

# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 275 Praise in the Workplace

We all know how important it is for managers to give praise to workers, but did you know how important it is to learn how to accept praise? I'm Jerry Roberts and today, we'll talk about praise, the giving and the accepting, on The Extra Point.

Do you love to be praised at work? Most people do. How well do you accept praise when it comes? Let's talk about that.

The giving and receiving of praise is tied to trust. As my manager you give me praise and that tells me you're paying attention to me and my work. That builds trust. It also opens a loop that needs closing. Think of it this way. When someone says to you, "Thank you," the natural response in Western society is "You're welcome." So, to close the loop on your praise, I should respond in some way. However, for some, it's to deflect the praise.

There is a classic story about two women friends who meet for lunch and one says, "Did you have your hair done? Oh, I love your hair, you look like you just stepped out of a magazine!" The other replied, "Look who's talking, you always look like you've come straight from the salon." The first woman shot back, "I wish I could wear clothes like you. I think you're the same size as when we were in high school." The second lady, not to be outdone, responded, "If only I had your shoulders. Dresses just hang perfectly on you." There's nothing wrong with this but when the first woman received the compliment on her hair, she could have just said, "Thank you."

My response to your praise should be the same. "Thank you." It's the natural way to acknowledge the recognition you've given me and to show you I appreciate it. You might add something onto the end if you choose, such as "Thank you very much, this was a great project and I loved working on it."

The first course I wrote, many years ago, was RPM — Recognition, Praise and Motivation. Aimed at managers, it gets into the nuts and bolts of how to effectively give workers praise and why it's such a powerful tool. We also cover the fact that in Guam and with a mix of cultures, sometimes the boss isn't going to get words back in reply to praise. Sometimes it's a nod of the head, or just a smile. There's a certain modesty or humility taught in the upbringing of some people. If that's how you handle praise when you receive it, let me say that words bring another dimension and carry more impact. Take that smile and nod, and add just a few words of thanks.

Let's flip the coin. A perceptive manager takes note at how each employee likes to be praised and how they will respond to it.

In addition, there's a "how" and a "where" to praising workers. Some want fireworks and a marching band and for it to play out in front of the whole world when you praise them, while others prefer less attention. The manager won't or can't always choose to provide praise in the preferred manner, but it's helpful to know how your team members see things.

There's another angle to this. Returning the boss's praise in a positive manner will give him/her encouragement to give more praise. Maybe over time, we can create a culture in the organization where praise is more freely given and accepted.

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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