

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1692 Is the Boss Burned Out?— Part 4

Today, we finish off our series on the boss and possible burnout, and what we can do to help. This last part is tough because it deals with determining if the leader is trying to do too much and, if so, how to get them to pull back. I'm Jerry Roberts, and that's next on the Extra Point.

Have you ever worked for someone who was a serious hard charger, constantly pushing to do more?

There was no such thing as too much. If you reached a goal, there was little to no time to celebrate the achievement. Their idea was to immediately reset the goal and keep going.

Leaders often take immense pride in their hard work, viewing their professional persona as a badge of honor. What they accomplish is their identity. They feel the need to be "always on" to fulfill their roles, and to set an example for everybody else.

Taking time off or delegating too many tasks can be wrongly seen as a sign of weakness. Consequently, leaders can become ensnared in a relentless work pattern that eventually leads to trouble.

When burnout creeps in on a person who regularly ignores reasonable limitations, they may struggle on many levels, which often include health problems.

I'll admit to being guilty of this. Early on, I thought that if I push my body to its limits and get more and more done, that others would be inspired to do more. It was a tough lesson to learn when that didn't happen.

To me, overwork was normal. I had been called a "workaholic" and I wore that as a badge of honor. I think I'm somewhat better now, but I haven't recovered from it. I like to work. I like what I do, and I think I can help people.

Folks like me often find it challenging to step

back and adopt a more balanced approach to life.

What can you do if you work for a leader like this, and you have determined that they are overextending him/herself, and it's becoming a problem?

Maybe you see the boss consistently clocking in long hours, obsessing over minor details, or neglecting to take days off? Perhaps their behavior has changed and they lose their cool more often.

Maybe they've gained weight, no longer do any form of exercise, or drink more than usual. Maybe they just look tired all the time.

I'd like to say that there's an easy fix to this issue. I was never a drinker, but I did gain weight and became sedentary. My oldest daughter worked with me, and after I'd pulled another all-nighter (sometimes I wouldn't sleep for 48 or 72 hours), she'd tell me to go home and get to bed. I'd say, "Yeah, okay, I will, just as soon as I...", and I'd list whatever I felt I needed to get done.

It's hard to reason with people who have this workaholic mindset, because they think they need to do what they do, and that there's really no harm involved. Of course, there is, because there is a bill to pay if you do it too often and for too long. I won't get into it here, but I had to pay a bill like that.

What would have gotten through to me is if I thought I was putting the company and the livelihood of our employees at risk with my work habits. I didn't want to be the cause of anyone's negative outcomes. Instead of telling me to go home, I wish my daughter had said, "If you don't stop, you're going to screw things up for everybody." That would have gotten my attention.

(Con't.)

If you work for someone like this, you're going to have to figure out the right words to get through to them.

Further, just as in earlier examples this week, you're going to have to find the right person to deliver those words. It's got to be someone whose opinion they respect.

That individual has to be the one to get the leader to see the potential damage if they don't change. They also need to give total assurance that the organization won't fall to pieces if they take a few days off.

Once that is accepted, they need to work with the leader on a plan to bring some balance to their life.

None of this is easy. You will likely be rejected when you initially bring it up. If you stick with it and make your case the right way, you can be convincing and create the changes needed.

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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