

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1797 Reclaiming Your Spark After Hitting a Career Wall

I want you to imagine that you've been in the same career field for over 10 years and have been successful. Then, one day you decide you don't want to do that kind of work any longer and you resign, before finding a new job. You go a few months without applying for any position because you're not sure what you want to do. Nothing seems to appeal to you. Your normal spark of interest and energy is missing. You don't know what the next step should be. You feel like you're in limbo. You're stuck. I'm Jerry Roberts and if you've ever felt this way or you're feeling it now, I've got some ideas that may help. That's next, on The Extra Point.

It's story time, which will lead into the topic I mentioned: Being stuck.

When I left Guam at the beginning of 1987, it was after a good run doing morning radio. A good run, but one that was tiring. I was never able to catch up on sleep, and that was a problem.

I decided not to seek morning radio work in California, but everyone I spoke with said I was an "act", not a disk jockey, and that my style of radio existed solely in morning hours. Still, I had made up my mind. There would be no more morning radio.

Broadcasting is a business where where someone known as an "air personality" might go from Guam to San Francisco, to Fargo, North Dakota, to wherever. If I had been 25 I'd have done that.

I moved to L.A., worked for a radio network for three years, learned a lot about radio formats and programming, but came to the conclusion that it wasn't fun any longer, and wasn't what I wanted for the balance of my career. I resigned.

After almost 12 years in radio, I had hit a wall and realized that what I once loved was not going to be my career any longer.

Was that scary? It was, because it was what I

had wanted for years and I didn't have a backup to broadcasting. I had some skills and a good work ethic, but no direction on where to apply them.

One advantage I had was that I was single and had no ties. So, I got in my car, hit the road, visited friends, took in events here and there, and just figured the answer would come. I was right, it did — but not for over six months.

I loved attending trade shows and had the opportunity to briefly travel with a show that toured West Coast cities. I saw how that business worked on the inside. That spark and energy returned.

Then, I signed on with a publishing company, and learned how to put ink on paper. When that ended, I had a chance to come back to Guam, and I applied those new skills. The training business followed.

I feel I've been blessed. That being said, there have been a lot of question marks along the way. I'll admit that there were a few days when I regretted having cashed in Fanihi's wings. Not many, but I had them.

Do you know anyone who's been in this position? Have you been there? Are you there now? Here are some thoughts on what to do.

1. Take time to think and be brutally honest with yourself. Do you want to leave your job because you don't like the work any more, or do you need to find a new employer? This list will be short for you if it's the latter.

Sometimes, all you need is a change of scenery or a new boss, and you'll be recharged.

2. If you're saying goodbye to a career field, reflect on the path you traveled. Recall the highs and lows, the people you touched, and who touched you along the way. It's the last chapter in a particular book, and you're about to start reading a new one. Give it the respect it deserves. (Con't.)

3. Take inventory. Figure out what you're good at, and what you're interested in. These two things don't always match up.

4. Decide what you want and how to get it. This should be exciting. It was for me.

5. Tell your network. Reach out to former colleagues, friends, and mentors. Share your decision with them. The people who are really in your corner will cheer you on.

6. Get a mentor for the new field. If you look, there is always someone to consult with who has done what you're setting out to do. Cut down the learning curve with their help.

7. Set written goals. If you've never done that, start now. If you need to, break your goals into smaller chunks and take them on one bite at a time.

8. Reward yourself for small victories. A new career is a little like traveling in a foreign land. There are going to be lots of surprises and challenges. Celebrate your progress, even if nobody else does.

9. Don't overly grieve your setbacks. Don't forget about it being that foreign land. There are bound to be mistakes made, and some losses along with the victories. It's okay. Learn what went wrong, make corrections, and get going again.

10. Even if you're not the journaling type of person, I suggest you keep notes from your first year in the new field, and there are two reasons.

One, some day you'll want to go back and see what was going through your head as you transitioned into a new role. The second reason is that the experience will be fresh, and you might be able to help the next person who comes along.

So, don't sweat being stuck. It's happened to more people than you might think. Let it be an adventure as well as a new beginning.

Rediscover your spark. You can do it.

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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