

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1711 The Toughest Leadership Job of All

In many workplaces, the term “leadership development” often focuses on equipping individuals to influence others. While this goal is commendable, it overlooks a fundamental truth: to lead effectively, one must first learn to lead oneself. I’m Jerry Roberts, and we’re going to dig into this topic, next on the Extra Point.

One of the first concepts I learned from Live2Lead speaker John Maxwell, was this: “You cannot lead others until you have first learned to lead yourself.”

On the surface, it sounds right. I mean, how could we lead other people if we don’t have control of ourselves, our emotions, and we’re able to use our talents and skills to the best of our ability?

How do we get to that point? Leadership training can certainly help. Being a lifelong learner is even better. Get the training, then find resources you can include in your daily routine that introduce ideas and concepts to get the mental juices flowing.

Another big part of the picture is to gain control of those emotions I referred to a moment ago. I say it all the time: “You either control your emotions or your emotions will control you.”

If you are a slave to your emotions, and you whipsaw back and forth with highs and lows, you’re likely not going to present an image of a leader that anyone will be comfortable in following.

Today, a great leader is almost always a great listener. People are inspired when a leader is able to connect with them through two-way communication. When workers are listened to, they in turn become better listeners.

Self-leadership involves having a vision for your career and life. Think about it. One of the main roles of any leader is to develop a vision for their organization, one that people can see themselves a part of. If we don’t have a vision

that we follow, how on Earth will we ever be able to come up with one for others?

We have to be able to lead ourselves when it comes to health and well-being. We need the energy and focus to do the job, and we also need to know when to back off for our own good, and the good of others.

I mentioned how being a lifelong learner is an important aspect for any leader, but I believe there is another essential part of the self-development puzzle. Mentorship.

I don’t mean being a mentor. Leaders usually take on that role at some point in their walk, and it can certainly be rewarding.

In this case, I’m saying that if you want to be successful in your efforts at self-leadership, you will need to have a mentor, and probably several.

Self-leadership shouldn’t be a solitary effort. We need a support network, one that is made up of people who have walked paths like the one we’re on, as well as those who have done totally different things.

I’ve had the privilege of sitting down with people over the years who questioned me and wanted my perspective. Some were more successful and had achieved far more than I ever will.

Why would they want to talk with me? Because they made a practice of talking with many people, always hoping for a nugget of wisdom or a few words that trigger a new idea.

You can have a single and formal mentor, and there’s nothing wrong with that. Or you can take the approach that anybody can be your mentor.

In some ways, this just scratches the surface. Self-leadership is the cornerstone of effective and lasting leadership. (Con’t.)

Get the best training you can, be a lifelong learner, gain control of your emotions, improve your listening skills, have a vision for yourself, lead yourself to good physical health and well-being, and seek mentors who will add to your knowledge and make you want to reach higher.

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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