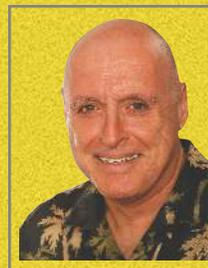


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



749 Some Truth About Optimists, Pessimists, and Realists.

The pessimist complains about the wind. The optimist expects it to change. The realist adjusts the sails. That was attributed to William A. Ward in a post from the Honorable Real Joe Cruz yesterday, and we'll dig into it next, on The Extra Point.

In his post yesterday, Joe asked me who is the better employee — the optimist or the realist? What if we shared both mindsets. Might that create synergy? Let's talk about it.

First, let's establish the fact that the most optimistic person does, at times, have a pessimistic thought cross his/her mind; and the ultimate in pessimists will occasionally find a morsel of optimism. I've never met anyone who is 100% of either, all the time.

Do you think it's possible to change a pessimist into an optimist? I tend to think that's God's work, but we can play a part.

Maybe we can condition pessimists to move from extreme pessimism, to mostly pessimism, to moderate, and maybe to occasional? They'll need results, proof, and reasons to adjust their thinking, but I've seen people change.

Next point. What are both optimists and pessimists thinking about? The past, the present, or the future? The past is gone, and the present is now. Neither can be altered. There is nothing to be optimistic or pessimistic about. Both are fact and can't be changed.

The future is up for grabs and — depending upon our personal circumstances and beliefs, and knowledge of the current situation — we're going to lean to the positive or negative.

You might want to look at things like this: Both the optimist and pessimist are locked in the future, while the realist is dealing with present time. When the quotation gets to the point

about adjusting the sails, this is the realist reacting to current conditions and making the best decision for right now.

Can the realist also be an optimist or pessimist? Absolutely. However, the realist wears the second hat, the one that requires that decisions are made when circumstances change. It doesn't matter whether I'm feeling positive or negative, I have to deal with the current situation.

Now to Joe's question, who is the best employee? I think you need both viewpoints in the workplace. Organizations need optimists. They paint an attractive picture for the future, and workers like that. It reinforces their original decision to hire on, and the decision to stay.

If I'm looking for a leader, I want a strong optimist who can paint a positive picture and motivate workers to buy in to the vision.

I hope that person also has a realistic streak, to understand there are usually logical boundaries to every decision. If not, I'd want somebody else on the payroll who can offer the countering viewpoint.

I prefer the combination of optimist in the role of CEO or business owner, with the realist in the support and detail capacity, looking at big ideas and helping to smooth them out.

With both of those positions presented and examined, decisions can be made as to the direction we go, and how fast.

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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