

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1014 Hard-Earned Career Lessons — Part 2

Today, we pick up the conversation on hard-earned career lessons that could make a difference for you. That's coming up next, on The Extra Point.

A couple of days ago, we talked about three lessons I've learned over my career that have made a difference, for me and other folks, too. In order, they are:

1. Decide what success means to you. Once you do that, make sure you don't lose track of it. Do the things that will lead to you achieving that vision of success.

2. Avoid the perfection trap. As we said, *done is better than perfect*. You can do work at a very high level and get things done.

3. Chart your path to personal development. It should match up to your vision of success.

Today, three more that can elevate you in the eyes of your employer.

4. Don't run from adversity, run towards it. An organization needs people to step up, not shrink when times get tough. Most people will wait and watch to see how things go. This is the deer in the headlights look.

What would be your manager's reaction if you said, "Hey boss, I know you're being squeezed with people being out. What if I can finish what I need to do by lunch today, then give you my afternoon so you can unload some things off your plate that need to get done?"

Adversity demands flexibility, patience, greater understanding, and the ability to encourage others who may not handle difficult days as well as you do. You don't need a title to be this kind of leader, and you don't need anyone's permission. Just decide to step up.

5. Look for ways to make improvements, large and small. Make a list of things that need to be changed at your workplace. This can be office chairs that give more support, or better software. You might describe a system or process that needs updating. Maybe people require training. Whatever it is, make your list like this:

Draw three columns on a piece of paper. In the first column, list all the items that you can do for free or for just a few dollars; and won't require a great deal of time or effort. We call these things the "low-hanging fruit."

The second column is for improvements that will require more money and time, but you believe should be done soon.

Column three is for the bigger, more expensive, more time-consuming projects. Many factors can influence when, or if, these items become a priority.

In any case, column three will always require the agreement and funding of senior leaders. You may or may not need that level of approval for column two.

In good companies with managers who have their heads screwed on straight, you shouldn't have to beg to go after the low-hanging fruit. Decide what you can change for the better, both quickly and for little or no money — and just do it.

If you've never done anything like this before and you're nervous, then approach your boss and say, "I can fix this (whatever it is), in three hours and for 15 bucks," and explain why you want to do it.

(Con't.)

After your first success, show your boss the list of simple improvements you want to make, and ask if he/she will approve a spending limit for you. "Or," you say, "If you've got the time, I can come and get your okay for every little job on the list." I did that once and quickly got my spending limit.

6. The last thing for today, and I've said it a number of times over the past four years. Be a dispenser of enthusiasm. Have a smile for people, a kind word, and exhibit some energy.

Enthusiasm speaks volumes about the kind of person you are. Enthusiasm makes others want to be around you.

If you add enthusiasm to your willingness to work on improvements, and to step up in adverse times, I believe you'll be seen as someone who delivers high value to your organization.

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.

###

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

