

# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 1149 They Didn't Know Joe Had it in Him

It was a small company, maybe 25 employees. Times were tough, but the team was hanging on. The owner thought they could do better, and brought in a consultant to discuss motivating the employees. They went over the performance figures for each worker. I'm Jerry Roberts and we'll see where that led them, next on The Extra Point.

To simplify the story, we'll say the company was in the business of producing widgets. They had long been a leading widget maker in their community.

The consultant was looking at the production numbers for each worker for the past year, and noticed that a man named Joe was always at the bottom of the list. While everyone else was producing at least 12 widgets a day, Joe produced six. In fact, Joe had always produced six. Never five or seven, always six widgets a day.

The owner replied: "Oh yeah, Joe. Everybody loves him. He does barbecues for the team, and always has a big smile. Still, his production has been a problem for a long time. Maybe we should let him go and hire a replacement who can do better."

The consultant made some suggestions to the owner, who nodded his approval, then called Joe into his office.

"Joe," he said, "you've been here three years and we care for you. However, your daily production has been low. Mary on your left makes 12 widgets a day, and Tom on your right also does 12. In fact, everybody in the building is making at least 12 a day. Joe, do you think you could do any better than six?"

Joe had a look of surprise on his face. He paused, then said, "Well, maybe."

The next day, Joe came in at 8:00 a.m., and instead of chatting with several of the other

workers, he went to his station and got busy. By noon, he had created four widgets. He did another four in the afternoon, for a total of eight.

The owner came by just before closing time, and said, "Joe, how did you do today?"

Joe said, "Boss, I made eight widgets today." The owner smiled and said, "Joe, that's great. I knew you could do more than six. He saw that Joe seemed happy, and the owner then said, "Joe, do you have any more in the tank, do you think you could do even better?"

Joe looked up and said, "Maybe."

The next day, Joe came in at 8:00 a.m., and again, instead of chatting with the other workers, he went to his station and got busy. By noon, Joe had created five widgets. He did another five in the afternoon, for a total of 10.

The owner came by just before closing time, and said, "Joe, how did you do today?"

Joe said, "Boss, I made 10 widgets today." The owner smiled and said, "10 widgets? Joe, that's fantastic! He saw Joe's big smile, and the owner then said, "Joe, do you have any more in the tank, do you think you could do even better than 10 widgets?"

Joe thought for a moment, then looked at his boss and said, "Maybe."

The next day, Joe came in at 8:00 a.m., and again, went to his workstation and got busy. By noon, Joe had created seven widgets and was half-done with the eighth. After lunch he finished it and did another seven in the afternoon, for a total of 15.

The owner came by just before closing time, and said, "Joe, how did you do today?"

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Joe was tired but gave the owner a big grin and said, "Boss, I made 15 widgets today."

The owner shouted out, "15 widgets? Joe, that's amazing! In just days you've gone from six to 15 widgets per shift. I'm so proud of the way you've made this change to a much higher level of production." The owner then said, "Joe, do you think you could do 15 widgets every day?"

Joe looked at the owner and said, "I'm tired because I'm not used to this pace yet, boss, but maybe."

What's the point of all this?

"Joes" are found in a lot of workplaces. Maybe yours. They've been locked into doing work at a certain pace, a certain level of production, and it's possible nobody has spent much time to encourage small and steady improvements. They may not be aware how you feel about their overall contribution.

What if you asked your Joe to do just a bit more? What if you worked with them to steadily raise their production?

In our example, Joe went from six widgets a day, to 15, a 150% increase. You may not get similar results with your lower volume workers.

However, what if Joe had only done seven widgets a day, instead of six? That would still be a 16% increase. What if you got 16% more production from people on your team — would that make a difference?

Not everyone is a go-getter and big producer. Some people aren't geared that way. That said, You just might be surprised how much more someone can do if you focus them the right 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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