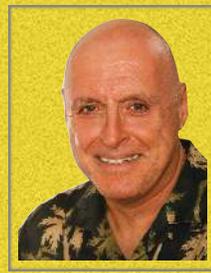


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



108 Walk a Mile in Another Person's Shoes

Did you ever talk with a coworker and come away with the distinct impression that they think the world revolves around them? How dare they, especially since you know very well that it revolves around you. I'm Jerry Roberts and I'm here to set the record straight on that... today on The Extra Point.

Not long ago a frontline employee said to herself, "Nobody knows how hard I work. I'm the one who has to greet all the customers, and if something goes wrong it's always my fault. It's just not fair."

Hours after she'd gone home, her supervisor was still at work. He'd missed dinner with his family, again. He thought to himself, "Nobody sees what I do. My employees don't know what I sacrifice, and my boss doesn't care. It's just not fair."

That weekend, the owner of the company anguished over financial reports to give to the banker who would decide if he'd get another loan, in order to keep the business open and everyone employed. He wondered, "Will the 70-hour work weeks ever stop? My kids have grown up and I missed it. I may lose everything. Nobody understands how lonely it can be to own a business. It's just not fair."

The moral of the story: everybody has challenges and a different perspective; and if you haven't been in their shoes, then you really don't understand.

I remember working a particular frontline job. It was 40 hours of mostly repetitive tasks, with little to no positive contact from my supervisor...but I'd sure hear about it if I messed something up. It sure didn't seem fair.

I know now that he'd never had any formal management training and didn't really know what to do. What I didn't know, until years

later, is that his manager didn't treat him very well, either. So, I ended up getting what he was getting from his boss.

Many years later I landed a management position with a growing company. I had a boss with a sarcastic attitude who took great joy in ridiculing me publicly, and he finally fired me because I refused to lie to a client. Highly unfair. Over time I learned about the extent of family and business issues he was struggling with. It explained a lot and I felt sorry for him,

But nothing compared to owning a business. It can be exhilarating, and it can be soul draining. Ownership has brought some of the highest highs and lowest lows I've ever experienced.

You don't want to burden your employees with your worries, so you suck it up and try to roll with the punches. You often get isolated, and for me that wasn't fun at all. The 70-hour work week I earlier referred to was normal for me. Sometimes I hit 80 hours. Business went on, payroll had to be met, so you just kept going. I was usually too tired to worry about whether it was fair or not.

The takeaway: If you think that life and work is sometimes unfair, you're right. But nobody gets away free, regardless of what we believe. Give the next person a break. You don't know their burdens. The grass may be a whole lot greener where you're standing, right now.

That's The Extra Point. Get out there and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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