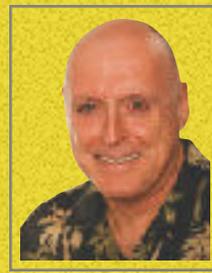


# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 942 Report Cards and Performance Reviews

Annual performance reviews and report cards. What do they have in common? I'm Jerry Roberts, and I shall reveal that, next, on The Extra Point.

If you've been a listener to The Extra Point for long, you know I am not a fan of that annual ritual that is generally hated by workers and managers alike — the performance review.

I haven't had many of them, as I've been self-employed for most of my working years, but I've had enough to know how they fail to give much, if any real value.

A few days ago, I was thinking of my youthful days and maybe this was where I began to develop my distaste for reviews. Of course, when you're in school they call those reviews a report card. Would you believe there are some striking similarities between report cards and performance reviews?

In school, you get letter grades which indicate how well you know each subject. On the job, it's likely a score of one to five about how well you perform the basic functions of your job.

A student's letter grade in a class is objective. Did you do the assigned work, did you turn it in on time, and was it done correctly? Then, how well did you score on your tests.

There's a little bit of wiggle room for teacher opinion in some classes, but for the most part it's a straightforward process.

It should be the same when your boss gives you a rating for job skill proficiency, but there's more room to play around with the numbers.

In what turned out to be the last review I ever received, my supervisor gave me several grades of "4" when I felt the proper score was clearly "5". The response I got was, "Well, I like to give a little room for improvement." When I

pressed him on it, "Shouldn't a '5' be scored a '5,' because that's accurate?", he suddenly had no more time for me.

You can find more on how I see these annual reviews with past Extra Points, numbers 3, 4, and 304, all available at [guamtraining.com](http://guamtraining.com).

If you recall, there was another part to the school report card, the citizenship grades. This is where the teacher could get back at you for every snarky thing you said in class, or for whatever they didn't like about you. There were three options. "E" meant excellent, "S" was satisfactory, and "U" was for unsatisfactory.

I'm convinced that junior high, now called middle school, is where J.Q. Fanihi was born. You see, I'd say something in class and everybody would start laughing. This was when I learned about how powerful recognition was. I also learned that recognition made you want more of it, so I'd continue to say funny stuff. Then, I'd see the "U" on the card.

Oh, you were the kid who got E, E, E, E all the way down? Yeah, we had words for kids like you — but I digress.

There was also a space for the teacher to make a comment, and this is where some of them made points. I'd see things like "Disruptive!"... "Lacks self-control"..."Thinks he's the class comedian." I can promise you my mother wasn't amused at my "recognition."

On that final performance review I mentioned, my boss had put down a comment which I felt was misleading, unfair, and totally subjective. I questioned him on it, and asked him to remove it. He declined, saying it was how he felt and he didn't need to justify anything to me. That's when I knew the review was just a game, and why many of the workers sucked up to the guy. I didn't do that.  
(Con't.)

Report cards and annual performance reviews are snapshots of where you are at a given point in time. That's all. My problem with all of it is that neither should be judged as an indicator of the future.

More than that, the review and report card should be the beginning of the conversation. "Okay, here is where I am and here's where I want to be, where you want me to be...so how do we work together to make that happen?"

Teachers occasionally meet with parents to discuss student progress, and that can be helpful.

In the workplace, most HR departments are buried in regulatory issues, new initiatives, and general busywork, that they don't have time to deal with individual worker development.

Each manager must be coached to become a superstar at conducting one-on-one meetings, and working with employees to build skills and grow. If it doesn't happen at the supervisory level, it's unlikely to happen at all.

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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