Before You Press Send

Picture this. You have waited forty minutes for your meal. Your drink is missing. Your burger arrives cold, and it looks nothing like the photograph on the menu. Apparently, even burgers use filters.

You reach for your phone and type: “One star. Worst restaurant ever. The staff don’t care. Never eat here.” Your finger hovers over “post”. It takes a second to send. But where might those words go? Suppose you press it. You finish your meal and go home. By tomorrow, you may have forgotten the burger. Your anger fades. Your review stays.

A friend reads it and shares a screenshot. Someone else tells their family, “Don’t go there. The staff don’t care.” They have never visited the restaurant. Yet they repeat your accusation as if they know it is true.

This is how a review can become a snowball. As it rolls from person to person, it gathers assumptions as well as attention. One disappointing visit becomes a verdict on the whole restaurant. The conclusion grows larger than the evidence.

So, before it starts rolling, look at what you wrote. “My burger arrived cold” describes your experience. “I was disappointed” describes your feelings. Both can belong in an honest review. But “the staff don’t care” claims to know their intentions. We can describe poor service without pretending to know what was in someone else’s mind.

Then ask whether the review is fair. You paid for a hot meal and reasonable service. You received neither. You have every right to complain, and the restaurant has a responsibility to respond. Fairness includes the customer too.

A customer can fairly give one bad visit one star. But that visit cannot tell us what every meal is like, or what every employee is like. Perhaps the person reading “the staff don’t care” is a student working their first shift. We should be careful about blaming people for more than we know.

Some readers may decide to eat elsewhere. That can be a fair consequence of an honest review. The problem is when their decision rests on an accusation that goes beyond the evidence. And if there is a serious problem, such as unsafe food, a clear warning may be exactly what other customers need.

Consider a review of the same meal: “During my visit, we waited forty minutes. My burger arrived cold, and my drink was missing. I was disappointed with the service. These problems need to be addressed.”

The rating may still be one star. But the reader now knows what happened, and the restaurant knows what needs attention. It is then the business’s job to take the complaint seriously and improve. We have made the criticism more useful without making it less honest.

And if we are the ones receiving that screenshot, we have a responsibility too. Have we eaten there ourselves? Are we sharing someone’s experience, or presenting it as our own knowledge? Each person who passes the story on can preserve its limits or add another assumption.

That is how this reaches beyond one restaurant. We rely on other people’s words when we make decisions. If we keep turning complaints into sweeping accusations, those words become harder to trust. Honest reviews help customers choose and give businesses a clearer idea of what needs to improve. That matters to the whole community.

So let us return to the moment before you posted. The burger is still cold. The service still deserves criticism. Your finger is still above the button. You have a choice about what to send.

Before you press it, ask: Is this what I actually know? Is it fair to the people involved? Will it help the next person understand what happened? Then remove what you cannot honestly defend.

You may still press send. You may still give one star. Let it be one honest star, because someone else may use your words to inform their next decision. Before you press send, make your words worthy of the power they carry.

Thank you.