

Customers...

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Now...I contend that had the president of United Airlines been on board and seen this, he could have been excused for punching the guy in the nose and physically tossing him off the plane.

Failing that, though, I think the president of United could justifiably have said:

"Look, mister. We're in competition with a lot of other airlines. We want passengers to turn to us when they're looking to book a flight. But frankly, we don't need business from fools like you. So don't bother writing any letters or making any indignant calls because of what I'm about to say: Get off this plane and do us a favor and give someone else your business next time. We don't want you on United."

Under "the customer is always right" credo, of course, such a thing would never be said. Under "the customer is always right" way of thinking, any situation — no matter how much at fault the customer may be — is smoothed over.

It's about time we all realized, though, that "business" does not always translate to a soulless corporate giant, and "the customer" does not always translate to a poor, powerless, meek individual. Business usually filters down to employees — like the flight attendant — who have the same feelings, annoyances and headaches as the customer.

Yes, it makes sense to try to satisfy the customer in the name of corporate goodwill. But when the customer is one of the growing number of creeps like the guy on the United flight, it would be better to tell him just what a jerk he is and advise him to take his business somewhere else.

Maybe he does make a practice of kissing any working woman who tries to get him to follow the rules. One of these days, with any luck, one of those women will kiss him back — with her fist.

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Letters

Season of self-denial

Kema Soderberg's column concerning Catholic Lenten practices (Daily Nebraskan, March 15) upset me quite a bit. Whether she intended to or not, Kema offended a lot of Catholics, myself included.

I'd like to set the record straight on why Catholics give up things like chewing gum during Lent. Lent is a time of penance, a time to make sacrifices, to make amends for our past faults.

One way many Catholics observe this season is to give up something we usually enjoy, be it gum, alcohol or whatever. Giving something up has a two-fold purpose, as a reminder and as a means to strengthen a person's will.

By not trotting to the nearest Pepsi machine whenever one feels like it, or not having that stick of Big Red gum, a person is reminded of the reason for self-denial. It serves to remind us all that we must always strive to be better people.

It is true that some people do lose weight by not eating between meals during Lent. It is also true that a person will save gas by observing the lawful 55-miles-per-hour speed limit. Is it wrong to save the money that increased gas mileage provides? Is it wrong to shed a few pounds by giving up something during Lent?


Observation of Lent is not confined to "giving something up." Many Catholics I know are attending Mass more frequently during Lent. Likewise, many are making an extra effort to do something for someone else. By giving of our time to do these extra things, by helping others, we are reminded of our Lord, who gave everything He had, even His life, for us. If God can do this for us, cannot we do some extra things for our fellow man?

As for Kema's suggestion that we all put petty grievances behind us, I'm all for it. If we would never return to those petty grievances, the world would be a much better place. I'm willing to try. Anyone else?


John Kopetzky
senior
broadcasting

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