

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



968 Not Asking the Right Questions Can be Painful

Success in life and career is certainly made easier when you have the right answers when you need them. However, getting the right answers is usually determined by asking the right questions. When you don't, that can be a problem. I'm Jerry Roberts, and I've got a painful example of this coming next, on The Extra Point.

I played on my high school football team in my senior year. Three days before our first game, I came up with an upper thigh strain. It hurt to walk, let alone run around.

One of the assistant coaches was also my health teacher, and he knew a lot about football. He was a big man, extremely strong, and had played in college. I was sure he'd had his share of minor injuries, and would know what to do.

The lesson I would soon learn taught me the value of not just asking questions, but asking the right questions.

I asked the coach if he could help with the thigh strain. The better question was, "What would you suggest I do in order to be ready for the game on Friday?" Since I wasn't specific, he roared, "Yes, absolutely, I can help. I'm going to fix you right up!"

He told me to take off my football pants, get up on a table, and he'd examine the thigh. He poked it a little and asked where the pain was, and then made his diagnosis. "We can let this go for a week, you'll miss the game, but you'll be okay by the next one. Or, I can heat up the leg, get you healed faster, and you'll probably play on Friday."

Here's where I should have asked, "Coach, exactly what do you mean by 'heat up the leg'?" I didn't ask that question. I just nodded and said to go ahead. I had a feeling I should have asked another question when I saw him

smile. I didn't ask.

The coach brought out a huge container and opened it. Inside was an orange ointment of some kind, but there was no label on the container. He reached in and grabbed a big handful of whatever it was and began to rub it on my injured leg.

I quickly understood what he meant by heating up the leg. This "ointment" turned out to be some industrial strength version of what you might know as "Tiger Balm." You rub it in and it penetrates into a sore muscle.

It was hot, and getting hotter. Then, the coach began to wrap my thigh. Not with a gauze bandage or any kind of cloth, or even a flexible ace bandage.

He wrapped it with thick rolls of athletic tape which has a strong adhesive and sticks to the skin. About 12 inches of my thigh was totally wrapped with this tape, and without any air flow, my thigh was on fire from the balm. I should have asked the question, "Coach, do I want to shave the leg first?" I didn't ask.

Other players were staring at me, and saying, "Dude, why didn't you shave your leg?" One said, "Can I be around when he pulls that off of you?" and then laughed hysterically.

Well, the heat went away and after a couple of days the leg did feel better. The day before the game, I went into the locker room and the coach said the bandage had to come off. I got on the table and he began to unwrap the leg. Several yards of tape came off, and then he reached the skin level.

He said, "Take a breath." While I did, he yanked on the end of the bandage and sounds came out of me that I didn't know I was capable of.
(Con't.)

I looked at the part of the tape he'd exposed, and it was full of the hair that had been a part of my leg just moments before.

The coach said, "Are you okay?" Before I could answer, he yanked again and that noise came out again.

He only had about a fourth of the bandage removed, then he said, "Well, I got you started, you can finish the job," and he walked away. Everybody in the locker room broke up in laughter. I found out I wasn't the first person ever to go through such a procedure. Apparently, it was a ritual of sorts.

Me having to pull the bandage off on my own likely doubled the discomfort, and asking the right questions might have saved me from some of that pain. That said, I finally got it off, and the leg was okay. It was mostly hairless, but otherwise in good shape and I did play in the game.

Do yourself a favor. Don't ask questions that only scratch the surface. Learn to ask questions that get you specific answers. Not doing that can prove painful.

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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