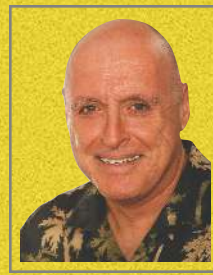


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



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Carlos and Manny were the best of friends, growing up together, beginning in elementary school. They would remain so into retirement. Their careers were separated by the slimmest of margins, only one percent. Their story is next, on The Extra Point.

Carlos met Manny on the first day of elementary school, and they became fast friends. They did everything together. The friendship was rock solid. They attended and graduated from the same high school, enlisted into the military on the same day, attended basic training, got the same job and technical training, married their high school sweethearts, got deployed together, and got discharged together.

They had a plan to apply for jobs at the same company back in their hometown. Both were hired, though into separate divisions of the company, and they joked that one day they were going to run the place.

Al, the department head for Carlos, was an old pro, did everything pretty much by the book, and the department was well respected. He trained his supervisors and front line workers to take pride in registering the fewest sick days, fewest workforce accidents, and lowest employee turnover.

Carlos enjoyed the boss's style. He was able to gain certifications pretty much at his own pace, and never felt rushed.

Manny had a somewhat different experience. His department head, Bill, was a younger guy who respected the performance of the other departments, but he saw his role differently.

He had been responsible for developing almost half of the new supervisors in the company over the preceding three years. He was always looking for talent who wanted to move up. Manny fit the profile.

Bill immediately sold Manny on the idea of continuous growth, continuous coaching, and to try to improve his performance by one percent during every reporting period. Sometimes that was a week, sometimes a month. It was sort of a game, and Manny enjoyed it.

Production would go up by one percent (or more), while expenses and utilization of resources might decline by the same amount. Manny hit his numbers almost every time, while also earning certifications.

Manny talked to Carlos about the idea. While he saw merit, he said he was doing well under his boss and thought a promotion was coming.

Manny threw himself into his work, and began encouraging other members of the team to do the same. He was promoted to a supervisory role in his seventh month. He and Carlos celebrated. Carlos would get there the next year.

Bill pushed Manny for the next 12 months, knowing that another department head was preparing to retire. He talked Manny up to senior leaders, and when he applied for the job, he became the youngest person ever to hold that position.

Manny was now on the "executive radar screen," and 18 months later they created a position for him to lead the company's expansion, including an aggressive talent development program.

The first thing he did was beg Bill, his former boss, to design and run that part of the operation. They implemented the one-percent concept company-wide to anyone who was interested, with production and the net profit picture improving.

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Let me fast-forward. The company flourished over the next several years. Carlos became a division leader, and the two friends celebrated. A year later, they celebrated once again, as Manny was selected by the board of directors to be the company president and CEO.

When asked what made the difference in his career, he always credited Bill, his first boss, for lighting a fire under him with his belief in regular growth.

He said it wasn't just making his numbers that drove him, it was the continual support from his manager, and the growing confidence he gained.

Manny and Bill developed three other CEOs during their time together. That is, CEOs for other companies. These were people who prospered in their roles and eventually left to join another organization, eventually taking over the top job. They always considered that a unique achievement.

The story ended well for the two kids who met decades earlier in elementary school. They remained loyal friends, saw their kids grow up together, welcomed grandchildren together, and on the same day at age 68, after 46 years at the same company, Carlos and Manny retired — in one more celebration.

Not everybody is cut out to be a CEO, or any senior leadership role. If you're not or don't want it, that's okay. However, if you think you are, or know someone who thinks they are, find somebody like Bill, who'll believe in you and push you to grow.

It's just one percent. Then, another one percent, and then...well, you know.

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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