

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1292 “So That’s All There Is – That’s It?”

Every once in a while I catch a story of someone who reaches the end of their career, or achieves what others think is a big goal, and they seem to be anything but excited. You’re thinking they had a great run, a significant career, but for them there’s something missing. What could it be? I’m Jerry Roberts, and today we’ll dig a little and see if we can figure it out, next, on The Extra Point.

Have you ever seen anyone achieve a big goal, earn rousing acclaim from his/her peers, or maybe end what seems like an absolutely outstanding career — yet they don’t seem all that happy about it?

Did you know that a number of people suffer from depression after achieving what so many others would give anything for?

It could be the job you’ve dreamed of, a major award, or bigtime recognition, and all of a sudden there’s this feeling that “Hey, it’s very nice, don’t get me wrong, but is that all there is?”

Robert Waldinger, a professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, leads a study, started in 1938, on how people thrive. Waldinger says sometimes the thing we’re after is just as wonderful as we always imagined it would be. However, for some folks, it’s an underwhelming experience.

Underwhelming in the sense that it doesn’t provide the satisfaction you thought it would. Or, it could be overwhelming, more work than what we anticipated, or out-of-control politics, or you get there and realize that you’re really not ready to handle it.

People who spent years building a successful business and then sold it have sometimes had severe regrets. It was the building of the company with a dedicated team, working to overcome obstacles that made them happy. Selling the business, even making multiple millions of dollars, didn’t match up to the excitement and

satisfaction of the day-to-day experience.

In situations where people aren’t happy with how things turn out, I wonder if they really had a clear picture of what it was they wanted — and why.

People who chase specific dreams, not just advancement, usually are happier than those who just want more money or status. If you have pointed yourself toward a six-figure job, would you take any six-figure position, no matter what the work required of you?

There are people who are unhappy, even though they have achieved their goal, primarily because they realized their goal was too small. You might remember our conversations about developing “big hairy” goals. These are the goals that scare you if you just mention them out loud.

Some folks find happiness when their goal or job connects them with a higher purpose, which is being in the service of others. They get so much from that, that money becomes almost secondary for them.

Lest you think that we’re just talking about managers and business owners, that’s not the case. Teachers, nurses, engineers, and anyone who pulls 40 hours a week employed in a government job, or for the private sector, this applies to you as well. Are you happy right now, and will you be happy if you reach a new level — whatever that level would be?

Maybe your work needs to be lined up with your basic values, if it isn’t now. Maybe you need to look into the causes and cures for burnout.

Is it possible that you can stay with what you have now, then be able to put energy into a side hustle that would provide you with some level of excitement and happiness that may be missing?

(Con’t.)

Happiness and job satisfaction is often a moving target, but it doesn't have to be. That being said, achieving it will require that we're honest with ourselves and intentional. If we are both, the odds are in our favor.

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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