

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1249 No Time to be a Mentor? – Here's Your Answer

You've heard of mentoring and you know you can help someone, but you don't think you have the time. What if I said you could make it happen in 5-10 minutes? I'm Jerry Roberts and today we explore micro-mentorships. That's next on The Extra Point.

Mentoring has proven to be a powerful tool that can help people progress at a rate that is far faster than normal. Both the mentor and the one being mentored — the mentee — get value from the experience.

For years, I have encouraged senior leaders to carve out spots on their schedule and parcel them out to eager workers who hunger to get ahead, or who might develop such a hunger if given a little special attention.

Among those senior leaders, there is often a concern raised about the time commitment needed to get results. I've heard them say, "I barely have enough time to get my existing work done. I can't add another 5-10 hours a week, or even in a month."

I've got good news for both potential mentors with stuffed schedules, and workers who want to be mentored. It's the micro-mentorship, and it can be done in 5-10 minutes a week.

If you say you don't have 5-10 minutes to help an individual and your organization improve, then I want to see your calendar. I've never met anybody who couldn't find 5-10 minutes, if they felt it could bring a good return.

So, why would you want to be a mentor? 1) You have a burning desire to help others grow in their career. 2) You have a burning desire to identify people who can be part of your next round of promotions, or who might be keys to your succession plan. Ahh, the plot thickens.

You might ask, "Jerry, wouldn't it seem like an ego trip if I tell people I want to mentor them?" I wouldn't see it that way, but if you're worried about that, have your office manager quietly

promote the concept to eligible candidates. "We're looking to identify new leaders in the company who want to step up and be available for new opportunities. This includes some one-on-one time with Mr./Ms. Big, and I think that will be a huge help. I've got a slot open, can I put you down for it?" Easy-peasy.

How might the sessions go? Mentees should be prepared to ask one key question about career guidance, managing, leading, strategy, or some other area. One major question each time. The mentor answers it. Hopefully, this leads to the mentee implementing the wisdom given, then comes back and reports on the results — and then asks another question.

It's important that the mentee is accountable to the process, and comes up with legitimate questions.

One good question and an answer can take up five minutes. A followup question or two can fill the rest of the time.

Then, agree on what the mentee will do to apply the knowledge gained, if appropriate, before the next meeting.

The main payoff for a mentor is seeing results. It's exciting when the mentee returns with a report on what they did and how the mentor's contribution made a difference.

Both the mentor and mentee should turn off their phones, and be totally engaged for the few minutes they'll be together. When they are, even 5-10 minutes can produce a lot of value.

If you're adventurous, stack three mentees and take them on back-to-back-to-back, over a half-hour. That way, you're building something for three people, and it's very likely still doable from the scheduling standpoint.

(Con't.)

Mentoring is a worthwhile exercise for both parties, and it can bring many benefits for an organization. A micro-mentorship may be the ticket to getting you started.

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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