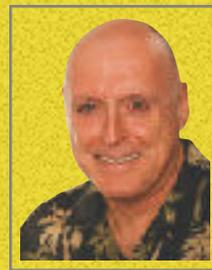


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



918 Don't be Afraid to Ask for Mentorship

One of the toughest sells I make is the one that could be the biggest game changer for anyone in the workforce. People nod their heads all the time, they say they agree, and indicate they want it. Yet, they almost always stop short of taking the steps necessary to make it happen. I'm Jerry Roberts, and the reveal of this difficult issue is next, on The Extra Point.

Sooner or later, if you find yourself in a training class with me, you'll hear me talk up the importance of establishing one of the most beneficial relationships you may ever have. It is finding and working with a mentor.

I can't imagine anyone who wouldn't get value from learning, and gaining guidance and advice from someone who has knowledge, ideas, and perspective that could provide a significant career boost. That said, so few people who hear this message actually act on it.

Forbes magazine recently ran an article that gives some insight into the problem. A lot of people are nervous about asking...asking someone to be their mentor. Let's see if we can help with that.

The first place to look for a mentor is your boss, or your boss's boss. Someone like that is invested in you already. When you say, "Boss, would you mentor me, to help me get to the next level?" — they've got a vested interest in helping you do that. That should work to your advantage.

People who don't go that route and seek mentorship outside of the organization, usually shy away from cold-calling somebody they don't know, and asking him/her to help them.

What goes through the minds of many is something like..."This person doesn't know me, why should they help me?" They sense

the call is going to be awkward or they'll be rejected, and they back off.

Mentorship is an opportunity to share knowledge. People are often flattered you think so highly of them to ask. Most people will help if they can, and I think that's a key.

If I ask you to be my mentor, before you agree you'll no doubt want to know what I want to know. You'll want to be sure that you possess the information or talent I'm looking to acquire.

Therefore, I won't approach you to say, "Hi, will you be my mentor?" Instead, I might introduce myself, and add, "based on your experience and success, I believe you can help me. Can I explain?" They'll say okay, and I'll give a 30-60 second pitch of where I work, what I do, what I want to do, and how I feel they can help. It might sound something like this...

"I've been the marketing manager at ABC Industries for the past three years. My goal is to work my way into senior leadership. I know you followed a similar path in your career. Can I buy you lunch, hear your story, and ask some questions?"

I didn't just ask somebody to be my mentor out of the blue. I gave them context. I researched their background a little to see the connection between their career and mine. I explained my goal, and what I wanted to do — buy them lunch, hear their story, and ask questions.

By doing this, I instantly let them know that I'm not going to waste their time. Here's who I am, here's what I want, I think you can help, are you willing to risk a lunch to let me ask questions?

If they don't have time for lunch, how about breakfast? Or coffee? Or can I send some questions via email?

(Con't.)

You just want to get started. If you impress the mentor early on, they may suggest another session — over that lunch.

When you finally set up the mentorship, plan your questions well. When the session is over, get to work on the advice you've been given. Then, set up another session, report on your progress, and ask more questions. It's a beautiful thing. Get moving on it today.

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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For information on training and consulting services with Jerry Roberts, please click this link: guamtraining.com

