

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1168 Getting Traction for Leaders Without Titles

Last week, we discussed the idea of being a leader even if you don't have a leader's title. It's a concept that sounds good, but is hard for some people to gain traction with. "Okay, I don't have a title and I guess I'm willing to be a leader, but how do we get that leadership thing going?" I'm Jerry Roberts, and that's what we'll talk about, next on The Extra Point.

When I say that anybody can be a leader, even if they don't have a fancy title, sometimes I get looks of disbelief, like "that will work for others but not for me," etc. That's wrong, and I'll prove it right now.

One thing a leader should do is encourage people to expand their capabilities, try new things, and stay with a task even if they find it to be a struggle. A couple of big chunks of encouragement, wrapped around some help or training, can make a world of difference.

Anybody can give encouragement. All you need is the desire to help someone. That's attitude, no title or advanced degree needed. This is a decision you make. So, before we get to anything else, I've proven that you can be a leader if you want to.

I was in the grocery store on Friday, looking for an item my wife wanted. I spotted a guy who was stocking items on the shelves, and I asked him if the store had the product. What I expected was him to tell me which aisle it was on, and I'd go find it.

Instead, he stood up and said he'd take me there. I said it wasn't necessary, that I knew he was busy. His response was, "No trouble, I'm happy to do it, sir," and off we went.

Pretty good customer service, right? It was also a good leadership move. You see, there was another employee, quite a bit younger, standing a few feet away, who took it all in. Yes, it was good service and I appreciated it as a customer. When I saw that other worker I

had an even greater appreciation. I don't know if the stocker had any idea that he was showing leadership, but I understood it that way.

Sometimes, we can display leadership without making it seem like we're delivering a lesson. You can categorize this under "actions speak louder than words."

Leadership isn't always about power and some level of authority. It's about the ability to focus on someone else who needs the kind of help we can provide, and showing them how to advance a couple of steps forward.

I've known veteran flight attendants who took new ones under their wings, if you'll pardon the unintended pun, and poured years of their hard-earned experience into them, getting them up to speed much faster. That's being a leader.

My mom was a waitress in some very busy restaurants. She and other older servers would help the new cooks when they were hired on, giving advice on menu adjustments and the reality of how the kitchen worked. Back in the day, that was called "learning the ropes." If people offered and you were open to advice, that learning came faster. The waitresses weren't told to do it, it was a decision they made to help a coworker. A *leadership* decision.

All this is about helping people or encouraging them, which is just one facet of leading. That said, when you help someone see that they can win, they generally develop a much greater desire to win. That benefits them and any team they're a part of.

Another situation is when a manager is fired or leaves a company, and there is a long period of time before a replacement is hired. I've seen people assume parts of the vacant leadership role out of necessity. Again, nobody asked them to do it. They simply saw the need and did what had to be done. (Con't.)

What do you know that could benefit someone else? Who needs to know what you know?
Are you willing to make a leadership decision to step up and make a difference?

You don't need the title. You may not know everything you'll ultimately have to know. Neither one of those issues will hold you back.

The only real issue is, are you willing to be the leader that somebody, maybe right now, needs you to be?

If you are, you'll figure it out and someone will be better off when you do.

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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