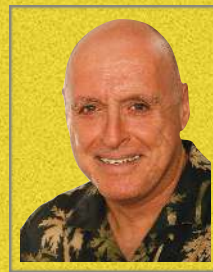


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



171 When You're Tempted to See Yourself as a Victim

No doubt you've heard these words: "Life just ain't fair." We've all had things or people go south on us, leaving us feel that we were victimized. But there's more to the story. I'm Jerry Roberts and let's go deeper next, on The Extra Point.

The majority of people don't see themselves as victims. The world isn't out to get them. Things happen, they get through them, bounce back and move on. Others play the victim card over and over. Whatever happens to them is never their fault, and there is always somebody to blame.

There was a woman whose boss once took issue with the quality of her work. And a man who was late to work repeatedly, and often argued with coworkers. Both received verbal suggestions on how to improve, none of which were followed, then written reprimands. They accused their managers of not liking them and playing favorites, that it had nothing to do with them. They were victims of an unfair boss.

People don't pay their rent and they're evicted, it's the landlord's fault. The car gets repossessed and it's the evil banker. They keep eating bad stuff and get sick, but never hang the blame on the one with the fork in their hand.

Then I hear the story of Mira, a 100 year-old Holocaust survivor who just passed away. Her grandson said the Nazis gassed her parents, grandparents, sister, brother-in-law and her three year-old niece, while three of her brothers were shot.

She escaped from a concentration camp and for nearly two years, lived with her husband and sister-in-law in a secret hole, a very small hole, dug beneath a barn owned by a Polish Christian family. When they finally left the hole she weighed just 70 pounds and couldn't walk. She was battered and emaciated. But she wasn't bitter or felt she was a victim.

She endured a time of cruelty and death but emerged from the experience a woman of quiet, gentle strength. He described her life as one of sacrifice and pain but also one of hopefulness. He said she was a cheerful person.

Thousands of Chamorros suffered during that war, and many I have had the privilege of meeting were like Mira — quiet, strong, resilient, and kind. They were hard workers, did right by people, and near as I can tell, also didn't label themselves as victims. That wasn't their mindset.

Many of us have stories of bad bosses, bad deals, bad relationships, bad times. I won't trivialize that. Until you walk in someone else's shoes, you don't know their burdens.

That said, I've met people with no arms or legs, kids who lost both parents within months of each other, God-loving people who have had cancer kick down their door repeatedly, parents who wept over a toddler's grave — and through the pain they didn't see themselves as a victim, though nobody would have blamed them if they had.

There are real victims in this life, even if they choose not to be thought of in that way. There are also others who claim it, though it's a dodge to avoid responsibility for their actions. Until they accept their need to change and do so, they will never find peace. Wherever you find yourself in all of this, that's what I wish for you. Peace, joy, and fulfillment.

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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