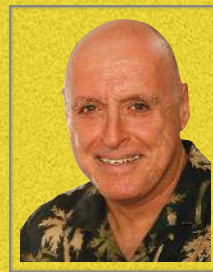


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



173 The Question That Can Change Your Life

I believe strongly in the value of a good mentor. Working with people who are interested in you and your success can be a life altering experience. I'm Jerry Roberts and let's talk about mentoring, today, on The Extra Point.

Mentors come in many forms. My first mentor was my mom. My father wasn't around. I learned the basics of character from her, how to deal with people, gratitude, and a million other things. For most people, I think it's the same — parents deliver the foundation.

We can be mentored by friends, associates, vendors, customers, and don't forget retirees from your field. Do you know someone who has a particular talent you would like to add to your skillset? Do you think they would be open to a free lunch, or series of free lunches where you ask questions?

It's simple. You ask the questions and take notes while they talk, then you go back and implement suggestions. You then schedule another session and report on your results. Your quote-unquote "mentor" gets not just free food, but the satisfaction of seeing their help evolve into positive change and growth. That makes them want to do more of it. In that way, it mirrors a formal mentoring relationship.

Who do you know whose skill and performance makes them a good target for a lunchtime Q & A? Make a list and start inviting them.

Next are long-distance mentors we may never meet in person. They come through books, articles, webinars, speeches, YouTube videos and more. The list of available mentors in this fashion is endless.

Then there's your boss or your boss's boss. Maybe you've heard me talk about Big Ed, one of my early bosses. I'd never even heard the

term "mentor" when I worked for him, but he was always happy to answer my questions. Ed was kind of like my mom, in that he often chose to answer a question with a question, which means he was going to force me to think my way through an issue before he would chime in. I credit him with teaching me to come to your boss not just with a problem, but also with one or more potential solutions, and then getting his/her advice. That is the beginning of your career as a problem solver, which makes you a favorite of just about any employer.

If you want to get ahead faster and develop a better and closer relationship with a manager, walk up and ask this question: "I want to be more valuable to the organization. Will you be my mentor?"

If they say "No," move on to the next person and ask them. They may want to talk about it, to set up how it will work. What do you want to learn and what are your goals with this mentoring relationship? When will it take place? I suggest over lunch. Again, you pay.

I need to add one thing here. If your manager agrees to this, you need to deliver results. Be at your absolute best. They want to see you grow and that's their payoff.

Mentoring can accelerate a career like nothing else. Give it a try. It may become a permanent part of your success playbook.

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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