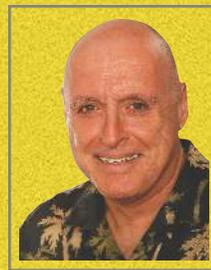


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



727 Hey, Who's in Control here?

If you're trying to figure out what 2021 will bring us, you're in the right place at the right time today. I'm Jerry Roberts, and I've got the answer to that question. It's coming next, on The Extra Point.

Anybody who is any sort of economist has been asked a thousand times, "What will 2021 be like, what's going to happen?" If you're one of those people, maybe you've whipped out your spreadsheets and charts, and have told people exactly what you see for the coming year.

The rest of us amateurs stick four AA batteries in our crystal balls, and hope for the best.

I've seen all kinds of answers to the question of what to expect in the new year, in terms of our economy. Some are positive, that it will be back to nearly where we were at the start of the pandemic, by the end of the year. Some say we'll have the lion's share of that by the start of the fourth quarter.

Not everyone is so optimistic. I saw a couple of people publish their predictions yesterday, one suggesting that the global economy will struggle throughout the entire year, and begin to improve in 2022. Another said we're in for five years of tough times, and they don't see positive arrows until 2026. Lord, have mercy.

Everybody hinges their hopes for a better economy upon bringing the virus to a halt, one way or the other. Thus, news of a more contagious variant of the virus in England, has the world taking deep breaths.

We now have vaccines being distributed, and would a new strain of the coronavirus be covered by them? A spokesperson for Moderna, yesterday, said he has high hopes that their vaccine will protect against new virus mutations. Hopeful, yes, but he couldn't say for sure it would.

Being in the predictions business is tough. Think about the variables. There's never been a successful coronavirus vaccine. The current vaccine producers are claiming over 90% effectiveness, based on early studies. Will that hold up? Will there be more mutations and will the vaccines offer protection? When will restrictions be lifted? When will tourism return to Guam in large numbers?

There's no shortage of questions, and trying to chart where the global, national, or local economy is headed is hard to do.

The reality is that you and I have zero control over any of the things I listed, and that's what make all this so frustrating. My suggestion is to do the only thing we should ever do, and that's to control the things we can control.

What follows isn't a full list, but we can:

1. Control our performance at work. It's our choice.
2. Let our manager know that we're ready to step up and accept more responsibility.
3. Support the efforts of coworkers.
4. Do more for customers, and improve their experience with us.
5. Contribute ideas on possible improvements. What do I see every day that we should address?
6. Be more enthusiastic. Who gains if I come into work with a frown on my face, and spread negativity?
(Tip: You want to be more enthusiastic? Greatly reduce or eliminate Facebook)
7. Improve our skills. We don't have to wait on our employer to train us in order to improve. Ask, "What can I learn today on my own?"
8. Get in better health. Eat cleaner. Exercise regularly. Sleep more.

Feel free to add to the list, as it's all good. There are a lot of things we can choose to do, things that are completely under our control. (Con't.)

Okay, where is the economy going? What about the virus and the vaccine? How about government actions and restrictions, not just local but the feds, too? How about the governments of the nations whose citizens become our visitors? And what else could possibly happen, that hasn't already happened? I can't answer any of it. Neither can you. Neither can anyone else. We don't know, and we can't control any of it.

So, it seems to me that the answer is to spend less time worrying about what we cannot control, and more time working on what we can control.

Be a control freak, in a good way. Your 2021 will be better if you do.

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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