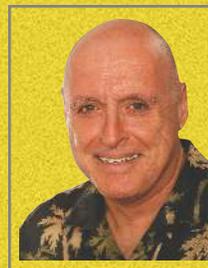


# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 876 Don't Fall Into Thinking Traps

Do you ever fall into a “thinking trap”? We’ve talked before about thinking patterns that people get into, but a trap? I’m Jerry Roberts, and today, let’s see where this takes us, next, on The Extra Point.

When difficulties and challenges surface in the course of life and work, one group of people usually launches into problem-solving mode. They figure out what it’s all about, and then try to figure out how to overcome it. However, they can also be affected by thinking traps.

Another group see the problem and falls into a trap, then chooses to ignore it. Either they don’t want to deal with it, or they hope it will somehow just go away on its own.

Both of these groups are relatively small when compared to the overall population. The rest of us simply default into the negative traps.

According to an article in Business Insider which quotes psychologist Elke Overdick, as soon as something goes wrong in our lives, we tend to fall into these negative traps, which hurt us in two ways. One, we prevent ourselves from being effective and reaching our goals; and two, they can have impact on our health.

It works like this. The bad thing happens, which we’ll call the stimulus. Our response is immediate, and we default into a negative mindset. As we’ve discussed before, we have the power to choose a positive response. Instead, we voluntarily give it up.

Overdick said this: “Humans are very creative when it comes to finding new ways of thinking unconstructively and unrealistically.” That’s hard to argue with. She outlined nine of these traps in the article, and we’ll chew over a few of them.

1. Self-deprecation. This is when we knock our abilities, or knowledge. We focus on our

weaknesses. We convince ourselves that we’re not good enough. We’re not deserving of good things to happen to us.

If you have these type of thoughts, you can counter them by focusing on an employer who obviously disagrees, because they continue to employ you for the value you bring to the organization. If you really had little or no value, would you still be there?

Counter these thoughts with the images of family and friends who care for you. Third, realize that knocking yourself doesn’t get you anywhere. When you’re done, the issue will still there.

2. Dealing in absolutes. This can be a close cousin to self-deprecation. “I’ll *always* have these problems. I’ll *never* get ahead. *Nobody* likes me. *Everybody* is just waiting for me to fail. This unhealthy exaggeration can get your emotional needle pointing south in a hurry. I know people who take this negative trip every once in a while. Maybe you do, too.

You deal with this particular mindset by stopping yourself, then saying, “There are almost zero absolutes in life, and I need to slow my roll here.”

My son is studying mental health issues, and he refers to the remedy as “Stop-Think-Go.” *Stop* the negative momentum. *Think* about what you’re thinking about, and realize you’re getting carried away. Figure out the positive way to handle things, and *Go* for it. Makes sense to me.

3. Over-indulgence and trying to convince yourself that it’s okay. We suspend our critical judgment and stay with something that can have harsh consequences. Gambling, alcohol, drugs, food binges, porn, speeding, video games, and there’s more. This is the land of instant gratification, and it can lead us astray.

(Con’t.)

The answer here is to identify someone Overdick refers to as a sparring partner, who will counter our behavior. They'll jerk our chain, and bring us back to reality. Someone who can tell us "that's enough," and we'll listen.

Another thing is to place what is called "anchors" around us. These are reminders of positive thoughts that can do the same as the sparring partner, if you can't find one. Put one on the bathroom mirror, the refrigerator, the dashboard of your car, in your wallet, or paste one on the back of your cellphone case.

Thinking traps can and do affect me, you, and everyone around us. Being aware of them and how to counter them is important for our progress, and our emotional well-being.

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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