

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



705 7 Things I Got From My First Boss

I caught a post on Facebook a few days ago, where a lady was remembering her first boss, who had passed away. I'm Jerry Roberts and let's talk about that today, on The Extra Point.

Just thinking out loud, I wonder if first bosses have similar impact of first loves. They say you never forget your first love. I think it's the same with our first boss. Their memory stays with us.

As she listed the things she remembered about her manager, my thoughts drifted back to Big Ed, my first real boss. It seems they were cut from the same cloth. Here's a list of qualities that the two men shared, and I'll have a few comments about Ed.

1. They always listened. Ed listened probably twice as much as he spoke. I use a line in my training, "God gave us two ears and one mouth, and we should use them accordingly." He listened carefully so he could respond carefully. If you truly have the desire to understand people, the only way is to listen.

2. They had time to help people grow. We had a busy fleet vehicle operation and a lot to do, but Ed would take time to explain policies and procedures. He wanted to know that we clearly understood important things about the company and our job.

3. They never made us feel like we were a bother. Maybe, in your career, you've had a boss or two who treated you like an interruption. It doesn't feel good. Ed never did that. He told us that we were a small team and everyone was needed if we were to be successful. We had almost zero absenteeism during the time I was there.

4. They shielded the team from criticism. There was a time when the team fell short of expectations. Ed accepted responsibility and didn't say a word to us. One of the mechanics inadvertently picked up on it. We figured out

the deficiency and fixed it. All Ed said was that he knew we'd handle it.

5. They knew when to be serious and when to joke. Ed had great timing. He didn't push himself to be funny, but he told great jokes, and great stories. He was just a neat guy to listen to.

6. They cleared the way so all we had to do was our job. Ours was a union shop, and when communications broke down, we were facing an impending work stoppage. The young guys, like me, had never been through one of those. Ed counseled us as to what we should expect, and what our options were. The union shop steward so respected Ed, and Ed explained things so well and without bias, that the steward declined to speak. Ed eliminated question marks, and we never worried about them. That way, all we had to do was work.

7. They trusted us to find better ways to do our job. Ed told us flat out, "Here's how to do the job. If you can figure out more effective ways to do things, feel free as long as we get the same results or better. If your way proves not to be as good, do it my way." That gave us all the freedom to experiment, and it was one of the things that made working there fun.

I hope you've had a Big Ed in your career, and I hope you have one like him right now. Further, if you are a manager, I hope you'll use his example, so that someday, your workers will have conversations like this about you.

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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