

Whose Back Do I Scratch?

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Introduction

Danielle O'Reilly was frustrated. She paid for a massage several weeks ago and was really looking forward to it. However, she had just learned that she was not going to get her massage and there was nothing she could do about it. Danielle refused to believe she paid thirty-five dollars for nothing, but what could she do?

Danielle worked as a school teacher. She enjoyed her job but, like any other job, it could be stressful at times. To help her deal with the stress, Danielle treated herself to a massage after she turned in her final grades each semester. She looked forward to these massages all semester long. As a school teacher, Danielle had to be careful with her money. While her job allowed her to live quite comfortably, it did not leave her with much money for luxuries like massages that could cost \$60 or more.

Rather than deny herself this particular luxury, Danielle signed up with an online deal-a-day website that provided discounted gift certificates from local companies. The website worked with local companies to find the deals; all Danielle had to do was pick the deals that she wanted. Danielle purchased the gift certificates through the website and then worked with the masseuses to schedule her massages.

Danielle had been working with one website for years. When one of her friends suggested a new coupon provider, The Good Life, Danielle was willing to give it a try. Signing up was easy, purchasing the gift certificate was easy; it was scheduling the massage that turned out to be so difficult.

The gift certificate that Danielle bought was good for several months so she wasn't in too much of a hurry to schedule her appointment right away. However, when she did try to schedule an appointment with Healing Hands ("HH"), their website didn't work and they did not answer or return any of Danielle's phone calls. Danielle finally found an email address for HH on their website and sent them an email explaining that she had been trying to reach them for several weeks and wanted to schedule a massage. By this time, the certificate was only good for another six weeks. Danielle was thrilled to receive an email back from the masseuse at HH but

disappointed when she read the email and found out that HH was booked solid with no openings until the day after the certificate expired!

Danielle had never been denied service with the other deal-a-day website and she was not sure what to do, so she reached out to The Good Life. When Danielle asked for a refund, they told her they could not refund her money because her request was “outside of (their) refund policy.” However, they did promise to check with the HH and get back to her. When they did, they told her that HH told them that they did have openings. Since HH had openings, The Good Life would not refund Danielle’s money.

Danielle really wanted the massage, not the money, so she again contacted HH to try and schedule an appointment, and they told her again that they had no openings. Danielle couldn’t believe it! Somebody was lying to her. She reached out again to The Good Life and asked them to tell her what times HH told them were available so Danielle could schedule a massage. When The Good Life would not, or perhaps could not, give her specific times, Danielle got angry. Danielle really wanted her massage. She had paid for it and, if she did not need it before, she certainly needed it now. She would be happy with an extension on the time for her coupon or an exchange of her coupon for one with another provider. She did not care which, as long as she got her massage. If she did not get her massage, she thought she should at least get her money back. Then she would go back to the other “deal of the day” website she had been using and get a massage through them.

Danielle was not having any luck with either The Good Life or HH. However, she did not want to be one of those people who did complain about poor service, but simply left and never came back. She wondered, who was responsible for making sure she got her massage? Who did she have the best chance of convincing that they should make sure she got it?