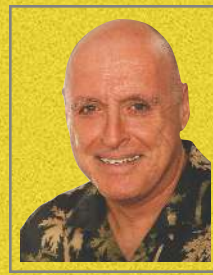


# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 1024 How Come Johnny's Not Special Anymore?

What makes you special? Before you answer that, let me ask it another way. What makes you special in the eyes of others? I'm Jerry Roberts and let's talk about the value of being seen as special, next, on The Extra Point.

Let's answer the question I asked a moment ago. What makes you special in the eyes of others? The second question is, have you been able to leverage this specialness to your advantage?

We'll start in the studio with Real Joe, Mana, and then Ray.

A lot of people have been told how special they are, pretty much for their entire lives. One group that immediately comes to mind is the Millennials. That is obviously a generality, and does not mean all Millennials.

However, the concept — true or not — exists that the Millennial generation was a bit spoiled in that respect.

Through no fault of their own, many people in this age group — born from 1981 to 1996 — grew up getting that “special” message from their mothers, their aunts, etc. So, what's the problem?

Well-meaning as those adults may have been, this continual desire to build up the self-esteem of their children in this way, may have had a negative impact on many of them.

I'm not saying it's wrong or bad to tell a kid that he or she is special. I do believe it's much better to tell them why and how something they did was special.

We want to tie that “specialness” to a particular act or achievement. This adds value to the person, that they did something that was special. They *earned* recognition.

When you tell a child that he/she is special, and many of us have done it, it's really to let them know they're loved. That's good so far, as a kid can't get that message enough.

Let's go a step further. If we're specific about why we think they're special, that adds context and answers the question, “Why am I special.”

Before we go on, for those who would inject that love is unconditional and doesn't need a reason, I get it.

However, being specific to the child is done for the same reason I say it's also important to be specific to workers when giving them praise. It's much more powerful to tell someone the reason for the recognition, instead of saying, “Good job” every time.

Being specific with the child and tying praise to an action they took — which is based upon a decision they made — has an extra layer of impact over “You're special.”

John Maxwell wrote a book called *Talent is Never Enough*. The premise of the book is that we can have oodles of talent, and we can be told that we're talented, but without a plan and supreme effort, a chunk of that talent will not be realized.

Maxwell believes, as do I, that the key thing is to teach the value of hard work, commitment, and achievement. When I played baseball as a kid, we didn't receive participation trophies. What a player got was a big trophy if his/her team won the championship. If you placed second, the trophy was smaller.

There is value in participating, and at the annual baseball league banquet, all players from all the teams were recognized.

(Con't.)

However, the big trophies and the spotlight went to the teams that won more games.

Adult life, especially working life, is like that. You're considered special and you get more rewards if you win more games. You may not agree with how that works, but there's no doubt that's how it works.

It's a rude awakening for someone who's been told how special they are, when confronted by a demanding boss who expects results and may not freely give praise.

Does that mean that Johnny and Mary are no longer special? No. It just means that they'll need to generate value for the team in order to hear words like that.

The next time you tell someone they're special, whether it's someone you supervise, or a peer, or your boss, or a child in your family, make sure you add the why and the how to it.

When you do that, see if they don't light up a bit brighter, glowing in the specifics of why you feel that way.

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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