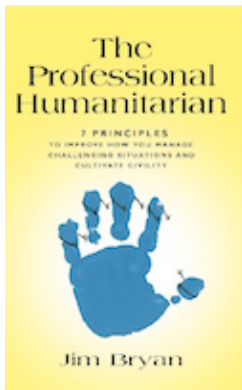


The Professional Humanitarian

7 PRINCIPLES
TO IMPROVE HOW YOU MANAGE
CHALLENGING SITUATIONS AND
CULTIVATE CIVILITY



Jim Bryan



The Professional Humanitarian delivers 7 simple principles that will enhance an individual's ability to manage challenging situations. The principles highlight the influence that individuals have on their surrounding community and focus on holding oneself accountable to high standards of self awareness. Challenging individuals and settings do not need to contribute to staff turnover and decreased morale. The Professional Humanitarian provides suggestions you can follow and implement.

The Professional Humanitarian

Order the complete book from

[Booklocker.com](http://www.booklocker.com)

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/8746.html?s=pdf>

**or from your favorite neighborhood
or online bookstore.**

Enjoy your free excerpt below!

The Professional Humanitarian

**7 Principles to Improve How You Manage Challenging
Situations and Cultivate Civility**

Jim Bryan

Copyright © 2016 Jim Bryan

ISBN: 978-1-63491-614-1

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author.

Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., Bradenton, Florida.

Printed on acid-free paper.

Booklocker.com, Inc.

2016

First Edition

Chapter 1: Belief in Oneself

A person will eventually arrive at an intersection of introspection where they ask themselves, “Who am I?” It’s not the end of the world if you don’t know. I assure you, the sun will rise tomorrow and if it doesn’t—well, you need not worry anymore about who you are because the world has inherited bigger celestial problems. However, this reflective query is a critical acknowledgement when it comes to believing in yourself. How can you believe in yourself if you are not yet aware of who *yourself* is? How does one intend to reach one’s potential if one doesn’t believe in oneself? This belief is a prerequisite to success. Every measure of success, whether it be financial, spiritual, or otherwise, requires personal belief. A person, no matter what they want to achieve, must first believe that they can achieve it, and in order to have this belief, they must know who they are and in whom they believe.

There is a memorable quote by Frank Lloyd Wright that has always remained with me. Wright, as many are well aware, was an innovative architect. Hundreds of his plans came to fruition. He said,

You have to go wholeheartedly into anything in order to achieve anything worth having.

—Frank Lloyd Wright (1958)

It is a simple statement, but one that resonates when it comes from someone whose entire legacy is rested upon a foundation of imagination. What makes Wright an even more interesting figure in regards to the discussion of humanity is that

his architecture prioritized structures cooperating with the environment and fitting into humanity's paradigm. What the quote effectively does is capture the importance of belief and faith in that first step towards a goal. No matter the magnitude of the first step, a sincere belief in the mission is not just critical; it is the most essential moment of the journey. That is what makes the statement so profound. The fact that it was made by someone who made such meaningful contributions to the world and to humanity, only makes it more powerful. And, just to bring Wright down from the pedestal and make him a more pedestrian icon, I read someplace that it isn't known for certain if he ever graduated from high school. Belief is the most important of initial steps.

Mr. Wright certainly didn't revolutionize the idea of belief being an integral ingredient of success. If one were to access the Internet and type in "quotes on believing", one could feasibly occupy the next several years of one's life scrolling from screen to screen. There you will find pictures of waterfalls and ocean fronts with inspirational quotes to get you through the day. Some of the most knowledgeable minds of humanity's existence have echoed these poignant phrases in one way or another. From Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to signs at a professional sporting event, the message is clear: Belief is where it starts.

I'm also reminded of another scholarly thinker, this one long before Frank Lloyd Wright was conjuring up ideas and then wholeheartedly developing them. St. Thomas Aquinas lived his life back in the 13th century, quite a different environment than Wright's. In fact, there are no reasonable comparisons to the two men's background and time period apart from the fact that they were both human beings during their occupation of said time periods. This condition of humanity connects these two men.

Criticisms of Aquinas are plentiful (I read once that he believed that a child should seek insight from a father because he is more rational than the mother), so one must accept that the guy was human, and no one lives an entire life without some measure of criticism. Nevertheless, Aquinas is attributed to have said:

We can't have full knowledge all at once. We must start by believing; then afterwards we may be led on to master the evidence for ourselves.

—Thomas Aquinas

This simple, yet meaningful sentence illustrates the importance of establishing a belief as a starting point upon which the entire structure of success can be built. Not only does the statement clarify this need, it also addresses the inherent nature of people wanting to know everything they need to know without earning the knowledge through time and experience. Aquinas clearly, at the moment he penned this statement, understood that knowledge gifted is not the same as knowledge earned.

This is important to discuss because as a person reflects on the knowledge they have gained over the course of a period of time, they can begin to see the differences between what they know because it was told to them and what they know because they experienced it for themselves. If I believe that I am able to understand human behavior to the degree that I can begin to navigate interpersonal situations with ease and influence, I can do this. Once I believe this to be a distinct possibility, I am now in a position to be led by others (both by written word and spoken truths) to master this craft. If I expect to just have this knowledge pumped into me without believing in my heart that I am capable, all I am is a student of ignorance, hoping that

someone (or something) else takes me along the journey, making me nothing more than a tourist in my own life.

If a person can understand the following simple directives set forth in just the two above-mentioned, meaningful quotes among a galaxy of other meaningful quotes on the subject, they will be well served to achieve their goals:

1) One cannot have all the knowledge one needs at the beginning and in one lump sum.

2) **Believing** that one can understand is the first step to true understanding.

3) We can master our chosen craft if we harness this belief and saturate ourselves with the knowledge and experience of past scholars and practitioners.

4) If we don't enter into this journey with both feet and with a full heart, we will not achieve anything worth having.

Of all the advice we receive throughout our lives about how to be successful and how to live a meaningful life, there is no more important key to success than acknowledging that one must first believe it is possible for it to occur. It is incumbent upon a person to recognize that, wherever they turn in life, there are likely to be more people around the corner. Regardless of the path chosen, whether it is professional or spiritual, the relationship with other human beings is going to be an inevitability. Being prepared for the relationships with others will require an understanding of humanity. Should a person neglect to recognize this fact, their understanding of the world will be narrow and selfishly driven. In the wildly-rare scenario where the journey takes a person away from other people to a life of total solitude, that person will find themselves *immersed* in introspection, reflecting on their place in the world and their meaning to humanity. After all, what's a recluse if there isn't an accompanying manifesto about humanity?

Should the journey be into business, politics, the arts, athletics, spiritualism, or healthcare, the most likely common denominator is going to be other people. So do yourself a favor and start accepting that humanity is in our hearts, minds, and DNA, and therefore understanding it is critical for success in every way. You don't have to like every person you meet. That would be ridiculous. The facts of current events give more than enough reasons not to do so. Just because you don't like or don't understand someone doesn't make them any less "human". On the occasion that a terrible event takes place, people are within reason to speak of hate and revenge. But, to look at the problem from the cloud's point of view, people should be ashamed at the negative potential of the human race. Individuals can sometimes make it difficult to see the value in humanity as a whole. As a person works to understand the behavior of others around them, it becomes clear that the statement "a sum of its parts" applies to people as much as it applies to complex machines. You will find lousy people in life; they do exist. You may even encounter evil in many forms; it also exists. Humanity isn't always pretty or poetic. Humans are complicated and humanity is a sum of these parts.

If your chosen path is one where you will be surrounded by people, you should be prepared to accept this. If your chosen path happens to be into the profession of human services, then this understanding is a requirement and without question your most vital tool. This brings us back to the idea of humanitarianism. If you have chosen the heart-warming profession of a human services professional, your understanding of humanity is important. No big "Aha!" moment there. It is also of profound importance that you recognize the need for working to expand your knowledge of human behavior. Take a few classes at a community college. Read a few books by some noteworthy psychologists. But, most importantly, open your

eyes and ears to the people around you and absorb what is happening. These experiences are the building blocks of a more complete understanding.

The idea of helping others in need predates it being called a profession. Communities and church congregations have been reaching out to help their fellow humans for generations. There are instances of formalized human service programs dating back to pre-revolutionary America. Part of the human services expansion was likely an awakening to the fact that droves of people cannot care for themselves independently. In doing the caring for them, there was opportunity for business, a business that makes you feel better about yourself.

Now, the volume of people in need of this service has begun to exceed the capabilities of the caregivers. This crossroads represents a shift in the thinking of administrators, CEOs, and organizations as a whole. No longer is it enough to employ a workforce with the just the required credentials. Complex disorders make for complex needs and none of these disorders are more confusing and scary than the ones that affect a person's ability to think and reason. When the people that need help taking care of themselves begin to lose their ability to think rationally and understand the motivations of those around them, caregivers are placed in a seemingly unwinnable situation—the key word being *seemingly*.

My first experience in this field was as an entry-level childcare worker at an orphanage on Long Island, NY. I grew up nearby. We didn't know much about it. When I was a kid, my father took my brother and me there after he got sick of our 1st-world problem complaints to show us where we could be living and to quit griping. Either I or my brother made a wise-crack comment about it having a pool. If I knew then what I know now, I'd have kept my mouth shut. I remember the director at that orphanage. He was a Ph.D. in something. We

rarely saw him. When he was around, everyone would be very sure they were doing things right. When he wasn't around, people would say funny but hurtful things. After some time, I started to form ideas about how I'd be if I were the boss. I knew for one thing that I'd be around more often.

After a few years, I was offered the first promotion of my life, and I turned it down. This is something I would never do again. The position of Cottage Chief was the promotion. When the time came, I had already tasted something I really liked: stand-up comedy.

I had already decided I was going to head west to Las Vegas, my birthplace, to be the next big thing in comedy and write the next Great American Novel. What can I say, I aim high. Sometimes when I aim, I miss. I am not the most treasured writer of a generation and while I have made lots of audience members laugh, I am not on your television one night a week during primetime.

What I did do when I got to Vegas was get another human services job. I got another entry-level job on staff at a therapeutic group home for adolescent boys; challenging crowd. The level of training at this job was minimal, so the next few years were a period of developing my own skills and shaping them into something unique with little to no restrictions. After a while, my methods were recognized enough to get a nominal promotion to lead residential worker. It was a small supervisory role; six or so staff. There was a feeling of great individual accomplishment with this nominal promotion because I genuinely created it for myself. There was no identified career path at this organization and almost no direct supervision. My own method of accomplishing the task of managing challenging interpersonal relationships was working and it felt great that it came from within my own heart and mind.

I was never formally instructed on how to manage a volatile, mentally-unstable, adolescent boy who was brandishing a box cutter with malicious intent to harm me. I had to achieve a desirable outcome all on my own. This period was rife with therapeutic failures and genuine learning opportunities. I met *good* people at this place. The difference between me and others I noticed was that, in the absence of supervision, I became my own instructor. I revisited every challenging interaction and if the event resulted in a physical restraint, I believed that *I* had failed. The instructor in me reminded me of this failure. I told myself: “You can do this better and without conflict. You need to manage yourself when the client cannot manage themselves. You need to be the grizzled sea captain that has been through this before. You need to be the lighthouse for the lost ship. You don’t move so as to confuse an already-panicked person. You stand firm and be the beacon to a safe haven.”

Staying with the lighthouse theme, I reminded myself that the lighthouse is weathered and attacked by the environmental elements. The waves angrily crash at the foot of the structure. Yet, the lighthouse remains steadfast in its purpose: getting the ship home safe to harbor. Once the ship is safely docked, the lighthouse proudly awaits the next ship to save. Without any conscious awareness, the lighthouse has a defined purpose. I instructed myself to allow that lighthouse to be my core. I instructed myself to be strong and believe that my purpose was meaningful and will help people get to port safely.

As the belief in myself became more grounded, I developed into a more competent professional. I didn’t achieve this belief at the previous job at the orphanage. The praise I received there was more superficial. I was young, and all I heard was that I was “good” or “smart”. I wasn’t much concerned about the

evolution of my ideas and the resolve of my purpose. I was smitten with flattery as most young adults are.

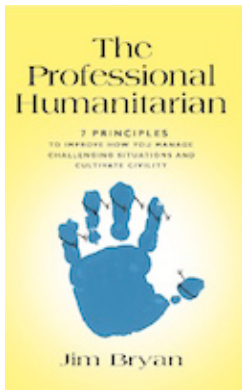
In Vegas, there wasn't a lot of external praise to benchmark developmental steps in this understanding of human service. Here there was almost no feedback. In most cases, this would be an environment where people would become stagnant. I, however, thrived for some reason. I was offered the liberty to be creative with methods and experiment with intervention techniques that didn't involve conflict-model foundations. Without that freedom, I do not think that I would have been able to develop such a firm belief in what I was doing. It was quite simple: There was no way anyone could tell me it wasn't working because I was watching a measured and peaceful approach to challenging individuals take real shape; other members of the team were taking notice, too.

This was a pivotal time in my personal development. I was polishing methods that had no earthly use outside of human services, or so I thought. I was also performing stand-up comedy in clubs around town on a regular basis. Never in my life had I found such a balance with professional and personal creativity. I felt as if I was walking the path that had been laid out for me by some other-worldly force. And, my reward for believing in myself in continuing this path would be delivered to me without notice.

I met my wife and had our first child while I was working in Vegas. She was visiting her cousin who lived there. I remember where we first met, the band that was on stage, and the shirt she was wearing. I don't believe in love at first sight, per se, because I do believe that love is an organic thing that is cultivated by mutual respect and understanding, two things that do not exist when you first meet someone. What I do know for sure was that I was placed in her presence like a chess piece, and she in mine. The rest was up to us. I was a fortunate man. I

believed in my abilities more than ever. I was actively employing my imagination to form ideas. Most importantly, I had found a partner to continue this journey with—and to sweeten the pot, she, too, was a human services professional.

We married after a lengthy engagement and, after our son was 3 months old, my again-pregnant wife and I elected to move back East. I had grown bored with the job and the lack of advancement. I was not achieving the super-stardom I had planned on with stand-up comedy and I was feeling the pressure to be a more conventional husband, father, and provider. Again, needing a job and now with 10 years of experience in one field, the choice was clear: It was time to move to another human services destination and continue this journey. This next step would be taken with a firm belief in myself.



The Professional Humanitarian delivers 7 simple principles that will enhance an individual's ability to manage challenging situations. The principles highlight the influence that individuals have on their surrounding community and focus on holding oneself accountable to high standards of self awareness. Challenging individuals and settings do not need to contribute to staff turnover and decreased morale. The Professional Humanitarian provides suggestions you can follow and implement.

The Professional Humanitarian

Order the complete book from

[Booklocker.com](http://www.booklocker.com)

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/8746.html?s=pdf>

**or from your favorite neighborhood
or online bookstore.**