

# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 837 Dealing With Toxic People in the Workplace – Part 1

Got toxic people in your workplace? Could you use some ideas on how to deal with them? I'm Jerry Roberts, let's talk about that today, on The Extra Point.

Toxic people can drive you crazy. So much about what they do and how they behave just doesn't make sense. We have the tendency to want to throw every toxic person into the same stereotypical bag, but that's wrong.

Some of them do cause trouble intentionally. They seem to get pleasure out of our discomfort. If we're miserable, they're on top of the world. Yet, for others, they don't seem to be aware of the mess and the impact they have on others.

Toxic people create unnecessary difficulties, hassles, and are a major source of stress, regardless of if it's done on purpose, or without intent. Stress is a mental issue which, if not handled properly, can lead to physiological problems. Stress reduces performance, hurts relationships, and changes how we view our present and future outlook.

Here's a handful of thoughts on how to reduce the impact toxic people have on us, our job, our general enjoyment and well-being.

1. Reduce our exposure to toxic offenders. If it's complaining and a pity-party they're holding, we don't have to accept the invitation. We can be sympathetic to someone's legitimate issues and needs, and that's being a good coworker.

However, some people aren't looking for solutions. Their aim is to focus only on the problem, and why it's so unfair to them.

You can't help them if that's where their head is at. Hear them out once and offer help if you can, then move on if they go into repeat mode. Don't be their audience for a command performance in misery. This means you have to limit the amount of time you spend with

them when they're mired in this negativity. When you are with them, focus exclusively on possible solutions.

This also gets into the area of establishing boundaries. If you're busy, let them know. You can offer an alternative time to talk. Don't let the toxic person set the guidelines for interaction.

2. Wrestling with toxic people is a bad idea. Some toxic people crave conflict, and love it if they can drag you into it. The more emotional they can make you, the better they like it. If they can get you acting in a toxic way, that's a big score for them. Here's where emotional intelligence helps you. Refuse to take the bait.

Stay focused on the issues at hand, not personalities. If the other person strays off the path, simply disengage and move on. Let them know that you won't tolerate certain behavior, or playing their game.

3. Don't be reactionary. Toxic people are often very good at identifying where our "buttons" are, and delight in pushing them. The only way to discourage this is to avoid giving them the desired reaction when they do push. You deny them the payoff. When they finally learn there is no reward waiting for them and their effort will be wasted, they're more likely to move on to mess with someone else.

Knowing how to effectively deal with toxic people is a critical skill that likely will be needed sooner or later. We'll have more on this Monday.

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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