

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



346 Building Great Success One Small Step at a Time

Have you ever heard the term Kaizen? It's about making improvements, but not by huge leaps and bounds like many people chase after. I'm Jerry Roberts and today we think about achieving great results, taking small, continuous steps forward. That's next, on The Extra Point.

The Japanese word *kaizen* means "change for better." Many of us first became aware of the word decades ago when it was reported that kaizen was at the roots of the tremendous growth generated by Toyota Motors. In fact, kaizen became synonymous with the overall business approach known as *The Toyota Way*.

In The Extra Point series we've discussed the *One Percent Solution*, which is based on improving a task or regimen by a mere one percent each day. It doesn't seem like much and that's why too many dismiss it.

Now, it's obvious that we're unlikely to be able to calculate a one percent gain if we're doing pushups, for example. The one percent factor is a metaphor for generating a small gain. If we can tie a lot of small gains together, one day we'll look around and see that we've made considerable progress.

All that's needed is to simply try to do a little bit better than we did the day before. The improvements will be gradual and some days we may not notice any progress at all. If we stay with it, the growth will come and the advances will be clear.

Legendary football coach Vince Lombardi once said, "*Perfection is not attainable. But if we chase perfection, we can catch excellence.*" Sports teams win championships by executing just a few plays per game better than their opponent. A lineman holding a block for a split-second longer becomes the difference between the quarterback being tackled for a loss, or throwing the winning touchdown.

Big goals are great and we should have them. That said, we can also employ kaizen in our daily activities, improving a little each day, and seeing big gains over time.

If we have only five minutes a day, what could we do to make small improvements in our skills? We could read a few pages in a book, or do a fast practice on a new idea or procedure. How about fitness and five minutes? We can do almost any exercise we can imagine. Or, just walk in place at our desk.

Figuring in weekends off, holidays and vacation, we'll work about 230 days in a year. Now, multiply that five minutes by those 230 days, and we get 19 hours. All of a sudden it sounds a little more substantial, doesn't it? What if we take 15 minutes a day? That's almost 60 hours. If we applied ourselves to growing our skills for 60 solid hours in the next 12 months, what difference could that make in our job and career? Sit down and sketch out what you might be able to accomplish in 60 hours. It very well could be career- and life-changing.

Here's the question none of us want to face in this conversation. How much time do we waste every day on activities that are meaningless? Checking our phone dozens of times a day, or idle gossip, or however you waste your time. What if you cut some of that out, and pieced together 15 minutes a day for your growth and your future? Or five minutes? Whatever you can do, take small steps forward, starting now.

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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