

# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 1775 Not Everyone is Meant to be a Leader — Part 2

Yesterday, we talked about the failure of our educational system to prepare youth for their role beyond their school years. Many, if not most, are not ready to assume a productive position in society after they leave school. We also highlighted the role of family members who continually pump kids up with the idea that they're meant to be leaders, only to set them up for disappointment. I'm sure all of this ruffled feathers all across our island. I'm Jerry Roberts, and today we'll perhaps smooth some of those out with ideas on how to approach this topic from a different direction. That's next on The Extra Point.

We want our kids to be leaders. Why? Maybe because leaders usually are in the upper income levels? Okay, there's nothing wrong with financial security.

Why else? Because if they become a leader the world will become a better place? Maybe.

Is there more? Could it be that we feel their success as a leader could reflect well upon us? I'm going to leave that at the doorstep of our collective consciousness, and move on.

What if — GASP! — our kid became a very good follower? What, how dare I suggest such a thing?

Leadership often comes with a unique set of demands, requiring qualities that not everyone possesses. Essential traits like nerve, which encompasses radical honesty, decision-making ability, and stamina, are crucial for those in leadership positions.

If someone finds that they are low on nerve or prefer not to deliver hard messages, that's perfectly okay. It's not a crime.

Suzy Welch, author of *Becoming You: The Proven Method for Crafting Your Authentic Life and Career*, believes that being a great follower or individual contributor is not a lesser role; it's a vital one. Many organizations thrive because of dedicated team members who excel in their

specific functions. These individuals often bring invaluable skills and insights, driving projects forward with their expertise and determination.

Someone who chooses to focus on their key strengths as a contributor can have a major impact without the added stress of leadership responsibilities.

Moreover, the role of a great follower involves supporting leaders and helping to cultivate a positive team dynamic.

By showing a strong work ethic, collaborating effectively, and offering constructive feedback, this kind of worker can contribute meaningfully to their team's success.

Powerful followers exhibit qualities such as reliability, adaptability, and a willingness to learn — all of which are essential in any workplace.

In my opinion, we would do well to shift the narrative around career success. Rather than viewing leadership as the only path available to achievement, we should promote the many ways to excel as an individual contributor.

Many people find great satisfaction in honing their skills, contributing to team goals, and advancing their careers without stepping into leadership roles.

Ultimately, the journey of “becoming you” has a lot to do with recognizing your strengths and aligning your career path accordingly. Embrace your unique abilities, whether they lie in actual leadership, or supporting others or excelling in a specific area of expertise.

A youngster today, unburdened by what others forecast as their destiny as a leader, and with the mindset that they can build a successful and rewarding career that reflects who they truly are — will have a freedom that too many people in preceding generations never had.

(Con't.)

I'm not saying that you can't want your kid to be a leader some day, and that's for whatever reasons you have to desire that.

My point is that we should not construct this image of "leadership or bust", that if he/she doesn't make it the way we feel they should, that they would have somehow failed.

Paint a balanced picture. Include teamwork and the value of everyone's contributions. Explain that success can come in many versions, and that being a part of something larger than yourself has its own benefits.

Equip them with the right values, support them in every way you can, celebrate when they win, and pick them up when they fall.

Let them know that they'll figure out what's best for their lives, and that you'll be okay with whatever they choose.

My friend, that will make you the leader they need.

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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