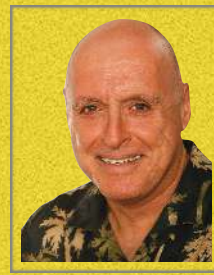# # 229   Change Series: Don't Just Point Out Problems

Are there things we do or don't do that may reflect badly upon us with our boss, as well as others in the workplace? I'm Jerry Roberts and this week let's toss out a few thoughts on that, on The Extra Point.

There are things that we may do, completely out of habit, unconsciously, that we need to change to let people see us differently, This week we'll talk about a few and what we might want to do to bring about that change.

First, have you ever worked with someone who is very good, and I mean really good at pointing out what is wrong, what the problem is, but never tries to fix it themselves? A Guam telecom CEO once told me that he had his staff clear on one rule: "don't bring me a problem unless you also show up with the potential solution."

He said that anybody can point out trouble, but not everybody takes the time to think through a situation and either take action, or come to the boss with options on what to do, seeking opinion or approval.

This CEO said that he had gone through years of everybody dumping off their problems on his desk and he'd figure out the answer for them. One day it hit him that if he didn't stop doing all the thinking in the company, he'd always have to do all thinking. So he just stopped and it was a bit of a shock when somebody would walk in with, "Boss, this or that is wrong or not working, what do I do?"… and he said, "I don't know, I guess you'll have to go back and figure it out."

He told me the looks on the faces of some workers were priceless. "Uhh..uhh..okay." He said it took a while to change the culture but it did change, and people learned to think for themselves and solve problems on their own, and the company improved.

So, beginning today, don't come to your boss with a problem unless you also come with what you want to do about it. That will make you look good not only to your boss, but to everybody where you work.

And if you're a boss and workers start trying to come up with these solutions, you need to honor the effort and be patient if some of the answers offered aren't exactly what you want. Take what they offer and walk back through it with them, smoothing it out. It's a start.

Would you like the advanced version of this? When you recognize the problem and you think through how to fix it…go ahead and fix it — or at least try — and then walk in to your boss and say, "Here's what was wrong, here's what I did to fix it. Problem solved." Or, "This is the difficulty and here's what I tried, but it didn't work and I'm a bit baffled by it. Can you give me a few minutes of your time, I could use some help." I like that approach.

Solving the issue makes you look like a hero to a boss whose head is screwed on straight. And before you say it I'll say it, yes, too many bosses don't have their heads screwed on straight. Okay. But for those who do, even if the solution isn't found, they should love the idea that the worker thought about it, took action and tried. Give me that any day over just showing up with trouble and expecting me to handle it. Problem solving is a super power. Develop it and use it.

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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