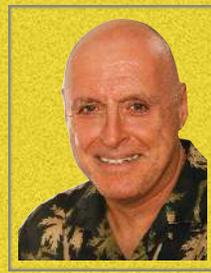


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



150 Can You Talk Back to Your Boss?

How would you feel if I said that beginning today, you should start talking back to your boss? I mean, disagreeing with him or her, challenging their opinions and positions, in front of other workers. Would you be okay with that, or fearful over what might happen? I'm Jerry Roberts and let's get in the boss's face, today, on The Extra Point.

Have you ever wanted to tell your boss exactly what's he or she is doing wrong? Or what's not working at the company? Just about everybody has, but most of us don't. Maybe that's due to fear, or because we're not the confrontational type.

What if I told you that a lot of leaders want their employees to challenge them and their positions?

How about a couple of billionaires who push people to do that? SpaceX and Tesla CEO Elon Musk and Bridgewater hedge fund founder and co-chairman Ray Dalio, both want people to think independently. They've intentionally built company cultures where employees feel they can speak up whenever they see a problem, even if it's an issue that leads directly back to the leader's desk.

So, maybe I should turn the question around. If you're a general manager, CEO, business owner, would you be okay if someone spoke up in a meeting and took on your positions?

Musk says it's critical. "Your probability of making a smart decision or coming up with a creative solution to a problem actually goes up, and the reason for that is that dissenting opinions force us to reexamine our criteria, to reconsider our processes and all the options available."

In fact, Musk went a step farther. It's reported that he's taken steps to make it "unsafe" not

to speak up. One of SpaceX's early launches resulted in an explosion. Prior to the launch Musk had asked for the top 10 risks and the factor that caused the explosion was number 11.

Following that he came out and said, "Look, even if you see something that might be totally irrelevant, if you think there's a tiny possibility that it could affect our success, please let me know." He told his team that if they're going to be afraid, he'd rather they're afraid of what will happen if they stay silent than being afraid of what will happen if they speak up.

One of Dalio's managers graded him a D-minus for his performance at a meeting, calling him unprepared and disorganized, and saying, quote, "We can't let this happen again." How did Dalio respond? He told the manager, "I'm sorry I let you down." Then he asked the management committee to investigate his history to see if there was a pattern, so that he could learn from it. Wow.

Musk and Dalio sent a message to everybody, that they were willing to be scrutinized. That eliminated fear. It said you're safe to call anything and anybody on the carpet, that you're going to be heard and your opinion is going to be taken seriously.

So, do you feel that freedom to speak up on any issue? If you're a manager, do your team members feel unafraid to challenge you? It might be worth your time to find out.

That's The Extra Point. Get out there and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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