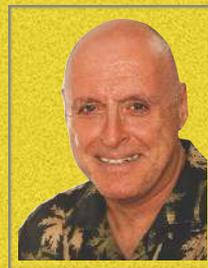


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



621 The Dichotomy of Leadership – Part 1

You have an objective to meet. Maybe it's 30% higher sales, or increasing net profits by a million dollars. You also have to take care of your team. Can you realistically do both well? I'm Jerry Roberts and we'll look at how two Navy SEALs look at it, next, on The Extra Point.

Former Navy SEALs Jocko Willink and Leif Babin, co-authors of *The Dichotomy of Leadership*, say that balance in leadership is crucial to gaining victory. While relatively few of us have ever had to lead a team into battle where lives could be lost, there are connections here for those of us who lead teams in the workplace.

First, for those who may not be familiar with the term, "dichotomy" refers to dividing something into two separate and contrasting parts. Willink and Babin say the ultimate dichotomy is to care deeply for each individual member of the team, while at the same time accepting the risks necessary to accomplish the mission. Let's dig in.

While we build strong relationships with members of the unit, we also need to recognize that we have a mission, a job to do. The dichotomy, or contrast, is that if we care too much about our mission objectives, we'll neglect the needs of our people.

Leaders who are focused almost exclusively on the numbers and push the team to achieve them, not taking the time to understand the condition of individuals, may achieve their goal but end up losing people to burnout.

If you put the needs of people in back of the goals of the organization long enough, some of those people will pack up and take their talents elsewhere. Thus, there are risks when workers realize the organization is solely focused on meeting its objectives.

On the other hand, if we care about the team

members more than needed and cater to their desires, the success of the mission could be compromised. This can be seen when you have a leader who has a basic need to be liked by his workers, and spends a lot of time trying to make that happen.

Willink and Babin say the key is to find a middle ground that meets the needs of the organization in completing the mission, while giving enough focus to individuals so they feel valued, and believe their needs are also being met. Obviously, that path is narrow at times.

In their first book, *Extreme Leadership*, the authors advised that even positive behaviors can be problematic for any leader, as it's possible to take those behaviors to extremes, and too much of a good thing can become a negative.

They say the answer is to "moderate the idea of leading from the extremes and focus on maintaining balance." In this and the next two Extra Points I want to look at some of their suggestions to achieve that balance.

1. Own it all but empower others. We've talked about this frequently, the leader owns the outcome, especially when things don't turn out well. Effective leaders take ownership of every mistake, and never place blame on their people.

If you cast the responsibility for a botched job on one or more of your workers so you can avoid scrutiny, that's how you lose a team. Just as important, step aside and let them get the recognition when you have a win, and they'll go through walls for you.

(Con't.)



2. Share authority. Unless you want to be saddled with doing all the thinking forever, you have to hand off responsibility to others.

Control the risk and bring them along slowly if needed, but build up their problem solving and decision making skills. This is particularly critical for small business owners who want to grow. You're likely already wearing too many hats.

If you're caught up working *in* your business, you'll never be able to effectively work *on* your business, and build it.

What you'll have is a job, inside of a company that will likely never achieve its potential. Your good talent that would otherwise stay with you and help you build an organization, will instead see that opportunities are slim with you and they'll eventually leave.

This is a massive problem for small companies and too many people never address it, with unhappy consequences.

More tomorrow on Willink and Babin's book, *The Dichotomy of Leadership*.

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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