

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



898 The Connections Between Managing and Parenting

If you're both a manager and a parent, perhaps you've given some thought that there are connections between the two? We'll explore that idea, next, on The Extra Point.

Trying to manage a team and parenting a child — or children — are difficult and challenging tasks. I don't think anyone will dispute that statement. Today's question is, are there similarities between working with both groups? Second, what about the skill-sets needed to be successful?

I read an account in CEO World, about a young business leader's experience in leading a team of 25 through the early stages of the pandemic, all online, while attending to the needs of his nine-year-old daughter.

It was during the initial lockdown, when everyone was staying at home. He said he got through the tough period with patience, positivity, resiliency, consistency, flexibility, and adaptability.

Someone once described supervising workers as "adult daycare," and I think many managers will agree. Sometimes the "kids" play nice together, sometimes you have to pull them apart because they can't get along, and sometimes everybody needs a nap.

As hard as it can be to effectively manage a team in the workplace, taking care of kids can wear you out, both physically and mentally. You wear many hats, including cook, playmate, teacher, nurse, chauffeur for kids with activities to be shuttled to, and I'm sure there's a few more hats I haven't mentioned.

You need patience with children who may have trouble focusing or are just bursting with energy, and it can be the same with workers. Leadership guru John Maxwell says this has been the hardest part for him. Not everybody performs at the same level, and some struggle, holding back the team. Sometimes, it requires a lot of

patience to help workers develop the skills necessary to get up to speed.

Many managers don't like to have to repeat themselves over and over again to workers who don't pick up on instructions the first time, second time, and it might be more than that. Well, kids are all about repetition. Have you ever had to remind your child to do homework, clean his/her room, or take out the trash?

Both kids and workers need repetition. They need to regularly be reminded of core values, priorities, and to be given an example of patience, positivity, resiliency, consistency, flexibility, and adaptability.

One day, those kids will be parents and you will have been their example. One day, some of those workers will be managers, and you, once again, will have been their example.

The topic of "reverse repetition" also came up. This is when you're not convinced the child or worker fully understands an issue, or is having trouble paying attention. You ask them to explain what you've been telling them, and how they'll use that information.

Don't ask, "Do you understand?" The answer to that will always be "yes." Instead, ask, "What do you understand and how will you use it?" That question can't be answered unless understanding does exist.

It's also important to allow people to search for solutions. You can spoon-feed them if you want, but that won't help develop their problem-solving and decision-making processes. Let them try to figure out the answer, then make corrections as needed.

(Con't.)

Tapping into the individual's motivation, and incentives are important. Most kids and workers crave the approval of the parent and manager. Learn the art and science of praise and recognition.

There's something else. Recognize that there are days when workers, like your kids, just aren't with it. Give them a little room, and allow for a down day. Show support, and let them know you believe in them.

Above all, it's back to example. Be the kind of person you want your kids to be. Be the kind of person you want in your organization.

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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