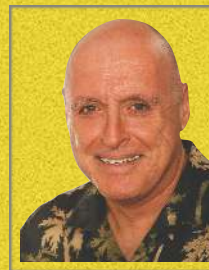


# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 673 Giving Effective Criticism – Part 3

How good are you at giving criticism? If you're a supervisor, you need to be good at it because it's a key tool in helping to build individuals and teams. I'm Jerry Roberts and today, we continue our look at what I'm terming Criticism 2.0, the way it needs to be. That's next, on The Extra Point.

As we discussed in the first segment of our look at criticism, most managers give too little. Workers want more, if it's not a session full of blame-filled negativity that doesn't lead to a solution of some kind. Many managers, on the other hand, shy away because they don't care for confrontation. Often, they let things go until a small issue turns into a big one, and then they have no choice but to deal with it.

The takeaway there is that when you see a problem developing, approach it when it's minor. Most of the time, it'll be more difficult and more costly later.

In trying to solve an issue with what people like to term *constructive criticism*, one of the keys is for the manager to frame his/her solution in the "WII-FM" context. We've talked about that here several times, WII-FM stands for *what's in it for me*.

If you're giving feedback and every reference you make is why your solution is so good for the organization, and never once tell the worker why it's also good for them, you're likely to lose them. Let them know why you think it helps them, too.

If we show workers that we care about their interests and values — and not just say it because we think it sounds good — then people will be more open to feedback...even tough feedback that isn't easy to hear.

Another key to providing criticism of any kind is separating facts from opinion. Whatever you feel about the worker, don't let that change

how you view the evidence when considering feedback. Stay away from personalities and focus on issues. Don't look to shame people. If someone even senses that your comments are personal and the facts are slanted against them, you're starting off in a bad place and it's tough to recover.

Once the facts are agreed upon, then discuss how people were affected by actions, and *together* work toward a solution. You'll note the emphasis on the word *together*. Solutions are only legitimate when they are agreed upon by both parties, and you establish a way forward. You must get "buy-in" or you're probably just wasting your breath.

People are truly committed to a solution when they have a hand in creating it. You might say this: "George, I'm glad we agree on the facts and that we don't want to go through this situation again. Why don't we put our heads together and work on a solution? To start, I'd like to know your thoughts on how we can move forward. How about getting back to me tomorrow with what you believe we can do?"

Even if George hasn't a clue, you tossed some respect his way and maybe he'll be motivated to try to come up with something.

The last thing is to end a feedback session on a high note. Drop a little honest praise on the worker, thank them for their good attitude, and willingness to make things better. They'll appreciate it...and they'll remember it.

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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