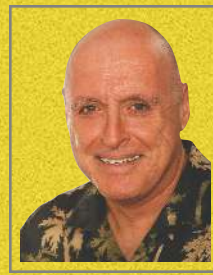


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



806 The Unexpected Knock of Opportunity

Opportunity often knocks without any warning or fanfare, and sometimes it's in the lives of those who don't seek it or seem ready for it. I'm Jerry Roberts and we'll chat about this, next on The Extra Point.

A young man named TJ had moved to L.A. from West Virginia, wanting to make it in the big city. He had a tough couple of years, ended up living out of his car, and cleaned up every day at the gym where he'd earlier bought an annual membership.

He finally landed a job as a runner with a tech company. It didn't pay much more than minimum wage, but he had no rent or utilities to pay. He just had to keep his car running and put gas in it, plus buy food and he'd be okay.

TJ did his job well enough, but he was very quiet. Because of his circumstances, he didn't hang out with any coworkers. He just put in his hours and left. After eight months, most people in the company still didn't even know his name. He'd received a small raise, but nobody had ever discussed a promotion or other opportunities.

One day, the CEO announced a big deal had been signed, and to celebrate there would be a party at his house. TJ figured he wouldn't go, but saw the CEO in the parking garage and he said, "Hey, you're coming tomorrow, right?" TJ managed to muster, "Yes sir, thank you," before the man drove off.

The next day he shaved and showered at the gym, as usual, put on the best shirt he had and drove to the party. The CEO's house was stunning, with a full view of the city below.

All the employees were there, plus clients, families, maybe 200 people total. There were several food stations to choose from, but the biggest one — for barbecue — had nobody in it. The CEO and his wife looked visibly upset,

and the catering manager was trying to explain that the cook was sick, and he was doing everything to find a last-minute replacement.

TJ went to the CEO and said, "Sir, I've had some experience with barbecue. If you want, I can start it up and then step aside when the cook gets here." The CEO accepted the offer. TJ got busy and it wasn't long before the smell of barbecue was wafting through the air at the party, and people were gobbling it up.

They never found a replacement cook. TJ barbecued up a storm and was the hit of the party. The CEO and his wife thanked him over and over again, tried to pay him, but he refused the money.

After most of the guests had gone, a small group of senior managers were left, just relaxing. TJ was headed out when they called him over. "Where did you learn to cook like that? — it was awesome!" said one. TJ teared up a little, and the man asked what the problem was. TJ replied that it was the first time anyone had ever said his cooking was good. Jaws dropped in the group, people couldn't believe that.

"You see," TJ said, "The best cook in the family is my grandpa, then my mom and dad, and I have six brothers and sisters — and it's pretty much accepted that I was always the worst cook in the family. It was sort of the family joke."

The CEO, perhaps sensing a chance to put some air underneath TJ's wings, said, "Not only is your food amazing, but you are the single biggest reason this party was a huge success. On behalf of my wife and family, and everybody here, we thank you for everything you did. See you tomorrow." The group then applauded, and TJ walked off, eyes filling up.

(Con't.)

The next day, everywhere he went in the company, TJ was greeted by his first name, and people raved about the party and his cooking.

By the end of the week he had a new job, a raise, and the company wanted to invest some money in his training.

TJ had been a good worker, yet was more or less invisible to people in his company. He changed that by volunteering to step up and help out, when that help was needed. He wasn't invisible any longer, and his life changed as a result.

There are a lot of TJ's in the workplace, maybe one where you toil for a living. Maybe all he or she needs is a way to break out and break through.

Maybe a manager pumping some air under their wings, will help. You never know where it can lead.

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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