

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



193 There's More Than One Way to ...

I was probably five or six when I first heard the phrase, and it was confusing, not to mention creepy. And it came from my mom...and although I didn't know it then, it has a lot to do with worker productivity. I'm Jerry Roberts and let's talk about this, today, on The Extra Point.

The words came out of her mouth and my reaction was, "Ewwwwww, why would you want to do that?" What words were they?

"There's more than one way to skin a cat."

We hadn't been talking about cats and the confused look on my face led my mom to quickly explain what she meant — that most times, there's more than one way to do something, get results, etc.

Well, what a relief that was. As I would come to find out, the science of productivity can lead you all over the place. There are literally hundreds if not thousands of books, videos, blog posts, and systems on how to get more stuff done. And a lot of them have an interesting thing in common — they share a general hatred for the good old to-do list.

"Why is that?" you say? I want to know, too. I love my to-do lists, but so-called experts claim they feed the unproductive impulses of our brains. They force our attention upon a bunch of chores that we may start to think are a lot more important than they really are — and we end up prioritizing things that have no business being prioritized.

Some people suggest the method of choosing one task that we make the focus of our entire day. We don't do anything else until that job is done. We're in line to get groceries, filling our gas tank, in the bathroom, folding clothes, you name it — we're thinking about job # 1. So what qualifies as the one task? Back to those things that come out of the mouth of someone

like mom, and this time she'd be quoting Mark Twain. She said, "Every day you need to eat the frog." But I still wasn't over skinning the cat...now I have to do what?

What Twain was talking about when he said "eating the frog," is doing the one thing you know you really need to do, a significant task, right off the bat. Get it out of the way. Don't put it off.

Yet other systems limit the number of items you're actively working on to three at any one time. When you get all three done, then and only then do you add more.

Some people use phone apps, desktop apps, and even plain old pen and paper to keep track of all these things. Some believe in multi-tasking, and others consider it a myth.

I know people who have tried everything and are still looking for the perfect system. It doesn't exist. Just find one way you like and that you can stick with. Then, focus on tasks that are important for both today and the long term health of the organization — staying clear of urgent issues and distractions that seem to have importance, but actually may not.

Productivity is a moving target. Whether you focus on one item, or three, or you keep your to-do lists, the most important issue to keep coming back to is what you commit to getting done.

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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