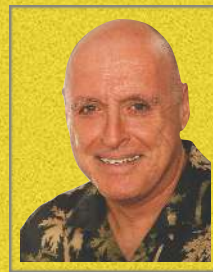


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



684 Add a Little Networking to Your Career Recipe

How much thought do you give to the connections you make? I'm Jerry Roberts and today, a story on the potential importance of that. It's coming next, on The Extra Point.

Almost 90 years ago, a Taiwanese-born man named Momofuku Ando moved to Japan and built a successful clothing company. During World War 2 his business grew, and he expanded to sell air-raid shelters and slide projectors to the Japanese government.

Noticing an accounting error, Ando asked the military police for help in investigating the problem. Instead, they put him in prison, starved and tortured him for 45 days. During his recovery from that, Japan surrendered. His factories had been destroyed. He had nothing.

He started over. This time he built a real-estate empire and was a partner in launching a bank. Again, he lost everything. Not just that, he was charged with tax evasion and put in prison again. Eventually, the charges were dropped.

Ando began yet again, this time in food manufacturing. His laboratory was in his tool shed, and he had failure after failure. We'll pick up the story again in just a moment. First, a couple of notes.

Besides extraordinary willpower, Ando knew the power of networking. He befriended a fellow prisoner during his first confinement, asking the man to contact an army lieutenant he knew, who eventually arranged for his release. Without those contacts, Ando probably would have died in prison.

Another friendship fueled his real estate business, which he never intended to build. Fusanosuke Kuhara mentored Ando, telling him to buy up as much cheap real estate as he could after the war ended. Kuhara's name may not be familiar, but you'll recognize the name of the company he developed — Hitachi.

A lot of people start companies or try to build corporate careers, and think they can do it all on their own. Or, they think that they don't fit in with the concept of developing a network. I've heard a lot of reasons for not doing it.

"I'm too busy"..."That networking stuff is for other people."..."I'm not good at making small talk"....and the list of excuses is long.

The reality of networking is if you make any kind of decent effort at all, in a relatively short period of time you can establish a pretty solid list of contacts. From that, can come opportunities. It's not hard, and if you're one who hasn't done much of it, any time is a good time to start — even now.

Back to Momofuku Ando. In 1958, still pursuing the food business, he hit upon an idea that changed his life. It probably changed yours, too. You see, Momofuku Ando is the inventor of instant ramen noodles. His company, Nissin Food Products, maker of Top Ramen and Cup Noodle, eventually was worth hundreds of billions of dollars.

Ando died in 2007 at age 96. His funeral might have been an indication of how well he had connected with people. It brought out 6,500 attendees, and it was held in a baseball stadium.

Is connecting with more people a good idea for you? Maybe think of it, the next time you heat up some of Ando's ramen noodles, or see them in the grocery aisle.

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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