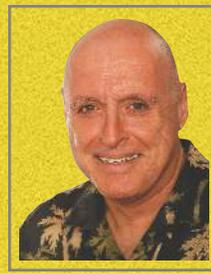


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1092 Waiting For the Other Shoe to Drop

By every measure imaginable, Peter had the kind of life anyone would be happy with. The trouble was, he didn't seem happy. That didn't make sense. When you hear the reason he wasn't happy, I think you'll be surprised. I'm Jerry Roberts and I'll tell the story, next, on the The Extra Point.

Let me start off by saying I didn't know Peter, I only knew of him. One of my neighbors in L.A. worked with him, so I got the story second hand. When I finally had all of the pieces of the puzzle together, it had personal impact for me.

Peter was a department manager at a small manufacturing company in the San Fernando Valley area of Los Angeles County. He had been with the company over 10 years, and in his position for about four years. My neighbor worked for him.

Peter was a good manager, and his team was as good as any at his company. He regularly received praise from his boss, the owner of the business. He had every reason to be all smiles when it came to his role, and his future there.

That said, Peter didn't smile very often. He had trouble accepting praise from his employer. He'd always mutter that he and the team could do better.

My neighbor Rebecca liked Peter and said he was a good, kind, and caring manager. However, she also noticed that he just didn't ever seem to be happy. He looked nervous, if anything.

Nobody could figure out what Peter's trouble was. The better things got at work, the more down and jittery he seemed.

Rebecca was a tough girl and as direct as they come. She told me she walked into his office and said, "Peter, are you sick?" No, not sick. "You got marriage problems, kid problems,

financial problems?" No, none of that. "Did your dog die?" No, the dog was fine.

She threw up her hands and said, "Well, then I don't get it. You've been walking around this place like you're in mourning, and you tell me that everything is good. We're all worried about you. What's going on?"

Peter looked up at her, gave a long pause, and began to tell a story. As he was growing up, and no matter how good things were going for the family, his mother would always say, "Don't get too happy. Nothing lasts forever, and that other shoe is going to drop."

When his father was promoted to foreman the mom had said those words, and within three months the company hit a bad spell and he got laid off. It took him two years to find full-time work again.

When Peter's older brother was flying high in his business and had bought his first house, the mother told him to remember what happened to his father. Six months later, the economy went sour and he eventually closed down.

Peter told Rebecca that his mom had told him the same thing, and he figured that it was only a matter of time before things fell apart for him as well — that the other shoe would drop.

Rebecca was stunned. No matter what she said about we have to stay positive, and just because it happened to the father and brother, didn't mean it would happen to him, she was unable to break through.

It was almost as if Peter had been brainwashed and programed to be miserable. When he should be happy and upbeat, he was down. It was like he lived behind this wall of gloom.

(Con't.)

I moved away and never connected with Rebecca again, so I don't know what became of Peter. This week, recalling the story, I had a strong feeling I should say that we, as parents, need to be careful about what we say to our kids.

Are we filling their heads with positive words and images that will serve them well and help them to navigate life's tough moments...or are we needlessly burdening them with some of the negatives we may have grown up with?

Let's be straight. The good things our parents told us are still inside you and me. Sadly, so is the bad stuff.

My son is 17, and I spend every waking moment trying to make sure that someday he's not apologizing to my grandchild for something bad that came out of his mouth — that I put there. And it's a challenge.

Can you relate?

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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