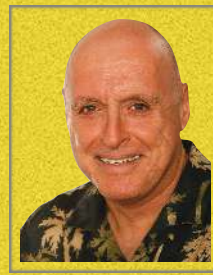


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



482 One of the Most Powerful Lessons I've Ever Learned

It was one of Stephen Covey's greatest lessons and it's as fresh today as ever. I'm Jerry Roberts and today, I share a principle that, if embraced, will bring about a massive change in your life. This is definitely one to share with people, especially young people. It's next on The Extra Point.

Twenty years ago I attended a leadership event, much like the recent Live2Lead, where Stephen Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, revealed a principle that has stuck with me for two decades. I'm going to offer it to you today. Let me set it up.

Imagine you're in the midst of a disagreement with a coworker and it intensifies. You're keeping your cool but the other person screams accusations and then obscenities at you.

You feel your own anger begin to rise and you find yourself reacting to what is being said to you and about you. Let's stop there for a moment.

What usually takes place in a situation like this is a retaliation, a response to the other person's verbal assault. We feel under attack and our initial reaction is to fight back, especially if other people are present.

Our ego won't let us just take it so we stage a counter-attack. We yell back at them and things may escalate from there. Egos may be satisfied that we both defended ourselves, but nothing constructive happened. Covey had another view.

He revealed something I had never focused on prior to that day. He said, in that situation, we have the power of choice. In fact, all the power belongs to us. Wait a second, the other person is barking at me and spewing his venom, how could I possibly have all the power?

The answer is that I have the power to choose

how I will respond. Covey was explaining a point made by Victor Frankl, author of *Man's Search For Meaning*. Frankl wrote, "Between stimulus and response there is a space. And in that space is our power to choose our response." We own that space and it's in that space — that moment — where we decide how to respond or if to respond.

"Emotional intelligence" comes into play here. That's a term for the ability to control our emotions, to be able to remain calm in the face of frustration or stress. Emotionally intelligent people use that moment, that space, to make a measured response, an effective response.

Rather than yell back at the coworker, maybe we say, "I'd like to respond to the points you've made. Why don't we go to the conference room?"

You drive home from work and your kids are screaming at each other, and all you want is a little peace and quiet. You could lose your cool and dole out punishment, or give them a hug and play with them for a while.

We can't always control circumstances but we can control how we respond to them. It's about finding that space, that moment, remaining calm, and making the best possible choice.

Refusing to lash out is often wrongly seen as a sign of weakness. On the contrary, it can be a show of strength. Covey said this one lesson can have an enormous impact on our lives, and it's worth revisiting on a regular basis.

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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