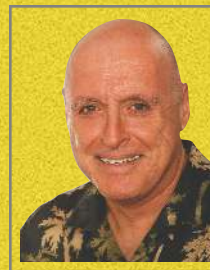


# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 1128 Small Talk Can Yield Big Results – Part 1

Are you good at smalltalk? In a business and perhaps networking situation, it's being able to chat up someone as a appetizer for what you hope turns into a main dish of a conversation that leads to establishing a relationship. I'm Jerry Roberts, and if smalltalk is not one of your strengths, let's see if we can help change that, next, on The Extra Point.

Sports, current events, wacky stuff in the news, things you see on social media, there is an endless stream of things you can use for a go at smalltalk, when you need to.

While not everybody appreciates or looks forward to these encounters that serve to break the ice with people, *Psychology Today* says that mastering smalltalk is "an important component of your arsenal of social skills."

Let's forget the "mastering" part for a moment. You don't need to be a master at smalltalk to get results from it. You just have to be willing to get involved, and hopefully add a little creativity to something most people are too serious about...and end up dreading.

The first question you get after you introduce yourself to someone is, "So, what do you do?" You respond with where you work and your job, the other person does the same, and now there's this uncertainty and maybe a pause in the action. What should we talk about? What topic can I bring up that gets us going?

Let's talk about Joe and Mary, meeting at a business event.

Joe: "I'm Joe Cruz, I keep Ray Gibson in line over at the Point, 93.3 FM. I produce his show. Now tell me who you are, what you do, and what's the best part of your job?"

Mary: (No doubt smiling) "Oh yeah, that guy sure needs being kept in line. Hi Joe, I'm Mary Ilaio, I'm the HR manager at XYZ, Inc. Nice to

meet you. The best part of my job is helping people grow in their careers, getting further than they thought possible."

Joe could come back, asking Mary to give an example. That takes the conversation deeper, and into an area that Mary has indicated she cares about.

It's a good start. The conversation flies by the uncertainty I referred to, and has a bit of momentum.

Adding a little creativity, doing things differently from how 99% of others do them, not only separates you from the crowd, but the other person will appreciate being saved from the same old routine.

If you're at the event to meet prospective clients, the thing I advise is not do any direct pitching, or asking for appointments. Many people consider that a big turnoff just after meeting someone.

Alternatively, you could suggest a coffee, or swapping contact info and then following up. The exception would be if the other person exhibits interest in your product or service. If that happens, you'll set up an appointment.

Don't thrust your business card at someone right away. Leave that for when you end the conversation, and only if it's gone well and you feel there's a mutually beneficial reason to get together again. More on this tomorrow.

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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