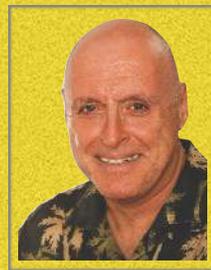


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



648 Worry and Fear — My Three-Minute Conference Speech

I just completed a three-day online conference, with a short speech involved. Maybe there's something in my experience for you. I'm Jerry Roberts and that's next on The Extra Point.

Part of my affiliation with the John Maxwell group is a certification to present his library of leadership programs, and that certification required a trip to Florida for a three-day conference. That was supposed to be in March but COVID intervened so the event got pushed back, turned virtual, and I completed it yesterday — and on very little sleep.

Part of my requirement in attending was to make a five-minute speech — without notes — in front of those in my virtual “table,” about 20 people. I chose an experience from my childhood which related to common problems with worry, anxiety, and fear. I practiced it over and over until it flowed smoothly. I was ready.

A couple of weeks ago they announced it was no longer five minutes — now it was down to three minutes. I no longer had time to fully tell the story, plus interjecting critical pauses and strategic body language. I began to cut it down. Five minutes to four minutes, and Saturday night, just hours before the event began at midnight — I finally hit three minutes. I was energized even though I hadn't been able to sleep much. I would deliver the speech about 3 o'clock in the morning.

Wrong. The final schedule hadn't been released when I planned for Sunday morning. I didn't learn until the event began that the speeches went off at 3 a.m. on Monday. Well, I didn't get much sleep and came into day two dragging.

I practiced the speech and was forgetting little parts of it. I then employed a trick I'd learned from someone years ago. I went through the speech, taking mental snapshots of each scene. Then, I tried to recall those scenes, in order, and the words came to me.

When I got to the virtual room I was the first person in, besides the moderator. I figured I'd go first. Wrong again. She lost track of that and I ended up 14th, an hour later. Listening to everyone else give their talk, I was even more tired and was just trying to focus. Then, it was my turn. My mind went blank for a couple of seconds and I thought, “No, this cannot happen now. I've got a story about worry and fear, and I'm trying to find my starting point.

There was no time for fear. I recalled the words of another mentor: “I'm glad I'm here, I'm glad you're here, I know what I know so let's go.” The moderator said “start” and I went searching for the first scene...the words were there. Once I got going, my preparation took over and I delivered it in just under three minutes. Sleep deprived and all, it was probably 95% what I'd hoped for, but people related to it and the feedback was good.

If you're called to make any kind of presentation, practice it until it's a part of you. Then, be prepared for last-minute changes that can throw you off-track. Adjust as necessary. Try making mental pictures of each step in your talk, then see if that helps you remember. Then, maybe more practice.

Make sure you're properly rested, and just have faith. You did your best, now deliver with the intent to help someone. You're glad you're there, you're glad they are there, you know what you know, so just go. I hope this helps the next time you need to get up in front of people.

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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