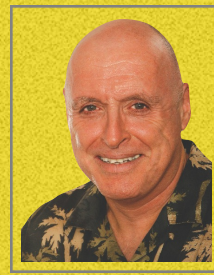


# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 1270 3 Things to Avoid in Making Conversation

How good are you at making conversation? Is it easy for you? Did you know that there are a pile of rules on how to do it right? Gotta do this, gotta do that. I'm Jerry Roberts and today we're going to focus not on what we gotta do, but on a few things we don't want to do. We'll go there next, on The Extra Point.

How good are you at having a conversation? If you're like most people, you probably get by pretty well, but you might think there's room for improvement.

One way to improve is to master the dozens and dozens of those "gotta do" rules. In my opinion, that will make you crazy. Another way is to avoid doing things that most people find abrasive or distasteful.

In an article for Psychology Today, research psychologist Dave Smallen identified six bad habits we all should avoid if we want to have good conversations and come across in a more positive way to others. Let's see how many we're now doing. We'll try to go from the least offensive habit to the most.

6. Bright-siding. This is when we push others to look at everything in a positive light when they share their challenges. The truth is, there are folks who don't want to do that, or they take a long time to get there. They need to get the pain and upset feeling out, and sometimes we just need to listen.

5. Being right. This is when an otherwise normal chat turns into a debate. Blunt question time: Do you have this need to be right and win the argument — oh sorry, conversation?

Well, if you have to be right, you're setting up someone else to be wrong. If you have to win, the other person will lose. I don't know how that will help anyone's cause.

4. Giving advice not asked for. Sometimes people need — and even want — our advice. When that happens and we can help, that can

be extremely useful and make a difference. However, in the majority of cases, the other person just wants to be heard and they aren't in the market for advice or solutions. They just want to get it out.

Wait...you've been there and done that, and you know exactly what to do? It doesn't matter. They don't want it. They just want you to sit there, stand there — whatever — and listen.

3. One-upping a story. You've no doubt seen this happen, and maybe you've done it yourself. You're in a group and somebody tells a story. Just as soon as they finish, somebody else blurts out, "Oh, that's nothing, you oughta hear what happened to me!"

Nice move. You just said that previous story wasn't worth listening to because you have something that is soooo much better. This is a situation that calls for a bit of restraint. Why not let the other person have the spotlight for a moment? Would that be so bad?

2. Being the know-it-all. Don't be this. Don't do it. You may have degrees on the wall. You may be brilliant. You may feel that you should have won the Nobel prize for communication in the workplace. None of it matters. Repeat after me, nobody likes a know-it-all.

1. Interrupting people. There are a lot of levels to this one. You know where the other person is going with the conversation and you jump in. Or, they're making a point and you disagree, so you jump in.

It can also be about power. Managers interrupt their workers, but workers don't interrupt their manager. Women are interrupted more often than men are.

Smallen gives some guidance on how to make an interruption if it's necessary, such as in the case when you're late for a meeting. In that situation, apologize for the interruption. (Con't.)

Or, if you interrupt the other person and you catch yourself, you can say, "Oops, sorry I interrupted, Please keep going."

Interruptions are a big deal to a lot of people. Proceed with caution.

Making conversation is important, and this is a good list of things to avoid. If you do, you will definitely improve the way you communicate.

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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