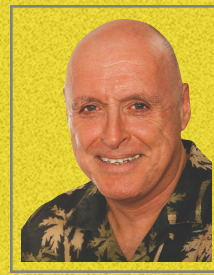


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1685 The Message We Learned From Trump and Obama

You're at a public event and discover that you've been seated next to someone you really don't like. They've said terrible things about you, and you've said terrible things about them. The relationship is more than strained...more than just adversarial...you are enemies. You say to yourself, "How could the organizer put me next to him? This is going to be a lousy next two hours." I'm Jerry Roberts, and I want to know how you would handle the situation. We'll talk about it, next on the Extra Point.

So, did you come up with a strategy for how you're going to somehow get by, having to sit next to a person you absolutely can't stand?

You could simply ignore them. Who would blame you if you kind of turned to one side, giving them a small portion of your back, and letting your body language tell them that there won't be any chatting back and forth today?

A few days ago at President Jimmy Carter's funeral, this situation was presented to two other U.S. chief executives, when Donald Trump and Barack Obama found themselves shoulder to shoulder.

The history of animosity between these two goes back since the day Trump announced that he was seeking the White House. For much of that time, the two have ripped into each other, and it's gotten downright ugly at times. Yet, on this day, it was different.

Now, keep in mind that this was a funeral service, and anyone attending, former U.S. presidents included, would be expected to maintain a certain degree of respect and to conduct themselves accordingly.

Trump leaned over and said something to Obama, who laughed. Later, Obama did the same, and the two men seemed to enjoy the moment. Former vice-president Kamala Harris didn't seem amused, and some people had the opinion that she might have been the topic

of conversation between the two men. There has been no definitive response from either, so it will likely remain a mystery.

So, what if this happens to you? How should you handle it? Perhaps our two political foes gave the example. Here are a few ideas you can use:

1. Be friendly and open. Begin with a warm greeting. A smile and a simple "Hello" can set a positive tone. Be approachable.
2. Stay away from potentially inflammatory subjects and engage in small talk. If, at some point, the two of you decide to move into a more substantial topic, move to another place that's away from others.
3. Be mindful of the setting, and keep your voice at a level you would normally reserve for someone seated inches away from you.
4. Listen actively. Show genuine interest in their viewpoint, even if you disagree with them, and you've always disagreed with them. Nod and ask clarifying questions to demonstrate that you are engaged in the conversation.
5. Don't try to win the conversation. This is small talk and nothing is at stake. Just be in the moment.
6. Exit graciously when it's time. Shake hands, smile as you disengage, and if you've enjoyed the time, leave with the words, "You know, this was good. I hope you feel the same. Why don't we do it again?"

Navigating interactions with individuals whose opinions you disagree with at public events can be manageable with a friendly, respectful approach.

(Con't.)

You never know, you might actually find that this adversary isn't so bad after all, and maybe you can put together some kind of relationship that proves beneficial down the road.

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

