

# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 506 The Reality About “Glass Ceilings”

Today we talk about the “glass ceiling.” I’m Jerry Roberts. Do you think there is one where you work and it’s holding you back? I’ve got words for you, next, on The Extra Point.

The definition of a “glass ceiling” is, “An unacknowledged discriminatory barrier that prevents women and minorities from rising to positions of power or responsibility, as within a corporation.”

This means the suggested discrimination isn’t stated or obvious. No one has told you that any specific job is beyond your reach, but you just know they will never choose you.

If you think there is a glass ceiling where you work, you’re really saying that your employer is stringing you along and has no intention of promoting you to — in example — the director’s position or vice-president. “There’s no way I can have that because I’m a woman or because I’m a minority.” Let’s talk straight. Do you feel your gender and/or your ethnicity is the real reason you haven’t been tapped for a bigger job than the one you have now?

Question. Have you made a pitch for that bigger job? I’m talking about words like these: “With my proven history of achieving goals and with my knowledge of our industry, I feel ready to take a step up into leadership. If job A or job B or Job C opens up, would you be ready to promote me?”

If the answer is “no”, then you can ask where the individual feels you fall short. “Okay, if I take on this project and deliver these results, will that change your mind?”

Question. Have you considered the value you bring and the value your leaders are looking for? On paper, do you match up with what the organization wants? If you want to be the next senior vice-president, what would make your boss want to hire you for that position?

Should years and years of loyal service count for something? Absolutely, but it’s not going to win the big job. As well, a promotion should not be based on what you’ve done in the past, but what is anticipated you’ll do in the future.

Maybe it’s not that you’re a woman and/or part of a minority. Maybe it’s that the people who decide on the promotion don’t have the gut feeling you can deliver the goods. If that’s the case then get ready to gulp — it’s probably your fault for not doing the kind of work that made them take notice.

Promotions are about perceptions and emotions. All candidates are expected to have the right qualifications. Those are the basics. After that, all the unanswerables kick in. Will you meet projections? Will you provide innovation? Will you be able to lead this team? I don’t know. If I hand you the keys, what are you going to do with them? This is the stuff that keeps a CEO or business owner up at night.

Are there glass ceilings? Yes. That said, I’ve known, interviewed, and shared notes with hundreds of leaders over the past 40 years. The overwhelming majority wouldn’t care who has the job as long as they can make it rain results.

If you can do that let the world know, including your boss. If you are ready and you can prove it, and your boss doesn’t do anything about it — eventually somebody else will. If you really want what you say you want, you’ll get there. 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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