

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



888 Employees Have to be Willing to Solve Problems

Today, the story of Grace, who managed a department at ABC Industries. A new employee named Phillip was hired to start in her office, and for a while things were great. Then, not so great. Phillip's performance fell off. I'm Jerry Roberts, and what happened next is a lesson for all managers. That's next, on The Extra Point.

Phillip came on board, and for the first 60 days Grace, his supervisor, was excited about his work and work ethic. Then, things changed. He was a no-show for a one-to-one meeting they had scheduled. It was rescheduled, and he was a half-hour late for that one. There was car trouble both times, he said. Grace wasn't happy about it, but she let it go.

She'd successfully worked with problem employees in the past. Low performance, behavioral matters, people who had trouble working in a team setting; Grace had always managed to salvage situations, increase productivity, and keep people on the payroll.

A few days later, Jesse came to Grace and said he'd like to be removed from a project he shared with Phillip. He said the two argued about almost everything, and that he had other work he could attend to.

Soon, there were other complaints about Phillip among the team members, and Grace knew she had a growing problem on her hands. She called him into her office to discuss the situation. For an hour, Grace tried to figure out what was going on with him to cause the negative changes. Phillip offered no clues.

She suggested some personal coaching, where they would carve an hour out of their respective schedules each week to discuss work issues and monitor performance. To her delight, Phillip agreed. Two sessions into the coaching, Grace was offering some feedback and Phillip stiffened up, disagreed with her statements,

then asked to end the session. The next day he said he didn't want or need any more coaching, and thanked her for her efforts. "I'll be fine," he said.

For a few days, things began to look up. Phillip's attitude seemed to improve. Then, suddenly, it changed for the worse. Grace tried to counsel him again, but this time he flat refused. He began to blame other workers for his troubles.

What we know in the training and coaching field is that you can help most people, but they have to work with you. Phillip had accountability issues. Delivering results on schedule was a big challenge. Time optimization was a problem for him, as well. Grace was confident all that could be dealt with.

Phillip also clashed with other workers, had trust issues, and showed a general lack of respect. He would casually waltz into meetings late, and sometimes just ignored them. He made people wait for things, and his work was sometimes incomplete. Almost everybody in the department had complained about him.

Again, Grace had turned bad attitudes around, and thought she could do the same with Phillip.

However, he would have to accept her coaching. If he didn't, she knew she'd be powerless to help him. After another up and down week with Phillip, Grace went to him with a well-conceived plan that — with his agreement and good effort — should result in growth and put him in position for a promotion. Phillip thanked her, but again he declined.

Grace, out of options, informed her HR manager that Phillip needed to go. He was terminated the same day.

(Con't.)

On his way out the door, he told Grace he was sad things didn't work out, and he thought she could have tried harder. Grace shook her head in disbelief.

Grace learned that you can fix accountability issues, and behavioral problems, and most of the troubles that pop up in the workplace.

However, that's only when you have a willing participant. Phillip was not willing to engage and be a part of the solution.

When workers refuse help, there's really nothing else you can do except to let them continue their career elsewhere, and move on to somebody new.

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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