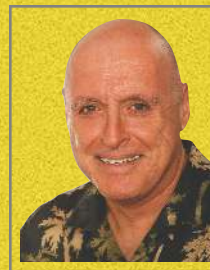


# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 807 A Presidential Debate Moment — and Being Likeable

Can you remember anything good that has come out of presidential debates? I'm not just talking about the most recent affairs with Donald Trump and Joe Biden. What is your last great memory from two people squaring off for the highest office in the land? I've got one for you, and was reminded of it this week, as one of the participants was in the news. That's coming next, on The Extra Point.

Presidential debates are mostly forgettable events. The recent clashes between Trump and Biden were among the worst I've seen. Looking back, it wasn't much better in any pairings that included Barack Obama, George W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George H.W. Bush — and those who ran against them.

In my opinion, you have to go all the way back to 1984 to find a moment that really stands out.

Ronald Reagan, already 73 and the oldest president on record, was ahead of challenger Walter Mondale, who had been vice-president in the Jimmy Carter administration. However, in their first debate, Reagan's performance was troubling, as he stumbled on several questions and his answers lacked certainty. Mondale's hopes had been bolstered, and he felt he now had a chance to win.

Age and competency took center stage as a big issue in the campaign, and when questioned if he had any doubt he could perform well under difficult circumstances, Reagan said he had no such doubts, then added: "I will not make age an issue of this campaign. I will not exploit, for political purposes, my opponent's youth and inexperience."

The audience erupted in laughter. Reagan had taken on the age question and knocked it out of the park. The election was over, for all intents and purposes. Reagan went on to win 49 states and had 59% of the total votes.

That, however, is not what I remember most from that moment.

My strongest memory was how Mondale reacted. He broke into laughter himself. He may well have known that Reagan's joke had essentially ended the campaign right then and there, but he didn't scowl, frown, look like he was trying to figure out how to come back with a brilliant retort, or anything else.

Mondale looked at Reagan with what seemed to me to be admiration. He looked like a guy who was appreciated an incredible line that was delivered by a master communicator.

Whenever I see that video, my eyes are drawn to Mondale's face, as Reagan hits the punchline. He seemed likeable. Both men were likeable.

Being likeable is a good thing. If you're in sales, you'll probably sell more products and services if you're likeable. If you deal with customer service, or you're a supervisor, or a police officer, or a teacher, or a doctor, or just about any job — you'll do better if you're likeable.

So often, we feel we have to be "professional," and that will bring us the results we're after. To be sure, professionals have the highest standards, and do things the right way, all the time. We want that, don't we? Not at the expense of being warm, friendly, human, and yes, likeable. If that's not included in your version of professionalism, I'd avoid it.

Research has shown, for as long as I can remember, that people tend to do more business with people they like. Professionalism is fabulous and it's great to have it, but when you add the likeable factor, it's an unbeatable combination.

(Con't.)

Walter Frederick "Fritz" Mondale passed away a couple of days ago, at age 93. He was an Army vet, serving in Korea, then came home and got his law degree.

He was appointed Minnesota Attorney General in 1960, served in the U.S. Senate, then the vice-presidency, back to law, and was America's ambassador to Japan under Bill Clinton.

He was a lot of things in life. People on both sides of the political spectrum, both conservatives and liberals, agree that one of those things is that he was likeable.

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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