting has been for me or for Julie.”

**Principal (Mr. Cool):** “Mrs. Finn, I will work with Julie’s teachers to come up with a way for her to bring up her grades. The grades may not be as high these six weeks as there is only one week left in the grading period, but I assure you, we are on it and next six weeks we will see an improvement. The benefit of today’s meeting has been to let you know that Julie is hiding her real emotions about what is going on at home. Our job is to get Julie back on track and get her focused on the fact that academics come first and the stress that she is experiencing over her parent’s separation is not to impact her academics. This is just one of life’s disappointments that she will have to learn to expect. Thank you for coming in.”



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## Educators' Customer Care Opportunity To Build a Relationship

Teacher: Ms. Pride

Parent: Mrs. Finn

Principal: Mr. Cool

**Setting the Scene:** Ms. Pride has scheduled a parent contact for after school with Mrs. Finn. It is the fifth week of the six week grading period. Her daughter is having difficulties, her grades are slipping, and she seems withdrawn. Ms. Pride has sent her to see the counselor, to see if she can help. She greets the parent in the hallway after school.

**Teacher (Ms. Pride):** "Good afternoon, Ms. Finn. Thank you for coming."

**Customer Care Revision:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Parent (Ms. Finn):** "Hello."

**Teacher (Ms. Pride):** "Right this way, follow me. We will meet in the conference room down the hall. I am glad you could make this meeting. I have been concerned about Julie, so much so that I sent her to the counselor to talk."

**Customer Care Revision:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Parent (Ms. Finn):** "Let's not talk until we are behind closed doors. People are listening."

**Teacher (Ms. Pride):** "Of course." *Behind closed doors* "Well, Mrs. Finn. I started seeing changes in Julie's behavior about four weeks ago. I didn't think too much of it at first, but it has gotten clearly worse."

**Customer Care Revision:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Parent (Ms. Finn):** "What kind of behavior? She's a polite, honor student."



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## **Educators' Customer Care Opportunity To Build a Relationship**

**Teacher (Ms. Pride):** "Well, at first she was just kind of quiet and that is not like Julie. Then she started zoning out. She stopped talking with her friends. I noticed she was not getting her work completed and the work she was turning in was just not up to standard. Her homework is almost non-existent. Her grades have really slipped these six weeks."

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**Parent (Mrs. Finn):** "Excuse me Ms. Pride, but why I am only hearing about this now?"

**Teacher (Ms. Pride):** "Mrs. Finn, you're an attorney and I know you have your hands full with three children. I didn't want to worry you unnecessarily."

Customer Care Revision: \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Parent (Mrs. Finn):** "Ma'am, I take care of my family and I love my children. I am doing the best that I can."  
*[Surprised at being upset and on the verge of tears]*

**Teacher (Ms. Pride):** "Mrs. Finn, there is no need to get defensive. I am here to be your friend and to help. I am simply concerned. Is there something going on at home that we here at school should know about?"

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**Parent (Mrs. Finn):** "Are you insinuating that I do not know what is going on with my own child?"



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## **Educators' Customer Care Opportunity To Build a Relationship**

**Teacher (Ms. Pride):** "No, of course not, but I just assumed with your busy schedule that Julie's behavior might have been overlooked."

**Customer Care Revision:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Parent (Mrs. Finn):** "My husband moved out a month ago. I am doing all I know how to do to keep the family intact and keep life as normal as possible for the kids. Julie has had to step up and really help with her younger siblings. It's been hard on all of us. I cry myself to sleep at night so that the children will not see. I have to be strong for them."

**Teacher (Ms. Pride):** "Oh, I was wondering if that might be it. Several people have noticed that your husband has not been in church for the past month. I was hoping I was wrong. Why didn't you send a note or tell us? The handbook states you should contact us if there is an emergency or life changing event. I could have gotten Julie into the counselor sooner."

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**Parent (Mrs. Finn):** "I will determine what information needs to be shared with Julie's teachers and the campus."

**Teacher (Mrs. Pride):** "Well, at least we know what has been bothering Julie. I hope everything works out for your family. Hopefully she will get her head back in the game and get her grades up. Thank you for coming in."

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Ms. Pride stands up signifying the conference is over. She extends her hand. Mrs. Finn leaves and goes straight to the principal's office. She is appalled by the teacher's condescending attitude. She recounts the meeting to the principal.

**Principal (Mr. Cool):** "Oh, Mrs. Finn, I am so sorry to hear about your situation. I can only imagine how hard it has been. Weren't you and your husband law partners? I am so glad that you took time to bring this to my attention. Ms. Pride is a personal friend and she is one of our most dedicated, loving, caring teachers. She is always involved in helping the community. I am sure it is just a misunderstanding and of course you're still very sensitive."

Customer Care Revision: \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent (Mrs. Finn):** *[Crying]* "Of course I am sensitive, but that has nothing to do with how Ms. Pride handled the conference. She just assumed a family issue was to blame and was not willing to look into any other possibilities. I do not believe Julie's father moving out would cause this kind of behavior. Perhaps, if Ms. Pride has been as insensitive with Julie, as she was with me today, that would be a concern."

**Principal (Mr. Cool):** "Mrs. Finn, would you mind if I called in the counselor, Ms. Care? I would like to see if we can come up with a plan to help Julie and your family."

Customer Care Revision: \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent (Mrs. Finn):** "Are you listening to me? This is a sensitive time, but this is not something that would drop Julie from being an honors student. Besides my sister is a school counselor and they are nothing more than glorified administrators and test givers. They do not have time to meet and counsel with students."



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*Mr. Cool now seems uncomfortable. He looks at his watch.*

**Principal (Mr. Cool): "It is my duty to dismiss the after school programs at this time. Why don't I call you in the next day or two after you have talked to Julie and confirmed that Ms. Pride is correct."**

Customer Care Revision: \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Parent (Mrs. Finn): "I'm not sure what the benefit of today's meeting has been for me or for Julie."**

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**Teacher (Ms. Pride):** "Of course." *Behind closed doors* "Well, Mrs. Finn. I started seeing changes in Julie's behavior about four weeks ago. I didn't think too much of it at first, but it has gotten clearly worse."

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Customer Care Revision: \_\_\_\_\_

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