

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1739 Do You Chat With People Who Give You Service?

If you work in a store and see a bald white guy who looks like me, forget for a moment that all bald white guys look alike, because it may very well be me; and I may be looking for more than to simply have my purchase rung up. I may be in the market for something else, something more, something personal, and no doubt something you didn't think you'd be called upon to give away that day. What could this "something" be? I'm Jerry Roberts, and I shall reveal it, next on The Extra Point.

Like a lot of folks who love to take advantage of their digital tools, I used to pay all of my bills online. It was so simple. I could pay everything in five minutes and be done with it. I have to admit, I liked it. I liked it a lot.

Then, last year, the payment system changed, and went through some rocky times. I still had to pay bills, so I decided to do so in person. There were only a few bills to deal with, so I didn't figure it would be a huge drain on my time, and I added the payments to my to-do list.

In each instance, whether private sector or government agency, the person I dealt with had a friendly smile and seemed glad I came by. We didn't talk forever, but we talked.

I asked things like, "How's your day going? Have you had any horrible customers today? Did you wanna punch 'em?"

I was able to make most of them laugh or at least smile. We went back and forth a bit while they were handling the transaction, and I think I was able to be a diversion for them, however their day was going.

Here's the thing. I had fun, too. I was able to raise somebody's spirits a little, and it turned out that mine were raised as well.

I've always gotten on well with restaurant servers and grocery cashiers, and I began to chat them up more, too. What I found was that most were happy to engage with me in that way.

Maybe that's because they're so often the object of a customer's anger, complaint, or snarky comments. I think I saw a lot of relief on the faces of many, as they knew the encounter with me wasn't going to go that way.

Some recognized me from The Extra Point, some from my writing in The Guam Daily Post, and a few knew of me from the old radio days. Most just saw a bald, white guy who wanted to talk.

We're all so busy and we hate standing in line. Well, guess what, there are people in that line who you might be able to share a smile with.

We live in a special place where you can talk to a stranger and it's okay, it's natural. No one's nose gets bent out of shape.

I left Guam for California in 1986, and after getting settled I went to the grocery store to fill up the refrigerator. I'm standing in line at a Ralph's supermarket, and noticed something in the cart behind me that I'd never seen before.

I looked at the woman pushing the cart and asked her about the item, and she looked at me like I was an ax killer. It was my very first reminder that I was no longer living in Guam.

It's nice to be able to exchange a little chatter with people, as both of you are going through your respective days. Maybe both of you get something from it.

Not everybody will want to do this. Some will wonder, "Why is this bald, white guy talking to me."

That being said, it's always been my feeling that most folks will be *just folks* if you give them a chance to do that.

There are thousands of people in Guam who serve us every day.

(Con't.)

Many make the minimum, many get yelled at, many are bored out of their skulls, and many work for bosses who don't exactly spread light and joy in the workplace. Then you show up.

You spend a few moments talking to them, and reminding them that somebody actually does appreciate them for their efforts.

You want to make a difference without having to work up a sweat? Any time you pay a bill or buy something, drop a few friendly words with the person taking care of you. I promise you it will make a difference for them.

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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