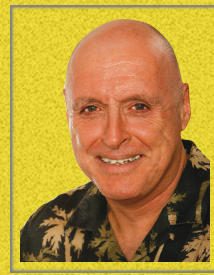


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



92 Big Ed Knew Engagement

Here comes the “E word” again...engagement. I know, it’s not a fun topic. I’m Jerry Roberts and let me tell you about a guy who had it down pat, today on The Extra Point.

We’ve discussed that the world’s largest polling organization, Gallup, conducts a massive survey on the topic of employee engagement, and the results typically show that seven out of ten workers don’t care much for their job, or their employer.

I have to admit, I see a lot of that in my travels around workplaces in Guam. When I do I always wonder how the organization deals with it...and I sometimes think of a man named Big Ed, one of my first managers. He had the whole engagement thing figured out.

I worked in a garage operation, handling fleet vehicles, about 200 of them, and we had a three-man team. Every vehicle had to be waxed twice a month, and washed once a week. We also had to repair and replace tires, and get done in time to sweep and mop the entire garage before closing, then check out. It was a union shop and it had to be done on time, or somebody would have to explain. That would be Big Ed. He’d also have to explain why a certain car wasn’t clean.

So he got the three of us together and said, “I believe in treating people as adults, as long as they act like adults. If I don’t have trouble because of what you do or don’t do, you won’t have any trouble with me. This isn’t brain surgery. It’s washing and waxing cars, fixing tires, and cleaning the place up. Do it any way you want and have fun, as long as it gets done right and on time.” That’s pretty clear. We took him at his word and we ran with it.

On hot days and nights we turned the hose on each other and laughed our way through each shift, sweating up a storm and knocking out

40 cars, plus the other work. Ed might bring us a soda on break, or hang out with us once in a while, asking us questions about our lives, college, or how we felt about things.

He found out what we were interested in and that’s what he focused on. I had told him my boyhood dream was to pitch for the Dodgers and I can’t tell you how many times I’d hear something like, “Jerry, where were you last night when the team needed you?” I’d reply with, “I was here Ed, washing and waxing your cars.” He’d say, “Oh, that’s right, and a fine job you did. Much better than those Dodgers,” laughing as he walked away.

He was personal with all of us in that good-natured way, and everybody loved the man.

Somebody once said employee engagement is about adding an extra layer of energy and passion to your work, without anybody asking you to do so. You do it because you want to do it. Big Ed did, and we wanted to do it for him.

So, managers, get to know your team and how to connect with them. Treat them well, train them and help them grow. And workers, the effort you make on the job is a direct reflection of you and your character. Whether or not you like your manager is irrelevant. Do your best because that’s who you are and because your name is on those eight hours. If we all just focus on the right things, one day soon we won’t have to talk about this engagement problem any more.

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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