

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



390 Do You Ever Say the Wrong Thing? – Part 1

Do you ever find yourself saying things you didn't really intend to say? Or maybe you did intend to say something, but it came out wrong? I'm Jerry Roberts and if that's ever happened to you, the next couple of days we'll be looking to find answers, on The Extra Point.

I caught an article in Fast Company magazine that describes an issue for a lot of us. We open our mouth to say something we think needs to be said, but the results aren't what we hoped for. Brain and mouth are not at all in sync and the results are embarrassing, or cause a problem.

You know what I'm talking about. These aren't planned speeches. It's impromptu, off-the-cuff talk. We just see something or hear something and decide to respond, or just react. It's happened to you and me, and just about everybody is victimized by their own tongue, sooner or later. Let's run down the ways.

The article, written by Judith Humphrey, went into what she termed *The Seven Deadly Sins of Impromptu Speaking*. Here we go:

1. Speaking before thinking

This is speaking before you've thought things through. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill once said about such speakers: "Before they get up, they don't know what they are going to say; when they are speaking, they don't know what they are saying; and when they have sat down, they don't know what they have said."

The key point here is to make a point and stay with it. Being spontaneous is wonderful if you can make sense. If you're around your boss, a client, or in an important meeting, scribble down a few notes to help you stay on track.

2. Running off at the mouth

Another way to express this is that we talk too much. Maybe this is interrupting others, or

going on and on, monopolizing a meeting, or you tell a story that could take three minutes but 20 minutes later you still haven't gotten to the conclusion.

This is a close cousin to speaking before we think. It's thinking we're ready to speak and have a definite point to make, then getting into it and figuring out we don't know what or where that point is.

What's needed is structure so we don't end up babbling. The solution is to set limits on where we want to go with the conversation. Establish your structure with two or three points you want to make and leave it at that. Avoid the temptation to go further unless you're really clear on what comes next.

3. Experiencing mind freeze

This is not the kind induced by eating ice cream. This is when your mind goes blank and you don't know what to say. This can be caused by nervousness, anxiety, or poor preparation.

And that last word is the key to avoiding an issue like mind freeze. Preparation. Be ready. Know your stuff. If you know that you're short on details and aren't completely clear on a topic, tell people you need more time. Or, if you have a team member who knows the information well, call them in and let them pick up for you.

Tomorrow, we'll have more ways to say the wrong thing and how to overcome them.

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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