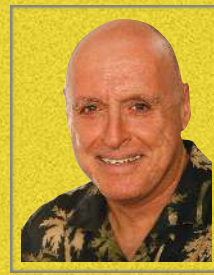


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



254 Big Ed on Jobs and Learning – “Make it Yours”

“One of my early mentors taught me some good lessons about working and careers, but maybe the most valuable lesson was one I didn’t see coming. I’m Jerry Roberts and I’ll tell you what that was, next, on The Extra Point.

If you’ve been a listener of The Extra Point for a while you might have heard me drop the name “Big Ed.” He was the manager for my first serious job.

Our three-man crew washed and waxed the company’s fleet of vehicles, plus fixed tired and cleaned the service bays up at night before we left. On top of that, once in a while one of the mechanics would give us a task to do, and this one guy always wanted it done his way... there was no other possible way.

Well, Ed heard this one night and pulled me aside and told me that there is usually more than one way to do a job and if I would see a better way, to tell the mechanic I wanted to go a different route. He said, “Jerry, when you take on a job, look for ways to make it yours.” Of course, his rule was that I could do it any way I wanted but I had to be accountable for the results. Fair enough.

A short time before I left Ed and the garage to transfer to another department, I asked him if the whole idea on making the job “mine” was just about giving me experience in decision making or if there was more to it. He nodded and told me that if I did every job just the way someone told me, there was no chance I’d ever figure a way to improve upon it. Boom. That was the key learning point. Yes, decision making was a part of it, but teaching me how to make an idea or process better, through trial and error, was the real gold.

In leadership seminars that Guam Training has produced over the years, that concept has

been driven home by numerous speakers. One, the legendary Tom Peters, boldly stated, “Never accept a job as-is.” Peters said to look at the situation from every angle, then come back to your boss and tell him/her that you’ll take it on but you need a certain consideration or change.

Most people are too timid to do that, but the reality is that executives and business owners want workers who have the ability to think things through, and to be proactive.

In my training courses I tell students to take the information I give them, swallow it and let it mix with their history and experience, with all of what they know and all of who they are. One day when they’re working with people and they need to use what I taught them, when it comes back out of their mouth it won’t be exactly as I gave it to them, it will be different, even if only slightly different. It will now be theirs. And because it is then theirs, they’ll be more likely to remember what they learned and be able to use it more effectively.

The other benefit, as Ed taught me, was that in making the job or thought their own, it is now possible for them to develop it into yet more ideas or projects, and to take it in directions nobody had thought about.

If you’ve never done this before and you think you need to sell the concept to your boss, let them know you learned it from one of the best there ever was — a man named Big Ed.

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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For information on training and consulting services from Jerry Roberts, please click this link: guamtraining.com

