

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



962 The Power of Acting like “Then” is “Now”

It was a piece of advice that I didn't fully understand at the time, but would pay off for me in later years. I'm Jerry Roberts, and maybe this advice will work for you or somebody you know. It's coming next, on The Extra Point.

I was 19, and looking for ways to make money while I was going to school. I was working full time for Big Ed in the fleet vehicle operation, but I needed more because I was trying to buy a car.

I don't remember who said it, but I was told that if I wanted a higher position in life, I should carry myself as if I already had it. I understood the words, but I didn't have any practical way to apply those words at that time. I was new with Ed's unit, and wasn't thinking of working my way up the organization.

So, I answered an ad in Playboy magazine, to become what they referred to as “Playboy's Man On Campus.” It was generic, but seemed to indicate I could earn good part-time money for just a few hours of work per month in my spare time. They would send me the details, and I waited.

While looking for the material to show up, I got to thinking about how I dressed. In my first semester of college, it was generally jeans and a shirt, nothing special. If I was going to be the man on campus for a national brand, maybe I should think about raising my game a little.

I scraped together a little over a hundred bucks, which is over \$500 in today's money, and I bought some decent clothes. Then, I went to a salon to get my haircut, not the old guy on the corner who had cut my hair. Overall, the new look — hair and clothes combined — changed my image.

I got compliments on the new style, and I felt it was a positive thing, a look befitting my soon-to-be reality, new position with the magazine.

A month later, one of my professors told me that the dean of admissions wanted to see me. Why would the dean want to see me?

When I got to his office, he said, “So, tell me about this job you have with Playboy.” My jaw dropped, as I asked, “How did you know about that?”

It turned out the magazine didn't send materials to your house, but sent them in care of the college you attended. The dean wound up with my package, which was mysteriously opened.

The long and the short of it was that if I was going to try to sell subscriptions on campus, it was a no-go. The school had a rule against solicitation. It was *game over* before it ever got started. No extra money. A wasted effort from that standpoint.

However, the dean did acknowledge that I had been dressing better, and probably would have made a good “man on campus” for somebody. He gave me a little wink as I left, with parting words, “Don't let me catch you selling anything.”

I had decided to improve myself a little, to be the image of the position I was hoping to get, though I had no idea what that really was.

Years later, when I first became a manager, I had zero experience in dealing with workers, and just tried to “channel” my memories of Big Ed, to act like him. Though I was extremely nervous, I thought about how Ed had done his job, how he walked around, how he talked to people, and more.

I didn't try to copy him, but I wanted to do my job in the same spirit he did. It helped me to present a more confident face to employees, and helped them do better. I acted like I was a successful manager, though many times I was clueless in what was going on. (Con't.)

I am a believer in the concept of acting the part before you get the part. If you want to be a supervisor, start showing accountability, and contribute more. Give management a glimpse of what you're going to be if they promote you.

If you're in management, and hope to one day make the leap to CEO, ask yourself, "How can I show CEO-like characteristics and attitude, so others see it in me?"

Some would label this "fake it until you make it," but I see it as more. To me, it's projecting yourself in a role and acquiring the mentality needed to win it.

Even if you don't get what you're after, or don't get it right away, it's still a win for you. You will have grown in the process, and those around you will notice.

One day, you will get what you're after. You'll get it because you were able to visualize it long before it was yours, and you raised your game to meet the challenge. Make it yours, before it's yours.

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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