

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1283 How to Work With a Control Freak

Question: Have you ever worked with a “control freak”? Pardon me if I ask a more direct and somewhat inconvenient question... is it possible that anyone you work with would describe you as a control freak? I’m Jerry Roberts, and as thousands of people listening silently say to themselves, “Not me!”, we will pursue this topic, next on The Extra Point.

To look at the subject of people who are overly controlling, otherwise known by many as a “control freak,” we first have to define exactly what that means.

A “control freak” is a term used to describe an individual who has an excessive need for control over people, situations, and outcomes. you may recognize them by the following behavior. Control freaks are:

Big micromanagers. They control every aspect of a task or project, even the small details. The term “delegation” means nothing to them.

Inflexible. They are fearful of change, and are totally rigid in their thinking. The way it’s always been is the way it’s going to be. Their way. The safe way. The right way. My way. Or the highway.

Needy for approval. Control freaks may have a strong need for validation from others.

Fearing failure. A control freak may have a deep-seated fear of failure and may feel that they need to control every aspect of a situation to ensure a successful outcome.

Unable to trust others. It’s the fear thing again. They need to be in charge of every detail. They simply can’t let go.

Before we go further, it’s important to note that not everyone who exhibits these kinds of characteristics is necessarily a control freak. Each of us may have moments where we feel the need to control a situation.

That being said, if someone consistently

displays these behaviors and it’s affecting their relationships or work performance, it may be a sign of a deeper issue.

Let’s also be clear that these employees may have good intentions. It’s just that their overall behavior can be detrimental to the team.

All right. Let’s say we’ve noticed control freak behavior in someone (or they’ve noticed it in us), what can be done?

The first thing to do is document the examples of that behavior. That’s because it’s unlikely the individual will accept your position that they’re acting in such a manner. They’ll give you a ton of reasons why, in their defense.

Once you have the evidence, schedule a private meeting with the employee and explain what you’ve noticed, giving specific examples.

Give the worker a chance to explain what they’ve done and why. Using probing questions to go deeper. What you’re after here is not blame, but an acknowledgement that their behavior is detrimental to the operation.

What you’re after here is not accusations, but simple awareness on their part. Awareness opens the door to understanding, and that can lead to them seeking change — so long as they trust the people involved and feel safe in doing so.

Once you have that you can work with the employee to find a solution that addresses the problem.

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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