

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



289 What Did You Learn?

Every job we perform along the way on the road we call our career, we get schooled. Now, just because we get schooled, do we learn? I'm Jerry Roberts and today let's talk about the lessons of life and work. That's next, on The Extra Point.

If you recall, we've talked about establishing a Book of Do and a Book of Don't. See Extra Points 138 and 180 for details. Once you do I've got a small project for you.

I want you to list every job you've ever had and every boss you've ever worked for. You can do this in a journal, yellow pad, whatever you like.

The next step is going to be a bit harder if you've got a lot of experience under your belt, and easier if you're relatively new. I want you to list the key lessons you learned in each job and from each manager.

At 19 I was going to college full time and to make money I delivered 400 newspapers, seven days a week. I got in at 3:00am, finished the route by 6:00, then ran home to shower and get to school. The manager, Bob, told me to train myself to sleep at 8pm and get at least six hours of sleep each night, or my body would eventually give out.

Go to bed at 8pm? No way. I felt strong, I had two evening classes, had to study for the others, and hey, I was 19. I wanted to party a little, too. So, I got about three hours sleep each night, catching up on Sunday, sort of.

It went fine for 18 weeks. I had a social life, and I was averaging A-/B+ in my classes, and life was good. Unfortunately, college semesters don't run 18 weeks, they go for 20, with the last two being for final exams. I crashed during finals, missing two the first morning. I was so sleep deprived I dozed off after the paper route and didn't hear the alarm. Both tests had ended by the time I woke up. I wasn't allowed

to retake the tests and overall, saw my grade-point average slip from about 3.5 to 2.3. I was 19 and learned that when more experienced people tell you about potential problems, don't just dismiss what they say. Do some homework and then make a decision.

As a frontline worker I saw micromanagement as the soul-crushing, motivation-destroying process it almost always is, and I decided that if I was ever a manager, I would do things much differently.

I learned in business that you can have the best product and still not win. I learned that talent is great, but it's not enough. I learned that you can deliver on every single promise you make in a contract, see the other party make big bucks off your back, and still weasel their way out of paying you.

I saw a man named Big Ed talk with workers and always made them feel special, and glad they came to work that day. I wanted to do my best for Ed, and I wanted to be a manager like him someday.

If you're just starting out in your career, get a journal and start writing down the things you learn on a daily basis. What happened, what does it mean, and what are your thoughts about it? If you're older, you write down your lessons, too. You paid with sweat and tears to learn them. Don't lose them to a faulty memory. My question for you: what has happened in your career and what did you learn?

That's The Extra Point. Get out there and make something happy happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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