

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1558 Do You Have a System for Disruption?

Somebody once said, “The only constant is change.” It’s absolutely true. As much as we hope that things stay just the way they are and the way we like them, we’re going to lose the battle...things change. Our lives and careers are disrupted in all kinds of ways, and you’d think by now we’d be used to that and even embrace the changes. Many of us do, but some folks struggle with it. I’m Jerry Roberts, and we’ll talk about disruption, next on The Extra Point.

Disruption is everywhere in our lives, yours and mine. We’re told by our leaders that change is inevitable, and to suck it up and do the best we can. I would hear words like, “As soon as you get used to it, everything going to be great...you’ll see.”

I knew the words were empty, and I knew that the person saying those words didn’t believe one bit in what he was saying. It was just a speech he felt he had to make, so he could check off a box somewhere.

When I was living in L.A. in the late 1980s, my next-door neighbors were two young guys who had escaped Communist-controlled East Berlin years before. They had a very different view about change.

They were good guys and fun to talk with, and they were happy to be living in the U.S. They knew I worked hard and always showed me respect. That said, they were very vocal in their opinion that Americans were mostly whiners.

That feeling really came out strong when they started drinking. “You Americans are soft. You complain about everything. You could never have put up with the conditions we had to live in,” etc.

Everybody in the apartment complex liked them, and we had no problem when they began to launch into these conversations. One reason for that was because we knew what they were saying was accurate.

There were a lot of corporate workers in those buildings, and we were kind of nodding our heads. We knew that people hated change and would do anything they could to avoid it.

At the time I had a management job with a growing company, and we were going through some radical changes. I had employees up in arms over them, and I was trying to figure out how to present new ideas and get buy-in.

This was just prior to the Internet becoming a “thing” with some functional capabilities, so I couldn’t Google for ideas. I had to talk to other people, other managers, and we’d share ideas.

What we came up with was four key things that had to take place if you had any chance to make change work for you.

1. Change is easier to deal with if you don’t immediately throw up your defenses and get into fight mode. Dig in to fully understand what’s happening. Only in understanding can we eliminate the fear involved.
2. Change isn’t always all good or all bad. In many changes, there are both good and bad components. Can we take this change and break it down? Let’s take all the things we like and put them in one column, and put all the things we don’t like in another column.
3. Then, can we make adjustments? Once we break things down, are there good parts we can make even better? Are there negative aspects we can improve or adjust? Maybe the leadership team will like our ideas, and go with them.
4. Results matter. Will we be able to test our ideas versus the change as it is offered to us? Can we show that our adjustments will give us a better return?

It’s important to mention something here. You can go through this process, and have it all rejected. I’ve seen that happen. It’s okay. It’s still worth doing. (Con’t.)

Sometimes, leaders don't have a choice. A change has to be made and discussion won't matter. Hopefully, it doesn't happen this way all the time.

Some people love disruption. Most people don't. What I've outlined here is the value in having a process or system to engage with change.

An enlightened leadership team should be excited that workers would develop such a system, and they should encourage you in those efforts.

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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