

# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 1487 Would You Like to Appear Smarter?

Abraham Lincoln is credited with the saying, "If I only had an hour to chop down a tree, I'd spend 55 minutes sharpening the saw". I'm Jerry Roberts and somebody else saw fit to take that theme and use it in a different way, That way could help you and me to be seen as smarter than we are? We'll get into it next, on The Extra Point.

I don't know if physicist Albert Einstein intentionally borrowed from the Lincoln quote, but history reports he once stated, "If I had an hour to solve a problem and my life depended on the solution, I would spend the first 55 minutes determining the proper question to ask... for once I know the proper question, I could solve the problem in less than five minutes."

In our fast-paced and uncertain world, the tendency is to prioritize action over just asking questions. However, research highlights the importance of asking questions for effective leadership. However, some people get a bit nervous when asking them.

There is often fear that asking questions may make us appear incompetent or uncertain. I mean, I'm supposed to know how to do things, right? Isn't asking a lot of questions a sure sign of weakness?

There are two ways to answer that. One, it depends on who you're asking. If you work for a boss who is critical of you for asking a legitimate question, maybe that's a sign that you're in the wrong place.

I always told my team, "The question you don't ask is the one that can hurt us." I hope your manager feels the same way.

The other way to answer the question about whether asking questions is a sign of weakness, is absolutely "no."

Questioning is not now and never will be a sign of weakness, but rather an opportunity for growth and improvement. In fact, asking

questions demonstrates intelligence and a willingness to seek expertise and solutions.

I actually like the second part of that better, that the person has the willingness to seek answers, solutions, and to grow. As a manager, what more can I ask for?

Let's go a step further. Workers appreciate leaders who encourage thoughtful questioning and value different perspectives.

A leader can show that appreciation by giving the worker a nugget of praise for asking a good question. I think there's something even better.

That would be asking a question of the person who asked that question. They ask, you answer, then you follow by asking them how they feel about the issue? In doing so, you might gain insight into the individual's thought process.

By engaging a worker in this way, you can boost their morale and hopefully make them want to do it again.

If you have a worker who is a bit introverted, this is a powerful method to get contributions from people who aren't used to giving them.

Asking good questions makes us appear more intelligent. It's a fact. Another fact is that managers who make this Q&A a fundamental part of their process, also are seen as better leaders, more open, and someone worth following.

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3FM, the Ray Gibson Show, and First Hawaiian Bank, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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