

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1798 When You No Longer Want to Be a Manager

You've just been promoted to the managerial ranks. Maybe your arrival included an office with a door. That can be important. Maybe the new job came with a pay increase. Now you'll be in a position to buy some of those extras you've had your eye on. How about a new car, or perhaps you can start thinking about private school if you have kids. Getting that first gig as a supervisor can be exciting, but it also comes with requirements — and over time those sometimes lead to burnout. "Wait, burnout? Jer, I just got the job and I'm stoked, don't do me like that!" I'm Jerry Roberts and I'm excited if you're excited, but the reality is that a lot of people who've managed for a while find that they're no longer excited...they're looking for a way out. We'll dig into this next, on The Extra Point.

In 30 years of training, I've had too many managers and supervisors tell me that they don't like their job.

It started out great, but the extra hours and added responsibilities that were layered on, plus having to deal on a daily basis with X-number of different personalities and their seemingly endless desire to scuffle with each other has taken a toll. Some days, being a boss is a lousy job.

I've coached over 100 managers in small and large organizations. These were one-to-one sessions. Some people I met with multiple times. I heard their frustrations. I'd had some of the same issues in my management days. The majority shared certain characteristics.

They were tired. They didn't sleep well. Things that never bothered them before now set them off. The anger and frustration from work had too often spilled over into home life. They just wanted a break. They wanted the simpler life they had before getting into management.

That said, they knew they couldn't take the pay cut that would come with a move down the org chart. Their financial obligations had them trapped...which only added to stress.

Could they jump ship and take their talents to another company? Maybe. Could they start a business? Maybe. However, would either of those options solve the sleep problem? Is it possible they'd be swapping out one set of problems for another one that could be worse?

Does any of this sound familiar? Do you know anyone who fits this description?

What follows is a set of ideas that apply if you decide to suck it up again, and stay in your manager role. I think it will give you a chance to carve out a better job and a better life.

1. Figure out what's really bothering you. What are the core reasons why you feel the way you do? You'll have no progress without this step. When these are staring back at you from your notepad or computer screen, you're ready to move on.

Decide who can help you. Maybe it's your HR manager, or your boss. Whoever it is, sit down with them and explain your situation. "I would like to make this work, but here's what I'm facing and I need your help."

Good managers are hard to find. If you're one of them, there should be some motivation to get you back to happiness and productivity. If that's not what happens, then maybe the decision becomes simpler.

2. Assuming you get help, you want to set up boundaries that will protect against you being overwhelmed again. I can't do a full day, then take my work home for more on nights and weekends. I'm overdue for an assistant, at least for four hours a day. They write big books on how to set boundaries. Grab one and see what's best for you and your employer.

3. Learn to be a super-delegator. Empower your team members by entrusting them with responsibilities that first match their skills; then help them develop greater skills so you can give them more. That's good for them and good for you. (Con't.)

Let this be crystal clear. You will never have the situation you want if you cannot delegate well.

4. You need an anchor point. This is what you cling to when things aren't going your way and you're getting that "I want outa here" feeling.

Maybe that's a specific working friendship, Perhaps you author and lead a great project. It also could be that you dedicate yourself to helping your people build satisfying, exciting careers. It needs to be something that's bigger than the negativity that visits you and brings you down.

Let me focus on the people aspect. A manager is called upon to get certain tasks done and to deliver specific results. You are probably measured on those things, under the heading of KPI, key performance indicators. No problem. That's how your bosses are able to evaluate you and what you provide.

KPIs aren't an anchor. They're just how we keep score.

In my opinion, the best anchor is the team you lead, and the individual relationships you have with the members.

Some day, its those faces you'll remember when you look back on your career. You'll remember them and the times you shared, and they'll remember you and what you did to lift them up. That's the anchor I want.

I could have made the list longer, but if you can make those four things happen, you'll be well on your way to where you want to be.

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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