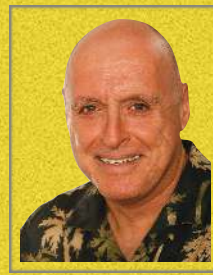


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



298 What to do When Bad News Strikes

When the news of the day causes workers to worry or be fearful, how should managers and supervisors handle things? I'm Jerry Roberts and today we'll talk about what you can do to keep emotions from overwhelming the team. That's coming next, on The Extra Point.

Part of the job of a supervisor is to help workers manage their emotions in times of high stress, disappointment, and perhaps fear. Most of us have witnessed times like that, times that threatened our happiness, productivity, and our hope. While none of us want those events in our life, very few of us escape them.

So, if something occurs that throws panic, worry, or distress into our workplace, what can we do to help people fight off feelings of dread and to lose hope? Here's a list of things to consider. By the way it's available for you on the website. Go to guamtraining.com and download Extra Point # 298.

1. There's no perfect time to communicate with your team, and it's usually better if done sooner, rather than later. Don't wait until you have all the answers. Start connecting.
2. Take a reading of how people are feeling. If that was you, how would you want to be communicated with? What are they looking to you for — a solution, a promise, or an infusion of hope? What they don't need are false promises, or false hope. Don't just tell them what you think they want to hear.
3. If there are people using gossip and other toxic behavior, try to separate them from the others before they influence others into a negative frame of mind.
4. When workers feel vulnerable they want something or someone strong to lean on. If you don't have any concrete information to provide, talk with people and let them vent if they want.

5. Listen more than you talk. If you want to show empathy — that you understand how people feel — that comes with hearing them out. Use those active listening skills we talk about from time to time. Don't be distracted. Focus.

6. When you do have information to share, give facts wrapped up in a clear understanding of what it all means. Tell people what they need to know without burying them in details.

7. They now know what the problem is and what it means, and next they are likely looking to you for direction. This is the solution part. What happens now? A sidenote: unless you plan to turn the meeting into a town hall to brainstorm the solution, make sure you know exactly what you're going to say at this point.

8. Help them to accept the situation and embrace the plan to move forward. As the saying goes, "We can't change what happened, but we can control how we think about it and what we do."

9. Take action. Even a small step forward is symbolic that, "Hey, we're going to be okay."

10. Be patient with people. Everybody handles stress differently. We all don't pass the test with the same score, but hopefully we'll all come out of it a bit wiser, stronger, with empathy for others, and grateful, extremely grateful that we're a part of this kind of team.

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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