

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



319 The Gameplan for Older Workers

Yesterday we spoke about younger workers mentoring older workers, and what the younger manager should do to get that relationship on track. I'm Jerry Roberts and today let's flip the script and talk about what the older worker must do to make this go smoothly. That's next, on The Extra Point.

The fastest-growing age group in the workplace is 65 and older. Many people want to keep working but more and more, seniors are forced to seek employment to make ends meet. This is going to present challenges for employers and especially younger managers who will be tasked to train and mentor older workers.

In six years, over 50% of employees will report to a boss who is younger. Chip Conley, author of *Wisdom@Work: The Making of a Modern Elder*, says while 60 may be the new 40 physically, 30 is the new 50 when it comes to holding power in today's workplace. The power is going younger and older workers are going to have to accept that. I'll go a step farther, we should celebrate it. We had our time to rule the workplace, now we pass the torch. It's their time and we need to help and support them, because what they create will become the future for our kids, grandkids, and for us, too.

Let me team up with Conley to offer advice to older workers who want to carve out a place for themselves in this brave new world of work.

1. Dump the ego. You're not out to prove how great you were. Your goal is to show how your skills and knowledge are a fit for the employer and can be help everybody do better.
2. Evolve. You don't have to forget about all your accomplishments, but realize that if those wins happened way before your new boss was born, it's going to make you seem ancient. Instead, frame that in terms of the lessons you

learned and how they apply to what's happening right now. That's more relatable. Don't start one single sentence with the words, "Back in the day..." If asked how you handled something earlier in your career, give your example and then add: "How do you think we could level up that strategy to make it work today?"

3. Be hungry to learn. Be the most curious person in the room. Not only will it keep your brain younger, it'll send a message that you can be an asset to the organization.

4. Help people solve problems. This is where you can shine. You won't panic in a tough situation because you've been there before. Use the emotional intelligence and reasoning skills you developed over a lifetime to show others how to work through issues. This can score you huge points in the organization, what the younger folk refer to as "street cred." Go on with your bad self.

5. Gladly mentor anyone who asks for help. Mutual mentorship and coaching is the future of work. You have a lot to learn and a lot to teach.

Younger workers and older workers alike need to get past personal biases and to stop the negative characterizations we throw at each other. The evolving workplace will need all of us on the same team if we're going to succeed as individuals, as organizations, as an island, as a country, as a global community. Let's get after it.

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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