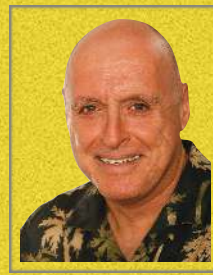


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



342 Nine Lies About Work – Part 4

Today we finish up with Marcus Buckingham's *Nine Lies About Work*. I'm Jerry Roberts and we'll be looking at the issues of providing the right kind of feedback, and how to deal with someone's potential, next, on The Extra Point.

Nine Lies About Work. Here's Lie #5: People Need Feedback

Buckingham says people don't need feedback, they need attention. Well, isn't feedback a form of attention? It can be, but most of us aren't good at giving it, and that's mainly because we approach it from the wrong direction.

Our tendency is to give personal feedback when things aren't going well, and we deal with the symptoms rather than try to uncover the root cause of a problem. Generally, this makes the person receiving the feedback lose energy for their work. The answer is to build a base of positive attention. Research shows positive attention is 30 times more effective than negative feedback in creating high performance.

After establishing this positive base the manager will have a much easier time when he/she has to give feedback with a negative slant. Most of your dealings with workers should be positive by intent. Catch them doing something right and praise them. Then, when you need to have a tougher conversation, it's much more likely the individual will be open to it. This is basic psychology and works across all generations.

Lie #7: People Have Potential

You're saying, "What could possibly be wrong with that? Of course people have potential. It's how we classify them, according to Buckingham. Even if we don't write it down anywhere, we tend to separate workers into categories, such as high potential and low potential. We all do

it. You look at somebody and say to yourself, "She's got the tools to be great and she's going to go far" ... then you look at the next worker and say, "He doesn't have the right skills and attitude, and he's going nowhere." When we do that we've just boxed them into our vision of their reality. Those labels are tough to shake and impact how we make decisions on who gets the better opportunities — and you know that's true.

Everybody has untapped potential that their manager never gets to. I'll grant you that some have more than others, but don't you think the style of the manager and the circumstances of the job may have something to do with that? I've known people who were categorized as total failures and disinterested in their work, then got a new manager or moved on to another job, and became high producers. How is that possible if they were "low potential"?

Buckingham prefers the term "momentum" over potential. Have we set the worker up with a development program, one that we can measure, is variable depending on how they perform, and they have a say in it? We can introduce different things into their program to go faster or slower as needed. That's a way to encourage momentum, and we don't get into the game of labeling people.

The book is *Nine Lies About Work* by Marcus Buckingham. It might be a good addition to your library.

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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For information on training and consulting services from Jerry Roberts, please click this link: guamtraining.com

