

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1719 Constructively Comparing Yourself to a Coworker

You may know that I'm not big on comparing oneself to another worker. Or, matching my skills or possessions up against those of anyone else. It leads to envy, self-pity, anger, and a mindset that doesn't serve us well. Yet, sometimes it's hard not to do it. So, I'm going to offer a few thoughts today on a method you can use to generate something positive out of what is usually a negative. I'm Jerry Roberts, and that's next on the Extra Point.

I was probably 16 when my mom advised me to avoid comparing myself to others. She said that wherever life would take me, there would always be people who were richer, taller, better looking, smarter, along with a bunch of other things. She didn't say anything about them having more hair.

What she did tell me is that none of that would determine my outcomes in life. She said that was up to me. She also said that one thing I could control was to make sure nobody ever outworked me.

In the workplace, comparing ourselves to more productive colleagues can often lead to feelings of envy and resentment.

I've seen plenty of this in my career. People who were unhappy because others had more or had done more, or whose achievements received more recognition. That's not the mindset we want. It's not constructive.

By shifting our perspective, we can get some value out of comparisons. I'll give you three ways to do this.

1. Celebrate differences. Every individual brings a unique set of strengths to the table. If Ray, Joe, or Donna does something far better than I can, I can choose to resent them for their higher level of skill, or I can try to tap into it. If I want what they have, maybe I'll ask them to help me get it.

I'm happy to recognize and appreciate their talents. This likely accomplishes two valuable

things. One, our relationship will probably improve. Two, I'm guessing they'll be open to sharing some tips and techniques with me so that I can improve.

Collaboration is key to maximizing team potential. By finding opportunities to work together on projects, coworkers can leverage each other's strengths for better results.

Doesn't it make sense that if you and I spend more time around people whose skills exceed ours, that something is going to rub off on us? So, celebrate and collaborate.

2. Focus on learning. When observing a more talented and productive coworker, try to figure out *where* they are better. What are the specific skills and techniques that contribute to their success? It may take us awhile, but by analyzing what makes them effective, what they're doing that maybe we're not doing, we can ask better questions, and eventually adopt similar practices in our own work.

I also want to seek feedback from productive colleagues. I mentioned the sharing aspect. Most people appreciate the opportunity to share what they know. It's possible that you have certain talents they can benefit from, and you can mentor each other.

3. Set goals and track progress. If somebody is good enough to share or mentor us in a specific area, it's up to us to implement what we learn.

For me, I want to lay it out in a goal format. Here's what I want to do and why, and this is when I want to achieve it. Then, get busy. Finally, there's one more step.

When I've got measureable results that show I benefitted from their instruction, I want to go back to the person who helped me, showing them the outcome. That's a payoff for them for spending the time to help me.

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In conclusion, celebrating differences and find ways to collaborate with those people who have knowledge and talents to share.

Determine what they do better and focus on learning those things.

Then, set goals. When we achieve success with what we've learned, we want to let our mentor know how their help made a difference.

If we must compare ourselves to others, I hope this method will help you to do so in a way that brings you success.

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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