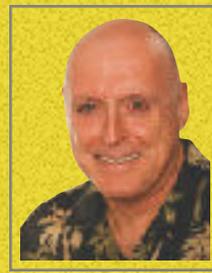


# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 947 When is Ignoring a Mistake okay?

If we mispronounce a word while giving a presentation, what should we do? What about when we send an email or a text, and it has some obvious spelling or grammatical errors? Let's talk that over today, on The Extra Point.

If you're an old hand in the radio business, it's almost a certainty that if you mispronounce a word — and you know you did — you'll stop and give the proper pronunciation before you move on.

There's this belief and standard that has been drilled into most of us that you need to give the correction. However, not everybody feels the same way.

I've heard people mispronounce fairly common words, and just keep on going like they were running a red light.

Because of my training, this used to bug me. I'd hear the mistake and wait for the correction that never came.

Before I go any further, here's the interesting part. I always knew which word they were trying to pronounce. It was obvious. So, whether they got it right or wrong, I did understand.

About 15 years ago, I came across a newsletter written by a communication expert, and this man said, in essence, not to sweat about getting words wrong.

Robert Abbott produced a monthly newsletter, and he said that if we don't know how to pronounce a word, just give it our best shot, blaze through it and move on.

Abbott was himself a broadcaster, and he claimed that the rule of thumb in radio was that it's not how we pronounce the name or word, but how confidently we handle it. Just make it sound right. Don't go back, don't apologize, don't call attention to it.

I thought to myself, "Well, I can't do that, but if somebody else did and I could still manage to figure out what they were trying to say, then fine — I didn't have to be the English police."

Abbott also advocated doing the same with speeches, meetings, and presentations.

I had to remember that Abbott never said we should ignore mistakes. We should always try to do our best to be accurate. What he did say was that we shouldn't call attention to our errors.

His key point was that when we stop the flow of our message, to explain or apologize, we're saying that we're more concerned about what people think of us than about the message they came to hear.

It took me a while to get my head around that concept, and I'm not sure I accept it all today. However, it no longer scrambles my brain when I hear the mistakes, along with no effort to offer a correction.

There's one more part to this. I don't know how you feel about it, but I'm not a fan of auto-correct for texts and social media posts. I've clicked send and post, unpleasantly surprised with the results. The auto-correct had changed something that made me look foolish, or careless.

I'll jump in and make changes when possible, but sometimes I don't catch them until later, and I cringe when I see what others have seen. I've since disabled the auto-correct on apps where I can. Now, I get to make my own mistakes. Maybe you've had this experience.

However, you and I both know that a significant percentage of people are okay with these errors. Their posts and texts are often full of them.

(Con't.)

The question that comes up is whether habits formed in texting and emailing have crossed over into other types of communication in the workplace. Many experts believe they have.

So, what do you think? Should we correct errors when we make them, or just ignore them and continue? In addition, do current trends in how people use texts, emails, and social media, signal problems for organizations?

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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