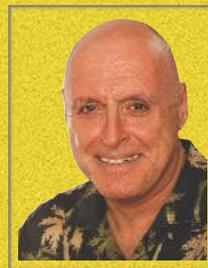


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



602 Building Your Mental Toughness

I've got a question for you. I want you to think before you respond. Are you mentally tough? Today, we talk about having the kind of mindset that will enable you to achieve amazing things. I'm Jerry Roberts and that's up next on The Extra Point.

To start things off I want you to put the image in your mind of the most mentally tough person you've ever known. I mean, this person could handle anything a job, or client, or coworker, or even a boss could throw at him or her. When you think of them you think of a rock. Do you have that image in your mind?

Now, I want you to imagine yourself and your mindset under pressure, and I have two questions for you.

1. How far away are you from having the other person's rock-solid mindset?
2. Take any problem or major challenge you've had in the past year or two, and tell yourself what this other person would have done to handle the situation that you didn't do.

So what is mental toughness? I'm sure there's a lot that can go into the definition but I'll keep it simple. In a competitive world it's the psychological edge that let's you handle pressure and adversity better than others, and to perform at a higher level.

We've all seen individuals and teams that excel in the big moments when it really counts, when the end result is still unknown. What is it about them in those big moments? Why do some people thrive when the game is on the line, while others shrink? Is mental toughness genetic or is it a learned characteristic, that any of us can harness it when we need it most?

Mental toughness is about the ability to focus on the main thing when everybody else's attention is scattered and they have trouble focusing. It's about coping with stresses and

strains, things that are unexpected, and things that are unfair. It's having a determination that defies distractions, but it goes a step farther. We've talked before about Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius, a stoic philosopher. One definition of a stoic could be a person who operates more on logic and less on emotion.

Aurelius had an opinion about how to achieve mental toughness and it gets into areas that make some people nervous. Here's what he said: "Only worry about what matters to you. Everything else is noise. Simply shrug it off. When you're dealing with emotions or situations that stand in the way of your highest aim in life, be indifferent to it."

Be indifferent to it? Ignore it? Blow it off? When I first saw those words I thought, "No way." You have to confront the demons, the barriers, the things in life that prevent you from moving forward — don't you? Well, since I never made it to emperor and Aurelius did, maybe he knew something I didn't.

I thought back to the moments in my life when I was my most effective, when I got things done a lot of people doubted I could. I was going after things I probably should have doubted myself. In those times it was just as Aurelius stated. I was so focused that I was indifferent to anything that really didn't matter.

And indifference is flexible. I didn't ignore my family or friends. I still did little things to please customers. I appreciated constructive feedback. I ignored any snarky stuff that came from competitors, or those who were just trying to bring me down.

Do you have those kind of people messing with you? Be indifferent. Be indifferent to the trolls on Facebook. In fact, be indifferent to Facebook.

(Con't.)



The bottom line is I locked onto what I had to do and didn't allow myself to be separated from my purpose. I wish I could say I'm always that focused and always can be that indifferent. I'm working on it.

If you're saying to yourself, "Well, I can never do it like that, be that focused," I think you can. But even if you can't yet generate the level of mental toughness you'd ultimately like to have, you can do some of these things and get a lot further down the road than you are now...and then it's all about practice, repetition, evaluation, tweaking a few things, and more practice. Mental toughness is there for you if you want it

That's The Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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