

The Extra Point

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1039 Being Fired for the Right Reasons

Raise your hand if you've ever been fired from a job. How many times have you been fired? Once, twice...more? I've been let go from a company no less than six times. In every case, except for the first, I did the right thing. I'm Jerry Roberts, and we'll dig into the sordid details of my employment record, next on The Extra Point.

How many times have you been fired? Has it been six, like me? Six? Good grief, was I just a bad worker? No. Was I a behavioral problem? No. Did I go to the mat with management over important stuff. Yes. Would I do it again. Yes.

I believe that when you sign on with a company, you give them the best you've got...every day.

I believe that when you hold up your end of the bargain, you have every right to expect the company to do the same. When they don't, I think you have every right to call them on it.

The second time I got fired...oh, what about the first time? I'm going to hold that one until the end.

The second time I got fired was over speeding. I was a courier, delivering company mail in a Ford Econoline van, equipped with a thing connected to the engine that logged the vehicle's speed throughout my route. It was a bad system, likely inaccurate, and it was hard to keep the van between 50-55 mph the whole way, as the boss wanted.

After several warnings and being chewed out for going a couple of miles-per-hour over the limit — and me complaining about the setup, I got canned. By that time, what had started out as a great job, had become an ordeal, and the firing came as I was looking for a new job.

As I later learned, a couple of other drivers then quit over the things I was vocal about,

and they finally changed the system.

Firing numbers three and four were in radio, both over money. I won't name the players to protect the guilty. In both cases, I was pulling 14 hour days and was responsible for or connected to about 70% of the revenue coming in.

Both stations handled money poorly, and without giving up too many details, I was impacted by their actions and I challenged the owners. I knew I'd be hired by another station in both cases if things jumped the tracks, and that's what happened.

Out of six firings, I was on solid ground in five. The sixth, which is to say the first, is coming.

Firing five. The owner broke an agreement with a client and entered into a simultaneous deal with his competitor. I'm at the dinner table, listening to this go down, thinking, "Oh boy, this is going to be interesting." Well, the first client found out and things got loud. My boss told me to lie about it, to say it wasn't true. I declined to do that.

He was furious and fired me, then blamed the whole mess on me, that I cooked up the scheme. Unreal. Of all the times I was let go from a job, this was the one I was most happy about.

Firing six was back in radio. I tried to help a station climb out of last place in the market, but found myself in a daily fight with the station management over music and why I was doing what I did. It was frustrating for everyone, and I had started the transition to my own company at the time I got the call. Again, it was a relief.

You give the job everything you've got and try to deliver for your employer in every way possible. That's what I believe.
(Con't.)

Okay, now to that first firing. The only one I deserved.

It was my very first job, other than delivering the weekly free newspaper.

I was 17, and signed on with the supermarket at the end of the block I lived on. It was perfect.

I had a three-minute walk to work after I got home from school, or the weekend. Even better, I got to date this cute cashier.

The job? Bagging groceries. I was good, I was fast. I never put the eggs in the bottom of the bag, or the bread. I was careful, and polite.

However, tomatoes were my undoing. Somehow, on two occasions, the cherry tomatoes — which were placed on top of the bag, inexplicably slid down to the bottom, and didn't survive the trip home — or so I was told.

The customer complained, the manager barked. The second time it happened, he showed me the door.

I was crushed. Not as bad as the tomatoes, but you can feel my pain.

Being fired is no fun. Doing your best and delivering results, keeping your promises, and fighting the good fight makes it all go down easier.

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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