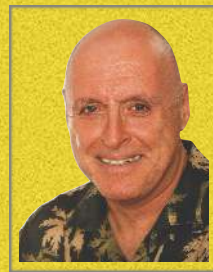


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



639 Gaslighting at Work — Part 1

You've probably heard the term "gaslighting." Do you know what it means and how it might apply to the workplace? I'm Jerry Roberts, and we'll dig into that, next on The Extra Point.

We're talking about "gaslighting." We hear the word tossed out a lot in the media, but what does it mean and what is its origin?

We can trace the term back to a 1938 stage play which became a 1940 movie starring Ingrid Bergman and Charles Boyer, about a woman whose husband used several evil strategies to slowly manipulate her into believing that she is going insane.

Gaslighting also exists in the workplace. It can impact relationships on the job, and overall worker satisfaction. An article in *Psychology Today* from Preston Ni, a professor at Foothill College in Silicon Valley, California, focused on this specific problem.

Ni highlighted seven ways gaslighting can be harmful. We'll discuss his findings today and tomorrow.

Ni characterized gaslighting this way: "*Persistent manipulation, marginalization and invalidation that causes the victim to doubt her or himself, and to ultimately lose one's own sense of objective perception, identity, and self-worth.*"

Most of us know people who have been treated badly on the job. Were they victims of a gaslighting campaign? Let's look at a few techniques commonly used.

1. Persistent negativity about the gaslightee's performance, credibility, product or service. Typically, the negativity is based on personal judgment and biased accusations, rather than facts and validity.

This is subjective, the opinion of the other person. However, since many times this

negativity is coming from a boss, it's comes across as a general slam on the person's value to the organization.

2. Gossip about the individual's professionalism, or perhaps something personal. Gossip can be a highly powerful weapon against people, particularly those who are more social and desire a greater degree of personal connection at work.

The thought that people are talking behind your back can be difficult to deal with, as are the unwelcome stares, whispers, and giggles.

3. Negative public comments in face-to-face meetings, group meetings, memos, performance evaluations, and other scenarios. So, it's bad enough that what the boss or another person is saying about you is false, but it's also being spread to others. Professional credibility and personal reputation can be damaged, along with self-esteem.

4. Negative humor and sarcasm. Has the boss ever made you the butt of his/her jokes? Is that followed up with the expression, "just kidding"? Sometimes attacks on people are hidden inside of humor, teasing, and mocking.

You might think, "It doesn't seem like he's attacking me," but you also know it somehow doesn't feel exactly right.

We'll have three more examples of gaslighting tomorrow, along with ideas on how to effectively deal with it.

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

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