

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



117 Stop Chasing Perfection

Are you a perfectionist? Do you like tweaking projects, stories, systems, and everything else because you know whatever it is you're working on can be just a little bit better? I'm Jerry Roberts and you and I need to get over this, next, on The Extra Point.

Some people would call this pursuit of perfection by another term — OCD, obsessive compulsive disorder. They might be right.

Here's a quote from a highly successful Internet marketer named Joe Polish: "It's better to be prolific than perfect."

In their book, *Art & Fear*, David Bayles and Ted Orland shared an incredible story about a ceramics teacher, and it makes the statement made by Joe Polish come to life.

The first day of class the teacher divides the students into two groups. Those on the left side of the studio would be graded on the quantity of work they produced, while those on the right would be judged on quality.

The method was simple. On the final day of the class he would bring his bathroom scale to in and weigh the work of the "quantity" group. Anyone producing 50 pounds of ceramics would get an A. If they weighed in at 40 pounds it was a B, a C was 30 pounds, and you can figure out the rest.

The students being graded on "quality" only had to make one item. However, it had to be perfect to get an A.

So, everybody started making their ceramics and time passed. When the time for grading and weighing arrived, something interesting happened. The work that was judged to be of the highest quality all came from the group being graded for quantity — none from the students who only had to make one piece.

What they found is that those who churned out a large body of work created a lot of average, even poor quality stuff. But here's the thing, they learned from their mistakes and discovered new techniques, and their quality improved over time.

If you were chasing perfection that would never have happened.

Their story isn't unique. Among the 50 greatest pieces of classical music ever created, six belong to Mozart, five to Beethoven, and three are Bach's. These three men accounted for 14 of the 50. However, they produced 2,250 songs between them.

Picasso painted thousands of works of art, yet only a few drew any sort of acclaim. Edison owned 1,900 patents, and Einstein published 248 scientific articles. Most of what they produced was ignored. The best hitters in baseball failed 70-80% of the time when they started. By the time they were at their peak, they only failed about 65% of the time,

Whatever it is that you do, do more of it. Make mistakes, try different ways, make more mistakes. Keep taking action. Push yourself. Find mentors for whatever it is you want to learn. Practice. One day, the inspiration will appear to generate — the work of your life — the project of your life — the race of your life — that singular moment in your life that most people will remember you for. Do more.

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

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