

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1553 What Walmart's CEO Would Tell Your Kids

He's 53 years old, once worked on the loading docks for Walmart, now the largest private employer in the world, and he worked his way up to CEO. He recently gave a speech to the 2024 graduates at the University of Arkansas, and I think there's a message in there for our kids and grandkids. I'm Jerry Roberts and I'll offer thoughts from Walmart's leader, Doug McMillon, next on The Extra Point.

Doug McMillon leads Walmart's global force of 2.3 million employees. And you thought you had a stiff payroll to meet.

In 2005 at the age of 34, he became the CEO of Sam's Club, Walmart's version of CostULess. Four years later he was tabbed to head up Walmart International, and in 2014 he became the overall leader for the organization. He came up through the ranks, so he understands corporations from all angles.

When he spoke to the graduating class at the University of Arkansas, he might as well have been giving advice to our sons and daughters, our grandchildren, nephews and nieces.

What he had to say caught my attention as it mirrors the message I've been trying to give for the past six years here on the Ray Gibson Show. Let's get to three key pieces of advice.

First, be present. McMillon said life goes by fast, so try to enjoy every moment. He said, "I'm wired to think more about what's coming next than the moment right in front of me. Planning is important, but enjoying the present is, too."

I'll add that the act of planning is important, but your plan may not play out the way you want. He planned to make \$24,000 a year in his first real job out of college. He made less.

He planned to get into business school at Harvard, Stanford, or Wharton at the University of Pennsylvania. They all rejected him.

He wanted to start a business. Didn't happen.

What did happen was an opportunity at Walmart, in a physically demanding job. His attitude was critical. McMillon said his first piece of advice to anyone looking for career guidance is "to do today's job well, be present, drive change, deliver results, and do it the right way. Being present in today's role and earning trust leads to the next job opportunity."

McMillon's second piece of advice is to pursue a career that does not feel like work. He said, "Life is too short to invest so much time doing something you don't enjoy."

His dad was a dentist and didn't like it. He had a family to support and he stuck with it. A lot of people fall into this category through necessity. You're going to work 2,000 hours a year in your profession. It's sure is a nicer way to spend that time if you like what you do.

Then he said something important, and young people who are of the mind to jump between jobs after just weeks or even days, should pay attention.

McMillon stated, "I'm not suggesting you run from hard things or adversity when they come up, and they will." Hanging in there in the face of challenges or criticism builds character, and that will serve you for the rest of your life.

Finally, McMillon offered a nugget of advice that we all need to take in, digest, and make it ours. It is to assume positive intent from others, and to always be willing to show people grace.

Social media has warped our senses, robbing us of our attention span as well as patience. We need to give people the same break we'd like for ourselves, or we hope someone gives our kid.

He told the story of how grace played a key role in him not losing his career at Walmart on his first day at work in 1984.

(Con't.)

McMillon showed up for work at the warehouse, but his boss decided to take a few of the rookies across town to help decorate the high school gym for the shareholders meeting.

McMillon's car didn't have air conditioning or radio, so he had a cassette tape boombox in the passenger seat blaring really loud, and the windows were down to get air into the vehicle.

Not wanting the boss to hear his loud music, he leaned over to turn the volume down on the boombox. What he didn't see was that his boss had stopped at a stop sign in front of him.

McMillon punched the gas and hit the boss's car very hard. No doubt shaken, his boss got out, looked at both cars, then said, "McMillon, you are not too smart, are you?"

It didn't go any further than that. McMillon said his boss showed him forgiveness and grace, and he never forgot that moment.

Be present, Plan for what you want, but enjoy the here and now. Find work you like to do. It's so much better than the alternative. And assume people have the right intent and will do the right thing. If it doesn't happen, show them grace.

The thoughts of Walmart CEO Doug McMillon.

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.

###

For information on training and consulting services with Jerry Roberts, please click this link: guamtraining.com

