

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1774 Not Everyone is Meant to be a Leader — Part 1

Some people are not going to like this one. Why? Because it points a finger in the direction of people who push other people — usually young people — to become leaders. I'm Jerry Roberts, and a different commentary on the topic of leadership is on the way, next on The Extra Point.

In today's culture, there's a big, big emphasis on leadership. The notion that everyone should aspire to be a leader is all over social media, lines the shelves of bookstores, and is pitched on campuses. Young people are fed a constant stream of this. They need to be a leader.

However, it doesn't start there. It begins many years before any of that. Little Johnny or little Mary exhibits some kind of skill or talent at the first-grade assembly or wins some award, and all of a sudden the parents and grandparents proclaim "You're going to be leader some day!"

Elementary school, middle school, more awards. More years of being told that greatness lies ahead, that maybe they'll own a big company, or maybe be governor. There's no doubt that they will be a leader.

Then they get to high school and there are bunches of other kids who've been told all of their lives that they'll be a leader, and all of a sudden there's a grade-point average and life becomes competitive.

Maybe the youngster knew that there were others who were smart and some maybe even smarter than they are in certain subjects — but now records are being kept and there is proof.

Not just that, but they're told that their grades will now be a part of their permanent record and could influence if they go to college, and which colleges might accept them.

"Wait a second," they think, "Some school might not take me because of my grades?"

That's just wrong. Don't they know that I'm a leader? Just ask my family."

Okay, before parents and grandparents descend upon the radio station with torches, let me say that I've done the same thing. I have said the "L word" to my son, and my grandkids. I believe they have leadership potential, but I didn't tell them *that* — I just said they were going to be a leader.

I teach leadership and I know what is required to become a leader. There's a lot to it, but you can't get into the leadership weeds with a kid who's five or ten, and maybe not even at 15. They're not ready for that yet.

So, am I like the dentist whose kids have bad teeth, or the dermatologist whose kids have acne? If my son doesn't become a leader after I told him he would be — is that on me?

If your children or grandchildren don't become leaders after you gave them the big buildup for so many years, is the blame at least partially on you? Should there be blame?

Author Suzy Welch was married to the late Jack Welch, who once led corporate giant General Electric, at one point under his leadership the biggest company in the world. She's written a book entitled, *Becoming You: The Proven Method for Crafting Your Authentic Life and Career*.

In her book, Welch presents the reality that not everyone is wired to take on leadership roles, nor do they necessarily want to. Embracing this truth can lead to fulfilling and successful careers as individual contributors or team members.

We do a lousy job of preparing kids for life after school. I say "we" because we all have a hand in it simply because we don't pressure education leaders to do better.

(Con't.)

I personally do not believe that DOE teachers and administrators wake up in the morning, with the thought to do all they can to ruin the future of our children. I've known too many of them to accept that foolishness. I think they toil away in a system that's not designed for success.

We still have poor test scores, we still have dropouts, and we still have kids being passed through the education machine, not at all ready to become productive adults.

The emphasis is still on the general curriculum that I learned in school a thousand years ago. It ain't that world any more.

The problem is, curriculum is political and likely the reason we haven't seen a lot of change over the years. But we need big changes, and one of those changes is to make kids ready for the working world.

Tomorrow, we'll talk about what Suzy Welch thinks we should do to prepare our children for that world.

Parents and grandparents, hang in there! You'll still be able to encourage your kids to be leaders...but we need to adjust the messaging.

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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