

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1239 How to Make Your Job More Meaningful — Part 2

Helping workers find greater meaning and satisfaction in their work. That's our focus again today, with part two of our conversation. I'm Jerry Roberts and that's next, on The Extra Point.

Discovering more meaning in our job. It's a good thing. Knowing that we are part of an effort that delivers value for someone anchors us to the realization that we are a contributing member of the workforce. That kind of thing checks off some important boxes for people. It relates to identity. We identify as a member of a team that others look to for a product or service.

By the way, you can download the transcript for part one of this conversation at: guamtraining.com; see transcript #1238.

Yesterday, I mentioned an article by Tamara Myles a positive psychology researcher, whose definition of productivity is doing more of things that matter.

Myles believes that we are most productive when we do work that feels meaningful — and that it's possible to make any job more meaningful.

She makes the claim that when we find our work meaningful, performance improves by 33%. Further, that research shows there is a significant dollar value on the increased productivity per each worker.

So, who is this productivity really about? Who has bought into the process?

Myles discussed a healthcare worker who described themselves as a "healer", and whose role is doing everything they can to promote patient health and healing. Let's get you involved. A. Is this a doctor? Or B. Is this a nurse? What's your answer? The answer is C. A hospital janitor — and this is not a fluke.

Yale professor Amy Wrzesniewski did a study of hospital custodians and discovered that about one-third of them changed their mindset about the work to find meaning in it. For some, cleaning was just a job. But others saw their role as critical to the patient's healing process.

These janitors got to know the patients and their families, often going the extra mile to make them more comfortable. They came to find their work to be deeply meaningful.

I love the story of President Kennedy touring the Cape Canaveral launch facilities in Florida, some time after putting America on a course to place men on the moon before 1970.

He was walking around and came upon a custodian and asked the man, "What do you do here?" The janitor responded, "Oh, Mr. President, I'm putting a man on the moon!"

That man knew that he had a role in helping to achieve a large goal, just like the janitors in hospitals do.

Janitors, dishwashers, landscapers, security guards, front desk clerks, maids, servers, cashiers, grocery baggers, sales assistants, front line supervisors who get dumped on and don't get a lot of love.

Obviously, I can only list a small number of jobs in this example, but you get the idea. If you work in a position where you're treated almost as an afterthought, then I'm talking to you.

Find the connection to what you do to the larger picture. It's not just what you do, it's what that means for others. That's the true value of your job. That's where it gets real, where it becomes meaningful.

(Con't.)

We'll conclude our conversation on meaningful work 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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