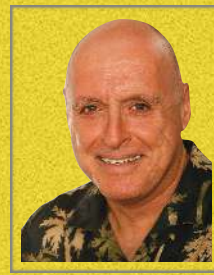


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



191 Negativity and the Workplace

There is one thing I'm absolutely positive of, that being negative has a huge impact on the workplace. I'm Jerry Roberts and let's chew this over today, next, on The Extra Point.

How does negative behavior impact workers? Can it add discouragement, frustration, and impact productivity? It absolutely can and does. Let's get into this and some steps to take if it's an issue where you are.

Negativity can suck us in. As much as we like to think that we always try to take the high road with everybody, most of us can be drawn into conversations that are negative, and we join in. You say, "No Jerry, not me, never me!"? Have you ever been in the presence of one or more people and the negative stuff starts flying around, and all of a sudden you found yourself chiming in? Yeah, it happens.

The solution? When a negative conversation breaks out around you, get up and grab a cup of water...or ask the boss a question...or tell coworkers you're busy and need to concentrate. The main thing is just stay out of it.

If you're a supervisor you could ask the status of a report or project, or in some way redirect the conversation. If you do that enough times, people will get the message.

I've spoken to numerous business owners and managers who admit their organization has a higher level of negativity than they're happy with, but they don't want to make a big deal about it as they believe that could make things worse.

I tell them this. Just like a positive workplace can be inspiring and invigorating, a negative organization can be disillusioning and draining. If you sense the mood in your place is bothering people, ask them. A lot of workers won't come to you about this, and many may

figure you're either oblivious to it or you are aware and don't care.

A negative atmosphere can help drive good workers away. If people quit, always conduct an exit interview and one of the questions should be on the positive-negative issue.

Isolate the negativity to a certain group or individual and find out what's really going on. Is there general unhappiness and is it for a good reason? Or, are they just gossiping? Is it bullying? When you know, make the correct response.

If it's two people teaming up to generate the negativity and they work near to each other, separate them. I've known of managers who split folks up into separate rooms, and even separate buildings. Other members of the team thanked them.

Some people are just naturally negative. It's who they are. Others are worriers. You can usually make progress with these people and reduce the impact on them, and their impact on others. Some people are trouble makers, though they are relatively few. control them, separate them, and in extreme cases you may have to invite them to continue their career elsewhere.

You can get a handle on negativity. Stay with it and you'll get there.

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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