

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1510 Inquiring About the Boss's Life and Career — Part 2

Yesterday, we talked about the advantages to developing a stronger relationship with your boss. We showed how that can be done by asking questions and demonstrating a sincere interest in their career, and the lessons they learned along the way. But what if your boss isn't someone who opens up about his/her background? What if they don't show interest in what you're looking to do? I'm Jerry Roberts, and I've got the answer for that, coming up next on The Extra Point.

Building a better and stronger relationship with the boss. It's a good thing, and yesterday I gave several reasons for doing it, plus the idea of asking questions to get things rolling. If you'd like the transcripts for that one, plus part two that we're doing today, go to our website, guamtraining.com, and download numbers 1509 and 1510.

At one point in yesterday's commentary, I mentioned the concept of separating from the pack. I don't want anyone to get the wrong idea about my intent. While I definitely wanted to become more valuable to my team and I clearly knew there would be benefits at some point from doing that, I was the ultimate team player.

I played fair and I played hard, and if it meant doing more than what I was contracted to do, I did it. It wasn't about ego and it wasn't about glory. It was about winning.

If you do that long enough, people notice. One of those people is going to be your boss, and probably your boss's boss.

If you caught the introduction to today's Extra Point, I want to give you a strategy for working up a better relationship with your boss, even if the boss isn't one to entertain questions or small talk. Maybe praise is minimal. Once in a while you'll get a nod, maybe a positive grunt-like sound. I've worked with a couple like that.

Before I go on, let me say that most managers are happy to take questions and will answer to

the best of their ability, and it's not hard to develop something good with them. I think it's particularly easy today, with the increasing difficulty in finding good talent. When a worker shows a spark of interest, any manager who has their head screwed on straight is going to respond positively. But, what if they don't?

Here's what you do. You become that one in a hundred, one in a thousand worker, performing above your pay grade as I mentioned earlier. Your boss will notice this, sooner or later.

When that happens and you get even the tiniest morsel of praise or acknowledgement, you thank them and then ask, "Hey boss, do you mind if I ask you a question?" The answer is going to be a yes because they opened the conversation.

You ask, "You were in my shoes once, wanting to do more and get ahead. How did you do it?"

That is a nearly irresistible invitation to drop a little wisdom on you. There's a few moving parts in this, so get the transcript and go over it.

1. You separated yourself from the pack. Your boss rarely — if ever — has had anyone ask a question like that.
2. Listen carefully. What the boss will tell you is not only how he/she did it, but also how you can do it. The road they traveled is the road they respect.
3. If you can come up with an intelligent follow-up question, you'll score some more points.
4. Now that the boss has engaged with you in this way, you now have a license to ask more questions. Make them good.

John Maxwell of our Live2Lead conference has a thought on this we can close with.

(Con't.)

When you ask a question of someone who is, in essence, mentoring you, do something with that question and report the results when you go back to ask another one.

Let me explain. Your boss is a busy person. You nibbled off a small chunk of their available time for your question. If you learned something, apply it, then go back and tell the boss how it went.

“Hey boss, you suggested that I do this and this. Well, I did, and I got the job done in half the time. That’s amazing! Do you think I can ask you another question?”

You know, I’ll bet they’d be open to that. What do you think?

Your results are the boss’s payoff for taking the time to work directly with you. And if all this wasn’t good enough already, you’re now seen as an action taker, further separating yourself from the pack.

What do you do next? Rinse and repeat. Rinse and repeat.

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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