

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1238 How to Make Your Job More Meaningful — Part 1

I wrote my first training course almost 20 years ago. I still offer that training today, and one of the areas we discuss is helping workers find greater meaning and satisfaction in their work. Meaningful work is not a new concept, and it is important to revisit its principles on a regular basis. I'm Jerry Roberts and let's chat this up next, on The Extra Point.

I read an article by Tamara Myles a couple of days ago, and it got me thinking about the topic of meaningful work, why we pursue it and why it matters.

Myles bills herself as a positive psychology researcher, and her definition of productivity has never been about doing more in less time. Instead, she sees productivity as doing more of what matters.

She believes that we are most productive when we do work that feels meaningful — and that it's possible to make any job more meaningful. Let's see if you agree with her reasoning.

Myles believes what it is that motivates our productivity is important. It isn't the same for everyone.

"Earning a paycheck," said Myles, "isn't always a very compelling reason to do great work. Neither is impressing a hard-to-please boss or the promise of a promotion." These are short-term productivity motivators, and the reward and good feelings we get from that will come and go quickly.

The Great Resignation and Quiet Quitting movements have people questioning the "why" behind their work. When we come to the conclusion that our work doesn't have much meaning, it's difficult to do our best.

On the other hand, research shows that when we find our work meaningful, performance improves by 33%. Further, Myles claimed that research shows there is a significant dollar

value for increased productivity, amounting to many thousands per individual.

Depending upon the individual and the work they do, that could be thousands per year, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands and even more.

To unlock that level of excellence, our work must be meaningful. Over the years, studies have found that the vast majority of workers would take a more meaningful job elsewhere, even if it paid less. I've seen the results of these studies before, and the question that is not asked is how much less people would agree to for moving to the more meaningful job.

I've asked that exact question of many people and the general consensus is that 10 percent wouldn't hurt too much, with 20 percent being the top for that. Anything beyond that and the economics wouldn't work.

Still, if one of your good workers would give up 10 percent of their pay in order to find a job that meant more to them, it's an issue you would do well to think about. Your question is, "How can I help make people feel that what we do and what they do is meaningful?"

Another question to ask is, "Can every job be meaningful?"

Are there jobs where meaning doesn't matter? If so, for whom is there no meaning — the one doing the job, or the one hiring that person? I hope you'll be doing a job today that has meaning for you. More on this topic tomorrow.

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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