

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1714 Firing the Unfireable – Part 1

Jason was an employee who was a big hit with customers, almost from the first day he was hired at the restaurant. He had a great smile, and made easy conversation that had everybody feeling welcome. People raved about him to management, who took notice that Jason's customers spent more than those handled by other servers. Everything seemed perfect, but six months later, it wasn't and led to one of the most frustrating issues for any manager. I'm Jerry Roberts, and we kick off a two-part episode, next on the Extra Point.

Jason had become the star server at a busy restaurant. He was the kind of employee whose charm and rapport with customers made him a favorite among regulars.

His coworkers loved being around him. He'd go out with them on weekends, after the restaurant closed. Rick, the general manager, was excited that the team had come together into a high performance group, and that they liked each other.

After a few months, however, Rick noticed a change in Jason as he began to treat others harshly, and with significant disrespect.

He yelled at fellow servers and kitchen staff, bullied the bussers who set up and cleaned tables, making him a nightmare to work with. Rick, the general manager, counseled Jason to change his tone and approach, but his words fell on deaf ears. Other team members noticed.

One hectic evening, Jason arrived two hours late for his shift during the peak dinner time. Customers were asking "Where's Jason," and the other servers scrambled to keep up with the traffic. Rick had left several messages for Jason, including in the employees' WhatsApp group.

When Jason finally strolled in, Rick went up to him with genuine concern, asked if everything was okay, that he had left messages, and was Jason's phone dead?

Jason looked at Rick with a blank stare, then walked away, saying, "Hey man, I got busy. It's no big deal."

Rick was stunned. He told Jason that the team has been covering for him, and his attitude and lack of accountability was unacceptable.

Jason looked Rick in the eye, smiled, then said he didn't owe anybody an explanation, and proceeded to walk toward the employee locker room.

Rick, feeling his anger rise, caught up to him, and said he owed his coworkers an apology. Jason said nothing, as he was changing into his uniform.

When Rick pressed him on it, Jason snapped, "Look, why don't you just drop it man? I got work to do."

Rick quickly replied, "No you don't. You can stop changing...you're fired."

Jason said, "You're making a mistake Rick, my customers will follow me. I won't be out of work for long, and you'll lose business when they know where I am." Then, he left.

The decision to let Jason go wasn't made lightly. His behavior was not just a personal grievance; it was a threat to the morale and productivity of the entire team. One person, no matter how popular with customers, could not be allowed to act as Jason had.

Many organizations have star employees, and managers often have to walk a fine line in dealing with big egos, as well as smoothing out the feathers of employees who are treated badly.

In the end, it comes down to preserving team integrity and fostering a culture of respect. Rick did what he felt he had to do. Jason was a great server, but the restaurant would be better off without him in the long run. (Con't.)

This isn't the end of the story.

Well...In part two, we'll answer the burning questions:

Where will Jason be working tomorrow?

Will his customers follow him to his new employer?

How will Rick respond to the situation?

And why are bank loan officers setting up tables in Guam grocery stores, next to the egg displays?

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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