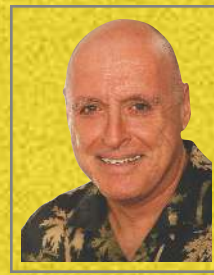


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



703 What is Your Little Voice Saying to You?

What's your mantra? Do you use aphorisms to get yourself going in the morning? Aphor-what? Well, where is this one headed? I'm Jerry Roberts and we'll both find out, next, on The Extra Point.

I was working in L.A. in the late 1980s, and the company hired a guy named Paul, who was into "New Age" music, if you recall what that was. But that's not all. It seemed like every time I passed his desk, he would be talking to himself. I just caught bits and pieces of it.

It was positive stuff. He'd say, "I am important to the success of my company"... "I give powerful presentations." One night we were both leaving the office about 7 p.m. and earlier Paul had told me he had a date. When I walked by the desk I heard him say, "I am attractive to women."

Well, I stopped and told him I couldn't help overhearing, and asked him if these things he was saying actually worked for him. I expected him to start quoting ancient philosophers and pop culture gurus, but in a moment of stark honesty he said, "Hey, can't hurt, right?" — and we laughed.

Paul had taken some training that pointed out how each one of us has always had a steady conversation going on with ourselves, and this is known as self-talk. When I make a careless mistake on something I've done a hundred times before, the little voice says, "Jerry, you dummy, get your act together."

When I played baseball as a young teen, and struck out against a guy I'd easily gotten hits off of before, I'd say, "How can you strike out against this guy, when he's got nothing?"

According to Paul, for most of us, this self-talk ranges from 80-100% negative. I thought that was pretty high, but he walked me through some information and asked me when I could

remember hearing my inner voice saying something positive. It turned out he was right.

Again, the baseball example. When I got a big hit, the voice was silent. My teammates, coaches, and parents would cheer, but nothing from me. When I screwed something up, I heard it. Think about that.

Some people do say positive things to themselves, and if we happen to hear them do it, we might think they're being egotistical. Let me give you a visual.

If you watched the TV show Happy Days, which ran on ABC from 1974 to 1984 and has since been in reruns, focus on the Fonz, wearing his leather jacket, and he's about ready to comb his hair when he stops and realizes it's already perfect. He throws his hands up, and acknowledges that. "Heyyyyy!"

Would you feel a little sheepish doing that, telling yourself that you thought you were hot, or would you be okay with that? How you answer that probably indicates how your self-talk usually goes — very positive or very negative.

While we need to observe how we talk to ourselves, as a reflection of how we see ourselves, we also need to be aware that our coworkers have the same issues. And there is a connection to self-esteem.

The whole purpose of this conversation is to point out that we all have these little voices yammering at us, and there can be an impact.

If you're not comfortable voicing mantras that focus on your personal value and talents, then maybe you can try, "We have a great team"... "I love coming to this job"... "My boss is a leader worth following."

(Con't.)

There are a ton of sites where you can find ideas for mantras if you choose, but maybe all we need to do is remember to say good things to ourselves when we deserve them; and not be so overly negative if things don't go well. That might be a good start.

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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