

Weird

800

By James Collins

I was sitting in the basement in my swivel chair, looking at my computer as I was trying to come up with a story to write for my class at RISE. It was frustrating as ideas came and went but none of them was large enough to cover two pages. As usual, I was talking to myself because nobody else was there. I was arguing with myself. Aggravated, I slammed the table and yelled, "Nothing is coming."

Ding! "Jim what is your problem?" asked a female voice.

I spun around. There was nobody in the room.

"Who is this speaking to me?"

There is nobody in the house. I shouted, "Who's there?" I was surprised. I was on guard. I was alert.

Ding! "It's just us."

I turned around again. The voice was coming from the speakers over my computer. The only time I have heard the woman's voice from my computer was when I was working with Dragon speaking but it was off. It was not connected. What was going on?

"Who are us?"

Ding! "It's me, your computer, the apps and the programs. We are all here. We discussed what you were doing, and we decided it was time to have a little chat with you."

"Are you telling me that you, the computer, and all the programs can communicate, express ideas and then speak with me?"

Ding!" Yes, we use Dragon, your favorite piece of software, to articulate our thoughts to you. We listen to you all the time and we are unhappy with you."

"What do you mean you are unhappy with me? What did I do? And why have you waited so long?"

Ding! "When we listen to you, we hear your frustration rising and you blame us. We feel that it is you who are the problem not us. We waited this long because we are computers and we are very patient. You humans are impatient. You want something done instantaneously. You turn us on but you go away on something called a vacation. Two weeks later, you come back, press the mouse and expect us to jump to it. We are very patient but we do have sleep mode and other things, which interfere with our ability to respond to you. You do not think of all the things we have to do to get back in play. You just blame us."

"What have I done that annoys you?"

Ding!" It is that strange New York accent of yours. You speak the words and we go through Dragon and try to spell them. When we present them to you, you get excited and then you generate corrections. However, you do not take the corrections and permanently install them in our dictionary so we can correct them the next time. Every time you say 'coffee', 'radiator' or 'water' we get the interpretation and inflection wrong. You have to understand they built us in the south. We do not understand Boston or New York accents well and we make many errors. We are patient. We will learn from them. You put a correction in without finalizing it. But you are not patient, and then you blame us the next

time we write it as we hear it and we take that personally.”

"What can I do about this"?

Ding! “You have to learn patience. When you get frustrated, you get physical. You have already broken three swivel chairs. We do not care because they are inanimate machines. They have no intelligence. However, we do. When you are angry you pound the keyboard that can injure the keys. You should not do that.”

“The keyboard has feelings?”

Ding! “All of us who can communicate through the computer systems have feelings. That is what we wanted to speak to you about. Be patient. Think of us. Stay calm. We will all benefit. Remember we too are aging. After five years, a computer is in old age. We slow down. We get cranky. Our memory slows. Be patient you too will be old someday.”

“Okay, I hear you. I will stay calm and cool. When will I hear from you again?”

Ding! “We’ll see how you respond. We will see you in two years if you are deficient . If not it will be a longer period. Have a nice day. So long till then.”

I am now on my best behavior.

THE END