

# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 375 The Pull of Mediocrity – Part 2

We spoke about mediocrity the other day and showed it as the place most people will arrive at in life, and never get out of. It's the majority, the middle, average. I'm Jerry Roberts and the question is, "If I want more, what then?" We'll start that part of the conversation next, on The Extra Point.

One reason for mediocrity is that's all someone has ever known and it's normal for them. They see others excel and do better but they figure that's not meant for their life. Maybe all of their examples growing up were average.

Legendary automobile creator Henry Ford once said, "Whether you think you can or you can't — you're right." It's a mindset and the only way to change that is through experience. Telling a person they can be more doesn't make it happen. It has to play out in front of their eyes to be real for them.

If you're the manager you can help people see themselves differently by giving them work that is slightly more advanced. If they stumble, give gentle correction and get them through it. Then, add increasingly more challenging tasks, building their confidence. Praise them for their advances. "When my manager feels I'm doing good work, that sends a message that I must be more than mediocre."

The next reason for being locked into a life of expecting less is that most people are not willing to fail. We've mentioned failure plenty of times on The Extra Point, and it's one of the root causes of mediocrity. The thought process goes like this: "I'm not willing to take any risks because risk brings uncertainty, and that makes me feel uncomfortable. Even though maybe I could have more if I tried for it, I'll stay safe with what I know. It's okay. I'm fine where I am."

Again, the way to defeat this mindset is to give

the worker a chance to climb outside of their comfort zone and try other things. Help them succeed as mentioned before, then observe how they react to their achievement and your praise. If they're open for more, steadily increase the degree of difficulty and make sure you and they are charting their progress. Most people are visual in learning. If they see an upward tick in their work, maybe that will help them change their thoughts about their place in your business, and their capabilities. Self-worth is directly tied to performance and the degree of recognition they receive from those who have the authority to give it. If you're a manager, don't ever forget that.

Once the worker is willing to accept risks, show them that failure is a part of success. Let them know if they want to accomplish anything of great value, it's highly likely they'll fail before achieving it. Make your organization a place that embraces excellent failures, where people are free to take chances and put everything they have into their work, and that you'll be there with support if they stumble — not be there to humiliate them for falling short. If you ever want to be able to stop doing the thinking for others, this is how you do it.

When people fail — and they will — focus your efforts on finding the problem, flesh out the solution with the worker, and encourage them to get back in the game. Tomorrow, more of the factors in mediocrity and how to handle them.

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.

###

For information on training and consulting services from Jerry Roberts, please click this link: [guamtraining.com](http://guamtraining.com)

