

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1725 Balancing Work and Single Parenthood

I was raised by a working, single mother. After she and my father split up, she worked as a waitress until her health gave out. She was on her own with me when I was in the third grade, and she had to stop working five years later. She gave everything she had at her job and was good at it, but came home completely exhausted, night after night. Single parents with jobs or businesses, and trying to raise children, have it tough. Some live at the breaking point, and they live there for years. I'm Jerry Roberts, and today we tell their story, coming next on The Extra Point.

Single parents, the majority of them single mothers, face a unique set of challenges while trying to juggle the demands of work or having a business, alongside raising children.

The daily routine can resemble a relentless race, with little room for rest or what we refer to as self-care. These dedicated people often find themselves up before dawn, ensuring their children eat breakfast, get ready for school, and maybe drive them there. With kids a couple years apart in age, that might mean dropping off to two schools.

Then, the work hustle begins as they mentally prepare themselves for a day filled with job responsibilities.

The pressure to succeed professionally is real, especially when financial stability is at stake. They work hard and they have to perform, as others are depending on them.

Often, the single working parent doesn't go out for lunch with others. Maybe they work over lunch, or maybe they can't afford to eat out. They grab something quick or bring food from home.

After the school day, the challenges continue. Picking up children, perhaps managing after-school activities, or getting them home, then rushing back to work to tie up loose ends from the day. If they are fortunate and circumstances are right, perhaps an understanding boss will

let them finish their work from home.

The struggle to balance work commitments while being present for the children is a daily battle.

Finishing or taking a break from the work, it's time to make dinner. Then, they help with any homework, and mustering up the last of the day's energy reserves, they get the children ready for bed. If the kids are still young, that can be an overwhelming task all by itself.

Let me add one more factor. More and more often, single working parents — like an increasing number of all adults — are also called upon to give care to their parents.

Once in a while, they might have time to treat themselves to a warm bath or watch a favorite show to cap off the evening, but most of the time they just collapse into bed, and hope to get an uninterrupted five or six hours of sleep, before the alarm goes off to do it all over again.

Too often, that sleep is disrupted by a child who needs comfort or assistance. Working single parents are often walking billboards for sleep deprivation. They know it's hurting their health and there may be a price to pay in the future, but what are you going to do?

In my training courses, I often ask attendees on how many hours of sleep they get. Too many respond with four or five. I know a number of them are single with kids.

Working single parents demonstrate incredible resilience and strength. They embody the spirit of "can-do," because if not them, then who?

I know that every kid who grew up, like me, watching a single working parent struggle to provide, sacrificing on every level imaginable, joins me in saluting this special group of people.

(Con't.)

We give awards in this community for career achievements and organizational excellence. These are good. Long-term success is worthy of celebration.

Single working parents deliver in the long term as well. There are no awards.

Rewards are the accomplishments of their kids. Graduations, jobs and careers, starting their own families.

And maybe someday, they get to hear one of their adult children tell a story to a grandchild, about Nana or Papa, and how they answered the bell every day, against all odds, for years, to deliver for their family.

If you're a single, working parent, this one's for you.

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

