

# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 1290 2,000 Rivets a Day For the Next 45 Years

It's almost April. Graduations are coming soon. Young folks will be coming out of high schools and Guam's college ranks, and many of them will be looking for jobs. Many of those will be asked to interview for open positions. What they tell the interviewer could get them the job, or blow the opportunity. I'm Jerry Roberts, with a memory of how it went for me when I went looking for work, way back when, That's next, on The Extra Point.

I was 19, on my own while going to school full time, money was running out and I needed a job. I heard that Douglas Aircraft, a defense contractor in Santa Monica, CA, where I lived, was hiring. I applied for a job as a riveter. Rivets held planes together, and I figured that was a good thing. It had to pay well, too.

Minimum wage at the time was under two bucks an hour, and I heard that Douglas was starting people out at about \$2.20. My rent was \$50, gas was 29 cents a gallon, I could eat on \$10-15 a week, and sock away money for tuition and books. Just get that job and I was going to be set.

There were a ton of people there that day doing the same thing I was. I filled out the application and waited to be called in for an interview. I got in there. The lady looked me straight in the eye and said, "Are you willing to drive 2,000 rivets a day for the next 45 years?"

I'd had a few jobs already but this was my first job serious interview and I had no clue what to do, but I knew I needed a job fast. I told her: "Yes ma'am, I am ready to do that."

No, I wasn't. I had zero interest in doing that, but I had a serious interest in paying rent and eating.

She asked a couple more questions, one about my college studies, and that was pretty much it. I was in there maybe 10 minutes. She said she would call me if I was one of those they wanted to hire. No call ever came.

One of my classmates knew I'd applied for the job and asked me how things went. I told him the story about the 2,000 rivets a day, and he said, "You dummy, she knew you're going to school to get a degree and you're telling her you're going to pump 2,000 rivets a day for the rest of your life? She knew that wasn't true." He had a point.

That memory came back yesterday and I began to think about how I would answer that question if it was posed to me today. Maybe like this:

"Frankly, my goal would be to work hard and become a leader of this company one day. I'll start with shooting 2,000 rivets a day, and I'll work to be the best riveter you've got. I also intend to prove my worth so you'll want to help me grow, so I can help you grow."

Do you think that's too bold? I think hiring managers are sometimes looking for people to be a little bit bold. I always was. Show me something. Show me why you're different. Show me why I should hire you.

Consider the two approaches for the job, the one I made eons ago, and the other one I just suggested. In the first, I'm saying that I'm good with staying in an entry-level capacity, the same job for my whole career. What HR person wants to hear that?

In the second example, I'm pledging to give my best effort in the job they're offering right now, and then I'm giving them a glimpse into the future, and what hiring me might mean to the organization over the long term. That's a present benefit, along with a projected future benefit.

Is there a young person in your life who is preparing to join the job market? It might be worth the effort to have a conversation with them about this topic. What could they say in a job interview that will send a strong message that they are a great choice to fill the position? (Con't.)

You'll probably also doing a favor for the poor interviewer, who is tasked to sit through a long list of candidates who will stare back at them, not sure what to say. They're looking for something — for someone — to stand out from the crowd. In my opinion, that's a good place to be.

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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