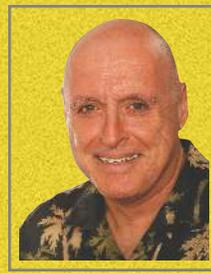


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1207 When You Break Down Gossip...

In almost every workplace, you find people who love to gossip. Passing juicy info about folks they work with, or politicians, or well, it's not really important as long as the stuff is good, right? I'm Jerry Roberts, and today we take a different look at the topic of gossip. That's coming next, on The Extra Point.

When did gossip begin? Well, if you want to get technical, the serpent was talking story about God one day, and he had a willing listener in a certain woman named Eve.

If you recall, his line was pretty successful because he got Eve to believe what he was saying, then to take a nibble on an apple, and...things have been going downhill ever since.

In Ancient Greece, there was this fellow named Socrates, and he had a great reputation for wisdom. One day, someone came to find the great philosopher and said to him:

"Socrates, do you know what I just heard about your friend?"

"One moment," replied Socrates, "Before you tell me, I would like to give you a test using three standards. I call it my three-way test." "Three-way test?" replied the man.

"Yes, continued Socrates. Before telling anything about another person, it's good to take the time to filter what you mean. The first way of the test is, is it the truth? Have you checked to learn if what you're going to tell me is true?"

The man looked surprised. "No," I just heard it," he said.

Socrates responded, "Very good! So, you don't know if it's true. We now continue with the second part of the test, that of kindness. What you want to tell me about my friend, is it good and reflects kindness about him?"

The man quickly said, "Oh, no. On the contrary, it doesn't make him look very good at all."

Socrates narrowed his eyes and looked at the man, then said, "So, you want to tell me bad things about him and you're not even sure they're true?" The man looked away nervously.

Socrates continued, "Maybe you can still pass the test of the way, that of utility. Is it useful that I know what you're going to tell me about this friend?"

The man sighed heavily, then hung his head and replied, "No, I suppose not."

Socrates put his hand on the man's shoulder, smiled and said: "So, what you were going to tell me is neither true, nor good, nor useful. My friend, why, then, did you want to tell me this?"

The man couldn't speak. He was silent in his embarrassment.

"Gossip is a bad thing," Socrates went on. "In the beginning it may seem enjoyable and fun, but in the end, it fills our hearts with bitterness and poisons us, too!"

Members of the Rotary Club might recognize this. They have something similar that includes what Socrates put together thousands of years ago, and call it The Four-Way Test.

Hearing gossip is one thing. Repeating gossip is the real issue. How would you score on the Socrates-inspired gossip test?

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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