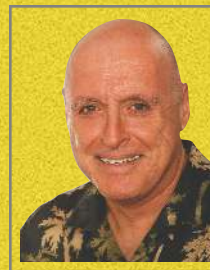


# The Extra Point

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 1032 Unsolicited Feedback: When Should You Give It?

Have you ever given advice to someone who didn't ask for it? What was their reaction? I'm Jerry Roberts and we'll chew over the issue of providing unsolicited feedback, next, on The Extra Point.

The topic is unsolicited feedback and advice. Before we dig into it, let's narrow the focus a bit. Supervisors don't have to ask permission to give feedback to a worker. It's an expected part of the job.

However, getting feedback from a peer, that is, someone on the same level as us, isn't at all expected. It catches us by surprise, and many of us don't like such surprises.

Is there a rule for how often someone should give feedback and advice that hasn't been requested? There is such a rule. The rule is, give feedback when it matters, and/or when the individual is open to receiving it.

I worked for a man we called Big Ed when I was 19, cleaning cars and fixing tires in a fleet vehicle operation. It took me a while to get up to speed on the tire work.

There was a machine called "The Tire Man," which was sort of a huge power tool for changing tires and other things, and I was having trouble with it. One night, there were a half-dozen tire jobs piled up and I was slowly knocking them out. One of the mechanics, a guy named Bobby, saw my struggle, and he walked over and asked if he could help.

I grunted something like, "Naw, everything's cool." Bobby then said, "What if I can show you a way to do these jobs twice as fast?" Now, he had my attention.

Bobby didn't walk up and tell me all the things I was doing wrong. He asked if I needed help. When I declined, he persisted by turning it

into an offer that was tough to refuse. This touched both bases mentioned earlier. There was no doubt I needed the help, and I became open to it when Bobby made it seem like I could have a big breakthrough with his help.

It's important to add that Bobby had credibility with everybody there. This guy knew how to fix anything on wheels. When people think you know what you're talking about, there's a good chance they'll be open to your feedback.

One more thing. Bobby outranked me in that operation. When I first declined his help, he could have told me flatly that I was going to get his help even if I didn't want it. Bobby probably figured I would resist that, and he softened it to where I was choosing the benefit — it wasn't being rammed down my throat.

I think the kind of language he used is the way to go. Rather than saying, "You're not doing this right," how about, "Can I show you a tip I was given when I first starting doing this?"

"Do you mind if I..."

"Would it be okay if I..."

"Let me know if you've seen..."

Could there be a time when you have to step in and give feedback, even when they resist? Yes. If the situation is critical and you see the worker potentially failing, and the organization would be hurt by that. I believe that's a time when it's right to step in.

The hope here is that you would have a good enough grasp of the situation and could offer the right assistance, or help in finding it.

Let's flip the coin and talk about a positive angle on feedback to peers. When a coworker turns in a great job. Don't be shy, tell them!

(Con't.)

Even if the boss gives that worker recognition for a job well done, you can do the same. It will be appreciated. Especially so, in times when that good effort goes unnoticed by the boss.

Again, when it comes to critical feedback or advice, give it when it matters and when the individual is open to it.

If someone is not necessarily open but help is needed due to critical circumstances, you may want to jump in and lend a hand.

When it comes to positive feedback, there's no reason to be stingy with it. I give you full authority to be a positive influence and a dispenser of enthusiasm.

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.

###

For information on training and consulting services with Jerry Roberts, please click this link: [guamtraining.com](http://guamtraining.com)

