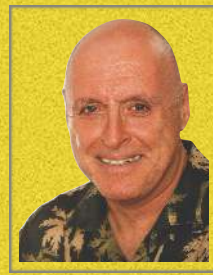


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



634 Secret Files of The New Boss – Part 3

We finish up today with supervising former peers. Does it have to be a can of worms? That's next on The Extra Point.

The last couple of days we've talked about the challenge of being promoted to manager, and trying to lead former peers. We spoke about the awkwardness of the situation at times. We stressed the importance of knowing what your workers want, and trying to help them get it.

There's an aspect of this I rarely get into except with clients, because it usually turns into a long and detailed conversation. We've only got a couple of minutes but I'll touch on it lightly.

You may make a magnificent effort to reach someone and encourage them, help them, only to find they still resent your promotion, will not accept you as the manager, and will make things tougher on you. It happens. So what then?

They may publicly question your decisions. They might even tell people you aren't qualified for the job. Communication may prove difficult with this worker, and their outward attitude to you could be less than cheerful. Yet, they perform their work at a high level. No loss in productivity.

There are options. Let's see if you like any of these.

1. "Hey, I'm your boss and you'll treat me with respect!" If you have to demand respect, does it make you look weak?
2. "Come on, we used to be close... gimme a break." If you whine, does it make you look even weaker?
3. See if you can arrange the worker to transfer to another department. This could work if his/her talents can cross over to another position.

4. Just roll with it and give the situation time. Their attitude sucks but their work is good, and you need them.

I don't think either of the first two options will fly, and number three on moving the person to another area depends on several factors which are out of your control. By default, number four — retain their production and see if you can win them over — seems the most logical.

Sometimes, a resentful worker will come up against a problem they can't handle, and you'll be presented with a possible breakthrough, an opportunity to step up and prove your value as a leader.

My suggestion is not to solve the problem yourself, but help the worker brainstorm to a solution. This will show them that collaborating with you — instead of stonewalling you — can be beneficial.

Does this always happen and there's a happy ending to the story? No. I've seen situations where the worker's antagonism grows and eventually they're terminated or quit. I've also seen it where both the manager and worker just tolerate each other, get decent results together, and live with it.

Being promoted to manager and then working with former peers is sometimes no picnic, but it can and does turn out okay. Attitude, patience, and focusing on what's important counts for a lot.

That's The Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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