

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



946 Are You Nervous in Public? Hey, Me too!

Are you nervous in public situations, like meeting people in groups? Is the idea of networking a scary thought? How about public speaking? No way? I'm right there with you. I'm Jerry Roberts, and let's chew on that, next, on The Extra Point.

In high school, outside of a few close friends, I was nervous around people. I wasn't much good in social activities.

On weekends, I would caddy for golfers at a country club, and things began to change.

After two years of lugging golf clubs for rich folks, including some Hollywood celebrities, I had been transformed from a total introvert to a semi-introvert. It was progress, but I was still a bit nervous around people I didn't know.

When college started, I took a job delivering newspapers. It didn't pay a lot, and one day my supervisor asked if I wanted to make extra money doing collections on overdue accounts.

Collections? Me? I told him there was no way I could do that. He lied to me and told me it was easy work, and some guys were making \$20.00 for a morning's effort. The minimum wage was less than two bucks at the time, so making twenty in a morning was pretty attractive.

I got assigned to a rough area of town, where nobody was interested in paying for a newspaper. I had doors slammed on me, and I was cursed at. I collected nothing in four hours.

However, one very nice lady asked me to come back the next day as she would have the money. She asked me about school, gave me cookies, and made the morning end well. The next day I did collect from several people, had more doors slammed, and made a few bucks.

Over the next couple of years, I took various side hustle jobs like handing out flyers and

conducting street surveys. Most people ignore you, but you do have some good conversations.

I sold subscriptions for the newspaper, going door-to-door and giving out a set of steak knives for a three-month subscription. More doors got slammed. More people were angry for being disturbed. Yet, some folks were nice and many subscribed.

Again, I didn't make a lot of money, but it still beat the minimum wage. Even better, I began to get more and more comfortable with knocking on doors and talking to strangers.

This kind of activity is filed under the category of "cold calling," which includes visiting people who haven't invited you, or calling them on the phone.

To most people, cold calling is scary and to be avoided at all costs. I once felt that way, too, but grew to enjoy doing both.

It's still the fastest way to get appointments to talk to people about your business, and I still do it, even in the COVID era.

Yes, you get a lot of rejection. However, if you have a cheerful attitude and show respect, most of them treat you well.

I don't bring this up to try to convince anyone to start doing cold calls, although I think it would help them as it helped me.

Here's the point. I've done radio shows, TV, made speeches and presentations to groups, sold things, given trainings, and generally been in the public eye for most of my life — and I am still an introvert.

I had a horrible stuttering problem in my teens, and a fear of talking in public.

(Con't.)

I've spoken here about my mother telling me that my career aspirations were wrong, because she felt I lacked the ability to communicate well.

By doing some things I'd never done before, some of them a little scary, at least for me, I was able to shake some of the worries.

I still get nervous when I talk to a group, and I've come to accept that I always will. It's okay, and I think that actually makes me prepare better.

If you have the kind of fears I've dealt with, I believe you can help yourself by facing them, and just doing something totally different than what you're used to...something in front of people.

It doesn't matter if you fail, just do it. What you want to do is prove to yourself that you can, and it will become easier.

Take small steps and build up your confidence. Do it long enough, and it will change your life.

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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