

Be Specific, Bob

[Be Specific, Bob](#)

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04 Jan 2024 03:36 PM

It strikes me today that many of the complications surrounding ideologies, movements, and even general daily work and family life could be simplified by the simple act of being specific.

Obligatory Incredibles meme:



In this scene, Mr. Incredible aka Robert "Bob" Parr gets chewed out by his "small man syndrome" Insuricare boss (voiced by the legendary Wallace Shawn) because he assisted a number of Insuricare clients to their advantage. As the lecture is ramping up, the boss tells Mr. Incredible to ask him why he's unhappy. When Mr. Incredible asks the simple "why", he clarifies the meme. "Be specific, Bob." This is an authoritative jerk move, but Mr. Incredible complies by asking the more specific "Why are you unhappy?" which kicks off the crux of the lecture in which the boss heavily implies that he'd be much happier with Mr. Incredible if he were to prioritize making profit for the company (and it's shareholders) than helping their customers in getting payouts on their policies. Mr. Incredible uses the original "Be specific, Bob" premise to turn the tables on the boss clarifying that they should indeed help their customers. Which turns their conversation to the heart of the matter. To Mr. Incredible, the Insuricare customers are the customer. To the boss, the shareholders are the customer. Both are serving who they believe represents the best interest of their job, which puts them permanently at odds with each other. The boss ends up in a body cast and Mr. Incredible gets fired.

This fictional incident does a good job pointing out how a general or nebulous conflict in the workplace can be simplified and clarified by specifics. Technically, both men were doing their job: Mr. Incredible in giving quality customer care to his clients, and the boss for protecting the firm from over paying-out on insurance claims. Both sides of this are legitimate tensions in an industry like insurance, which speaks to one of the many brilliant elements of The Incredibles overall. What brought the stark difference between their priorities was found in the specifics. Both sides of the tension matter, but each man was stoutly aligned with only one side: Mr. Incredible on the side of the weak and helpless client, staying faithful to his super hero role; and the boss on the side of the shareholders in his corrupt businessman role. What's key here is that two men working in the same context and within the same professional event (insurance client payouts) found each other specifically opposed to each other.

The inverse can also be true. People can find themselves working across the table from each other on an issue to discover, via the specifics, that they share the same intentions or goals at the table and just happened to begin from different vantage points. It isn't always the side of the table one starts from, but how one plays the game that determines what team we are really on.

Hence the need for specifics. The present state of communication of the world is simply too disingenuous to take things at face value and without question. Conventional media (aka MSM for many) parrots the priorities of their shareholders as "notable events" (the NE in NEWS). Social media pundits describe the world through the lens of their angle ranging from their sponsors to their affiliations. Political ideologues and social theorists gather, sort, and separate people using obscure tactics such as [dog whistling](#), intentional offense, and irrational praise to shape people into

intentional affiliations - putting white hats and black hats on others as they see fit, while stacking the deck to their advantage. What can one do in such a mess?

Be specific, Bob.

Don't be [gaslit](#).

Don't be offended.

Don't be sucked in to the hype.

Be specific, Bob.

Before allowing something to gaslight you, poke the specifics. Did they mean that? Are they focusing on something accurate or genuinely important? Is this worth your time or does it not really matter?

Before getting offended, look closer into the specifics. Is this really something that bothers you? Is this offensive position on it genuine or gaslighting?

Before boarding the hype train, ask yourself if this is legit. Is there real substance to it? Is it going anywhere? Is it built on anything of value or substance?

Slowing down for these specifics can prevent a lot of confusion, expense, and heartache - something everyone could use a bit less of.

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