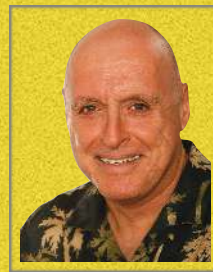


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



453 Talking With People Whose Opinions You Don't Like

Have you ever tried to have a discussion with someone whose opinions you don't like? Sometimes, it's called for to reason with people whose words are often uncalled for. I'm Jerry Roberts and today, let's chat up ideas on how to do this. That's next on The Extra Point.

A few days ago someone was telling me they sort of dread the Thanksgiving holiday and gathering over at their parents' house. It was because of "him." Well, that's an invitation to ask a followup question if ever there was one, so I did. "Uhh, *"him"*?"

Maybe you're way ahead of me on this. Most families have at least one person that almost everybody tries to avoid at these get-togethers. Maybe they are very opinionated, or dismiss everybody else's opinions, or they're just flat out disagreeable about everything. Do you know anybody like that?

You and I both know that disagreeable folks aren't hiding until holiday meals, they're out there the rest of the time too — and they're definitely in the workplace. Are you nodding your head? Are you right now seeing in your mind's eye the face of someone who fits the disagreeable description?

In the spirit of Thanksgiving and due to my feeling of gratitude for you listening to this daily feature, may I give you a gift today...a way...to deal with these folks? Was that, "Yes"?

1. No rolling of the eyes or exclamations of, "Oh Lord, not again!" That sort of gives the wrong impression, ya know? Avoid the urge to be confrontational. Keep your cool.

2. Redirect the conversation by introducing values. Let's say Mr. or Ms. Disagreeable says this at the weekly meeting: "You know, this company is way behind when it comes to taking care of employees." That's relatively inflammatory and you could escalate the

situation by outright challenging that they're wrong, or criticizing them for bringing it up, or you could use their statement to your advantage.

How about countering with, "You know, Dis, you bring up a point that we don't talk about much. Maybe we can spend a few minutes examining that. Let me start. First, our payscale is industry standard or even slightly above. Benefits are the same, plus we have a good number of opportunities for professional development." Then you give others a chance to chime in.

3. Listen well and keep the conversation focused. By the time you go around the table you might have a good number of positive comments, and maybe somebody will have agreed with the original point, too. No problem. You continue with, "Dis, there's a lot of good opinion on this. I'm glad you brought it up. Did you have anything SPECIFIC to add?"

At that point, the disagreeable one has to put up or shut up. Another generalization is not what you're calling for here. The other factor is that you acknowledged them. Sometimes, people just have a need to be heard and when they are, they become easier to deal with.

We also have to keep in mind that some people are having a tough day, and maybe a tough life. We often don't know their struggles and why they act in certain ways. I hope this helps. May you have greater harmony this Thanksgiving and beyond, even if Mr. or Ms. "Dis" does their thing.

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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