

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1516 From the Vault: What Did You Learn?

Every job we perform along the way on the road we call our career, we get schooled. Now, just because we get schooled, it doesn't necessarily mean we learn. I'm Jerry Roberts and today let's talk about the lessons of life and work. That's next, on The Extra Point.

Yesterday, the Live2Lead conference once again paid off as a premier opportunity to learn. Speaker after speaker, those from the global lineup to Yolanda Padrones and Dave Alcorn locally, told their stories and related lessons that they all earned the hard way... they had to go through them day by day, decision by decision.

My mother told me, my first boss Big Ed told me, autobiographies and documentaries have told me...it's one of my favorite quotes of all time, and I can't tell you who said it first because it's attributed to countless people..." If you don't learn from the lessons of history, you'll be doomed to repeat them.

Brainstorming was a key to yesterday's event, as participants took ideas from each speaker and tossed them back and forth at the tables. When you do that, you'll often hear about the experiences of others as it relates to the idea you're discussing. That's when ears should perk up.

Mine didn't always do that. I understood the message my mom had given me, but I was 19 and figured that whatever happened to another person didn't mean it would happen to me. On the surface that's true, but listening can give you clues on things that reduce your odds of being successful.

I mentioned a couple of days ago that at 19 I was going to college full time and to make money I delivered 400 daily newspapers, as in seven days a week. I got in at 2:30am, finished the route by 5:30, then ran home to shower and get to school.

The manager, Bob, told me to train myself to sleep at 8pm and get at least six hours of

sleep each night, or my body would eventually give out. Go to bed at 8pm? I had two evening classes, had to study for the others, and hey, I was 19. I wanted to party a little, too. So, I got about three hours sleep each night, catching up on Sunday, sort of.

It went fine for 18 weeks. I had a social life, and I was averaging A-/B+ in my classes, and life was good. Unfortunately, college semesters don't run 18 weeks, they go for 20, with the last two being for final exams.

I crashed during finals, missing two the first morning. I was so sleep deprived I dozed off after the paper route and didn't hear the alarm. Both tests had ended by the time I woke up.

I wasn't allowed to retake the tests and saw my overall grade-point average slip from about 3.5 to 2.3. Reality sometimes sucks, as Bob's words came crashing home.

So, at 19 I learned that when people of greater experience tell you about potential problems, don't automatically dismiss what they say. Listen, then do some homework so you can evaluate their position.

At 21 and a frontline worker I saw first-hand how micromanagement was the soul-crushing, motivation-destroying process it almost always is, and I decided that if I was ever a manager, I would do things much differently — and I did.

I decided that micromanagement wasn't about the supervisor, it was about the one who was being supervised. I'd tell a new worker that I would be micromanaging them — yes, those words — right up until they displayed that they knew how to get the job done. Then, I'd back off and become their support system. How long I'd micromanage was up to them, not me.

Being in business taught me that you can have the best product and still not win. I learned that talent is great, but it's not enough. Effort and going the extra mile makes the difference. (Con't.)

I learned that you can deliver on every single promise you make in a contract, see the other party make big bucks off your back, and still weasel their way out of paying you.

I saw Big Ed talk with workers and always made them feel special, and glad they came to work that day. I wanted to do my best for Ed, and I wanted to do my best for me.

I learned that my best was about me, not a boss. I learned that I wasn't competing against other workers, and later in life as a business owner, my true competition wasn't another company — it was always me and what I did yesterday, last week, last month, last year that I was competing against.

How many of life's lessons did I hear from others before I experienced them? Probably most of them.

How many did I learn in conferences or from training courses? Countless.

Can I tell you a secret? The deciding factor in success is not just learning, but doing something with what you learn.

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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