

# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 1002 Relationships and the 5:1 Ratio – Part 2

More today on relationships at home and work, what we should be doing, and what we shouldn't be doing. Warning: you might see yourself in some of what's coming. I'm Jerry Roberts and that's next, on The Extra Point.

Yesterday, we discussed studies that have shown when we have solid and caring work relationships, our job satisfaction and performance go way up.

We said it's important to have a good friend at work, because that helps when we're under attack by stress.

We also spoke of the 5:1 ratio, the fact that every negative interaction with someone we care about should be offset by at least five positive connections.

Researchers say if we don't do that, it will be difficult to maintain healthy relationships — and that goes for both at work and home.

We generally don't think about workplace relationships the same way as we do about those with family. Maybe we should.

There have been studies that pinpointed an important characteristic: A person who is or attempts to be dominant in their personal relationships, and who exhibits negative behavior in order to accomplish that — will likely use the same tactics in the workplace.

If you roll your eyes at your spouse or kids when they say something you disagree with or feel is dumb, you'll probably roll your eyes at a coworker, and maybe a vendor or customer.

If you have a habit of cutting family members off before they're able to complete a thought, you probably do the same at work.

Another habit is when you just have to get in

the last word during a disagreement at work. This is when you mutter a few choice words while the other person walks away, and they turn back to say, "What was that?" You then smile and reply, "I didn't say a word" or "It doesn't matter." People who do this at work will also do it at home.

Let me add that if you're the manager of the person you direct any and all of that attitude toward, it's just being a bully because the people who work for you really can't answer back.

The first thing we all should do is get in total honesty mode, and recognize that we almost certainly say and do things that give off a bad impression to others. Then, we start patching things up by modifying our behavior.

If it's rolling eyes, promise yourself you'll never do that again. When you're in a conversation, use what we call "active listening." Look it up for details. Focus on the words that are being spoken, plus the intent of the individual, and respond accordingly.

Active listening will prevent you from cutting people off, or completing their sentences for them, which is another bad habit.

If your challenge is barking, muttering under your breath, making facial expressions that indicate your disgust, or whatever it is, it takes a little work to adjust these behaviors.

I'll add that it can also take a little time for people to adjust to the new and better you. No sweat. Give them that time.

Remember that 5:1 ratio. For every negative bath you've given someone, you'll need five positive experiences to set things right.

(Con't.)

I think it's a solid baseline to work from. Now, is the 5:1 ratio a hard and inflexible rule?

No, if you do this really well, maybe you can go with 4:1. On the other hand, some of us will need to hit 6:1 or 7:1 to be on the safe side.

Can I tell you a little secret? The point here is that when we're focused on being positive with others, we're not going to be counting — and we won't have to.

One more thing. Maybe you're wondering if you can still have serious conversations, even dealing with problems, with all this positivity and kindness swirling around.

Yes, you can, and those conversations will probably be more open, honest, and free-flowing than ever before.

When the objective is to identify and solve problems, not to waste time in the pursuit of blaming someone, there's a totally different feel in the air.

Relationships are the name of the game. Play the game well.

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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