

# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 1173 What is the Best Predictor of a Leader's Success?

Why do some leaders regularly succeed and others struggle? Is it just that the successful ones are smarter than the ones who don't do as well? Do they have more courage? Do they make better decisions? Do they present a clearer and more dynamic vision? I'm Jerry Roberts, and while those factors no doubt contribute to success, there is one thing in the leader's personal toolbox that decides outcomes more than any other. That's coming next on The Extra Point.

Cornell University studied 72 executives at public and private companies, all within the annual revenue range of \$50 million to \$5 billion. Researchers were out to determine what would best predict a leader's success.

What they found has value for leaders and managers everywhere, including Guam. The research showed that the number one key to leadership success is high self-awareness.

We hear a lot about self-awareness, but what does it really mean for me and my work? We don't want to overthink this and get lost in corporate buzzwords. Another well-known term for self-awareness is "know thyself."

What am I good at? In what areas do I need to get better? Which strengths can I strengthen? Which weaknesses would I be wise to invest in to prevent future issues, and which do I ignore — either because they don't move the bar much one way or the other, or can I get someone else to step up and handle things when we get into areas where I'm weakest?

This is where you marry up critical thinking to self-awareness, making the right decision for the benefit of all concerned.

The study showed that high self-awareness leads to better team performance. This is true when the leader trains the team what it means to be self-aware, and that it's okay to admit that we aren't perfect, and need help in certain areas from time to time.

When teams are self-aware, they collaborate better and come to rely upon and appreciate each other more. They show resilience, more confidence, and adapt better when times are tougher and more stressful.

Another study from DePaul University showed that teams with less self-aware individuals made worse decisions, collaborated less, and didn't handle conflict as well.

In her book *Insight*, author Tasha Church wrote that self-awareness is now and will be the number one necessary skill for leaders for generations to come. Church cited a large-scale self-awareness study where most of the participants believed they were self-aware, but only 13% actually were.

We've been talking about leaders, but we have to understand that workers at all levels would be better off if they were self-aware. Let's step out of the workplace for a moment. Do you think that parents would do a better job in raising children if they were more self-aware?

So, the vast majority of people feel they are self-aware? One question. If that were true, would we have the kinds of problems we do?

Self-awareness is understanding who you are and the effect your personality has on other people. It gets over into the topic of emotional intelligence, and the ability to recognize and control our thoughts, feelings, and actions in real time.

One more thing, and this is a little gift to my friends at SHRM and all the HR folks in Guam. A higher level of self-awareness among an organization's leaders — and others — makes it easier to retain your talent. People want to stick around when they're treated better. The leader who is self-aware will also spend more time focusing on the needs of workers, and developing them.

(Con't.)

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Higher retention ultimately leads to lower talent costs, and that usually signals higher profits.

Again, the original study focused on organizations that generated at least \$50 million annually, but it applies equally well to you and your employer, whatever your revenue is.

Self-awareness is the path we all need to be on, if we want success with the challenges we're facing and will face in the years to come.

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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