

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



300 Focus on Copying Successful Methods, Not Style.

Did you ever want to be like somebody else? Did you ever try to copy their style or their ways? I'm Jerry Roberts and today let's talk about patterning our methods after someone else's. That's next, on The Extra Point.

I was playing junior league baseball and my favorite player was Sandy Koufax of the Los Angeles Dodgers. I listened to every game he pitched on my transistor radio.

Over a period of a few years Koufax compiled the best pitching record in baseball history. I was an occasional pitcher for our team and I wanted to pitch just like Sandy. I copied his windup and entire pitching motion. In my mind I was throwing like Koufax, down to the last detail. However, when I brought it up to a couple of the guys they laughed, telling me there was nothing about my pitching style that reminded them of Koufax.

"How could they be so dense," I thought. "I'm sure it looks like him." Then I saw a film one of the parents made in their 8-millimeter camera — yeah, 8-millimeter — and I groaned. I might have resembled Irving Koufax or Johnny Koufax, but wasn't even close to Sandy Koufax.

I've talked about Big Ed, one of my early managers and mentors. What I haven't mentioned is the time Ed took a vacation and left one of the mechanics in charge of the operation. He was a good guy and we liked him. Several times while subbing for Ed, he explained instructions to us, using not only the same style of language Ed used, but also some of the same jokes. It was, well, distracting. We picked up on it immediately and began looking at each other, like, "Did he really say that?"

We all learn from other workers, supervisors and peers alike. That's the way it should be, one person helping another grow, and to perhaps replace them when it's their time to step away.

My opinion is that we should strive to learn the successful strategies and methods from every person possible, but we shouldn't pay too much attention to their style.

Let's say your boss gives a great presentation to the management team on a certain topic or workflow. The visuals are spot on and he hit all the key points perfectly. You decide you want to borrow the slides to deliver the same talk to your team. What I would do is make a time to sit with the boss and ask questions about the subject, and then study it so you know it backwards and forwards. When it's time to present the program you do it your way, adding your own unique touches.

Many times over the years I've received the greatest gift a trainer can get, when a former student reaches out to say they're using the things they picked up in one of my courses, and it's working for them.

Bosses love to hear this, too. It shows that you not only listened, but you thought what they taught you was good enough to pass on to someone else.

It's the same reason we feed what we know into our kids, so they'll do the same for their kids. Then, one day, a grandchild or great-grandchild will share with you a chunk of wisdom that you recognize...that got its start as a seed you planted decades ago. When that happens you'll be reminded of one of the big reasons that you're here.

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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