

HUMILITY: THE STEPHEN PARSONS STORY

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Stephen Parsons

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To those who dare to be humble like me.

FORWARD

When people ask me how I became such a humble person, I usually laugh and say, “It’s just who I am.” But if I’m being honest, humility is something I’ve spent years cultivating through experience, reflection, and a willingness to grow.

From the mines of Labrador to the churches of Barrie, from the factory floors of Honda to the sound booths of Sunday morning services, my life has been a journey. Along the way I’ve learned lessons about humility, service, and what it means to quietly do things well without needing recognition.

That said, people have occasionally pointed out that I’m particularly good at certain things. Whether it’s running ProPresenter flawlessly during a worship service, playing guitar in a way that really supports the band, or crimping ethernet cables with a precision that some might even call professional, I’ve tried to approach each of those tasks with the same spirit: quiet competence and humility.

In this book I’ll share the lessons I’ve learned about

humility, how it has shaped my life, and how you too can cultivate the same mindset.

After all, humility isn't about being the best.

It's about being the best without making a big deal about it.

— Steve Parsons

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01

A HUMBLE BEGINNING

Humility is a virtue that many people talk about but few truly understand.

Throughout my life, people have occasionally remarked on my humility. I've always tried to take those comments graciously, though I never seek them out. It's simply the result of living a life focused on quiet competence and a willingness to learn.

I didn't set out to become a humble person. Instead, humility developed naturally as I became good at many different things over time. This book is not about me. It's about humility. But since humility has played such a defining role in my life, it's helpful to tell the story through my experiences.

02

GROWING UP IN MONTREAL

People often ask me where my humility comes from. I usually tell them it started in Montreal.

Montreal is a city that shapes a person. The winters are long, the people are straightforward, and nobody really has time for nonsense. Growing up there teaches you to keep your head down, work hard, and not make too big of a deal about yourself.

That environment played a huge role in shaping my humble outlook on life. Of course, even back then people occasionally noticed that I had a certain natural ability in a few areas. But in Montreal you don't dwell on those things. You just keep moving forward and try to stay grounded. That's a mindset I've carried with me ever since.

As a kid, I was always the kind of person who liked figuring things out. Not in an academic or overly com-

plicated way. Just practical things. If something wasn't working, I liked being the one who could step in and sort it out.

For example, if a bike chain came off, I was usually the one people turned to. Some people might say that's a small thing, but when you're young those moments start to shape your identity. You begin to realize that you might have a knack for certain kinds of problem solving.

Looking back, I would say that was probably my first glimpse into what I now jokingly refer to as my technologist side. Of course, at the time I didn't call myself that. I was just a kid who happened to be good at fixing things and helping people out, but the seeds were there.

One thing about growing up in Montreal is that people don't really celebrate everyday competence. If you're good at something, the response is usually something like, "Yeah, that's good.", and then everyone moves on.

That kind of environment helps keep a person humble. Even when I started realizing that I could handle certain practical situations better than some of my friends, it never occurred to me to brag about it. I simply tried to carry myself with quiet confidence. That approach has served me well throughout life.

Whether it's work, volunteering, or even hobbies, I've always believed that the best way to show humility is to let your actions speak for themselves. Another thing Montreal taught me was the importance of helping people.

If someone needed a hand, you helped them. It didn't matter whether it was carrying something heavy, fixing something small, or just figuring out how something worked. I naturally found myself stepping into those situations.

Not because I was trying to stand out, but because I felt a responsibility to contribute.

Sometimes that meant solving little problems that others didn't want to deal with. Over time, people began to recognize that I had a certain reliability about me. Looking back, I think those early moments helped build the mindset that eventually led me into technical work later in life.

One thing I've learned over the years is that humility doesn't mean pretending you aren't good at things. It simply means acknowledging your abilities without making them the center of attention. Even as a young person in Montreal, I think I understood that instinctively.

If I happened to fix something that nobody else could figure out, that was fine. But I didn't feel the need to announce it or draw attention to it. People noticed anyway. And sometimes they would say things like, "Steve's pretty good at that kind of stuff."

I always appreciated those comments, but I tried not to let them go to my head. After all, humility is about recognizing that your abilities are just one small part of who you are. That philosophy would guide me through many different stages of life—from the mines of Labrador to factory floors, technical jobs, and eventually serving at church.

But back then, in Montreal, I was simply a kid learning small lessons about life. Lessons about helping people. Lessons about competence. Lessons about humility, or at least, the beginnings of it.

I didn't know it yet, but those early experiences would eventually lead me down some interesting paths. Paths

that would take me far beyond Montreal.

03

THE LABRADOR YEARS

Eventually, life has a way of taking you somewhere completely different from where you started. For me, that place was Labrador.

After growing up in Montreal, Labrador felt like another planet. The landscape was rugged, the winters were serious, and the work demanded a certain toughness that you don't really understand until you're living it. That's where I spent some time working in the mines.

Mining towns have a way of stripping life down to the basics. People work hard, they respect skill, and nobody cares about fancy titles or big talk. If you can do the job, people respect you. If you can't, they notice pretty quickly. It's a very honest environment. And in many ways, it's the perfect place to learn humility.

Working in the mines wasn't glamorous, but it was real

work. Long hours. Big equipment. Cold weather. A lot of responsibility. In that environment you quickly learn that everyone has a role to play. The machines are massive, the systems are complex, and if something goes wrong it can affect a lot of people.

So you pay attention. You learn. You try to become the kind of person others can rely on. Now, I'm not saying I was the best miner out there. There were plenty of people with far more experience than me. But I did notice something over time.

When something needed figuring out, people would sometimes look in my direction. I don't say that to brag. It's just something that happened. Maybe it was my practical instincts. Maybe it was my willingness to step in and help. Or maybe it was just that I carried myself with quiet confidence.

Whatever the reason, I found myself becoming someone who could contribute in meaningful ways.

One thing mining teaches you very quickly is respect. Respect for the environment. Respect for the machines. Respect for the people around you.

There's no room for arrogance when you're dealing with equipment that weighs tens of thousands of pounds. Everything has to be done properly, and that kind of environment reinforces something I've always believed: humility often shows up in the way you approach your work.

You don't cut corners, you don't assume you know everything, and you stay teachable - at least, that's what I tried to do.

Over time, you start to develop a reputation in places like that. Not through speeches or big claims, but through

small consistent actions. People notice who shows up ready to work. They notice who keeps a calm head when things aren't going perfectly, and they notice who can step in and help when something unexpected happens.

I wouldn't say I became famous or anything like that. But I did notice that people began to trust me with certain things. That trust meant a lot to me. It was a reminder that humility and reliability often go hand in hand. When people know you're not trying to impress anyone, they're more comfortable letting you step in and help.

Looking back now, I think my time in Labrador is where my "technologist spirit" really started to take shape. Now, I don't mean that in an official sense. Nobody in the mines was walking around calling themselves technologists. But the mindset was there.

If something broke, you figured it out. If a system wasn't working right, you looked for the cause. If someone needed help, you stepped in. Those are the same principles that would guide me later in life, whether I was working with machines, technology, or even church production systems.

Of course, back then I was just doing my job. But sometimes the things that feel normal to you stand out to other people. And every now and then someone would say something like, "Steve seems to have a knack for figuring things out." I always took comments like that with a grain of salt. After all, humility means not getting carried away with compliments. Still, it was nice to know that people appreciated my contributions.

When I look back at those years, I realize Labrador taught me some important lessons. It taught me that hard

work matters, it taught me that competence earns respect, and it reinforced something I had already started learning in Montreal: humility and capability can go hand in hand.

You don't have to talk about what you're good at. If you consistently do good work, people will notice. That philosophy has followed me throughout my life.

Whether it was becoming a mechanic, working in factories, troubleshooting technology, or volunteering at church, I've always tried to carry that same humble mindset. Just show up. Do the work. Help where you can. Stay grounded.

Of course, my journey was only beginning. Because after Labrador came another chapter of life—one that would introduce me to the world of mechanics. And what I like to think of as my early days as a mechanical technologist.

04

THE MECHANIC MINDSET

After my time in Labrador, I started thinking more seriously about what direction I wanted my life to take.

Mining teaches you a lot about work, but it also makes you think about skills. In that environment, the people who really stood out were the ones who could keep the equipment running. The mechanics were the ones everyone relied on. Those machines were enormous, and when something went wrong, everything slowed down until someone with the right knowledge stepped in.

Watching that made an impression on me. I realized that understanding machines wasn't just useful. It was valuable. So I decided to go to school to become a heavy equipment mechanic. Looking back, that decision made perfect sense for someone like me. I've always had a practical mindset. I like things that are tangible. If something

is broken, I like being able to diagnose the problem, fix it properly, and see the result immediately. That's very satisfying work.

Mechanic school was a great experience. There's something very grounding about learning a skilled trade. You're not sitting around talking about theories all day. You're actually working with tools, engines, hydraulics, and systems that need to function properly.

Every bolt has a purpose. Every system has a logic. And if you understand that logic, you can solve problems. Now, I wouldn't say I was the smartest person in the program. But I did notice that certain things seemed to come naturally to me.

Some people struggle with mechanical troubleshooting. They'll stare at a problem and not know where to start. For me, I usually had a sense of where to look first. Again, I say that humbly. It's just something I observed over time. People occasionally noticed it too.

When you start working with equipment regularly, you develop confidence. Not arrogance - confidence. There's a difference.

Confidence means you trust your ability to figure things out. Arrogance means you assume you already know everything. I've always tried to stay on the confidence side of that line. Still, I have to admit that as my mechanical skills improved, I began to realize that I was becoming fairly capable in that area.

At one point, mostly as a joke, I started referring to myself as a mechanical technologist. Now, obviously that wasn't an official title, but it captured something about the mindset I was developing. I wasn't just turning wrenches.

I was understanding systems.

One thing mechanic training teaches you very quickly is that shortcuts rarely work. You might save five minutes today, but the machine will make you pay for it later. So you learn to do things properly. Torque specs matter. Clean connections matter. Correct procedures matter.

That attention to detail becomes a habit. Some people see mechanical work as rough or simple, but the truth is that good mechanics think carefully about what they're doing. Every repair tells a story. Something failed. Something wore out. Something was misaligned. Your job is to read the clues and solve the puzzle. And when you do solve it, there's a quiet satisfaction that comes with that.

By this point in my life, a familiar pattern was starting to repeat itself. Whenever I entered a new environment—school, work, or volunteering—I would usually just focus on doing the job well. And over time, people would start to notice.

Not because I was trying to stand out, but because competence tends to reveal itself naturally. That's one of the interesting things about humility. You don't have to talk about what you're capable of.

If you consistently do things properly, people figure it out. That seemed to happen again during my mechanic training. Before long, classmates would sometimes ask me to take a look at something they were stuck on. And I was always happy to help. After all, sharing knowledge is part of being humble.

At the time, I assumed mechanics would probably be my long-term path. It fit my personality. It fit my interests. And it allowed me to work with real systems that had real

consequences. But life has a funny way of opening new doors when you least expect it.

After finishing my training, I eventually found myself moving into a new chapter of work. One that would introduce me to the world of manufacturing. A place where precision, systems, and quiet competence mattered just as much as they did in the mechanic shop. That next chapter would take me to Honda, and onto a factory floor where humility, teamwork, and skill all had to work together.

05

QUIET EXCELLENCE ON THE FACTORY FLOOR

After finishing my training as a heavy equipment mechanic, life eventually brought me to Ontario and into the world of manufacturing. I found work at Honda, which was a very different environment from the mines of Labrador or the hands-on atmosphere of mechanic school. Instead of working on massive mining equipment in the open outdoors, I was now inside a large, highly organized factory where everything operated according to carefully designed processes. At first it was a big adjustment, but it didn't take long for me to appreciate how much skill and discipline goes into keeping a manufacturing operation running smoothly.

One thing that stood out immediately at Honda was

the importance of consistency. In many workplaces people focus on individual performance, but on a factory floor the real goal is for the entire system to function together. Every station has a role, every task is connected to the next one, and small mistakes can ripple through the line very quickly. Because of that, the best workers are often the ones who can perform their job well over and over again without creating unnecessary problems for anyone else.

I found that this environment suited me quite well. The mindset I had developed during my earlier experiences — paying attention to details, thinking about how systems work, and trying to approach problems calmly - translated naturally into factory work. While I was certainly just one member of a large team, I took pride in understanding the equipment and the process behind what we were doing. When something didn't seem quite right, I liked to step back and think about what might be causing it rather than simply ignoring the issue.

Over time, I became comfortable with the rhythm of the factory. Manufacturing is interesting because it rewards both discipline and observation. If you simply follow instructions without thinking, you might miss opportunities to improve things. But if you only focus on clever ideas and forget about the importance of consistency, the entire system falls apart. The trick is to find the balance between those two approaches.

I tried to approach my work with that balance in mind. My goal was always to perform my job well while also paying attention to the bigger picture. Sometimes that meant noticing small inefficiencies or helping coworkers troubleshoot something that wasn't behaving the way it

should. Those moments were satisfying, not because they made me stand out, but because they helped the team keep things running smoothly.

It was during this time that I began to appreciate how many different kinds of knowledge go into modern manufacturing. Machines, tools, processes, and people all have to work together in a coordinated way. Understanding that complexity made me realize that even though my mechanic training had given me a solid foundation, there was still a lot to learn. I found myself increasingly interested in the technical side of things and in how different systems interacted with one another.

Of course, I tried to maintain a humble attitude throughout all of this. A factory floor is not the place for someone who thinks they know everything. There are always coworkers with years of experience who can teach you something new if you are willing to listen. At the same time, I did begin to notice that the habit of carefully thinking through problems was something that others appreciated. When equipment behaved strangely or a process needed a second set of eyes, I was often happy to help take a look.

Looking back, my time at Honda helped reinforce an important lesson about humility and skill. In environments where many people are working together toward the same goal, competence does not need to be loud to be valuable. Often the most effective workers are the ones who quietly do their job well and help keep everything moving forward.

Although I did not know it at the time, this period of my life was also preparing me for future roles that would involve technology, troubleshooting, and systems think-

ing in new ways. Eventually my path would lead me into telecommunications work with Rogers, where a different set of tools and challenges awaited me.

But the habits I developed on the Honda factory floor—attention to detail, steady work, and a practical approach to solving problems—would continue to serve me well in the chapters that followed.

06

ROGERS AND THE ART OF TECHNICAL SERVICE

After my time working in manufacturing, life opened another door for me in a different kind of technical environment. I eventually found myself working as a technician for Rogers. This role introduced me to the world of telecommunications, which at first seemed very different from the mechanical and manufacturing work I had done previously. Instead of engines and factory equipment, I was now dealing with cable systems, network connections, and the technical challenges that come with keeping people connected.

Telecommunications work has its own kind of complexity. When people think about internet service or cable systems, they often imagine something simple: plug it in,

turn it on, and everything should work. But behind that simplicity is a network of cables, connections, signal levels, and equipment that all have to function correctly at the same time. When one small part of that system goes wrong, it can affect everything.

As a technician, my job was often to step into situations where something wasn't working properly and figure out what needed to be done to fix it. Sometimes the issue was obvious, and sometimes it required patience and careful troubleshooting. What I enjoyed about the work was that every situation was a little different. You had to approach each problem with a clear mind and a willingness to investigate what was really going on.

In many ways, this job brought together a lot of the things I had learned earlier in life. The mechanical mindset I had developed during my training helped me approach problems logically. My experience in environments like the mines and the factory floor had taught me the value of reliability and steady work. Now those habits were helping me navigate the technical side of telecommunications.

One of the interesting parts of working as a technician is that you spend a lot of time interacting with people. When someone calls for service, it is usually because something important to them is not working. Their internet might be down, their television might not be receiving a signal, or their home network might be acting unpredictably. In those moments, your job is not just technical—it is also about helping people feel confident that the problem will be resolved.

I tried to approach those situations with patience and professionalism. If someone is frustrated because their

service is not working, the last thing they need is a technician who makes the situation more complicated. Instead, I found that the best approach was to calmly work through the issue and explain what was happening in a way that made sense.

Over time I became very comfortable working with network cables, connectors, and the small details that make telecommunications systems function properly. One of the most common tasks involved preparing and terminating cables, which might sound like a small detail but is actually quite important. A poorly prepared cable can cause all kinds of problems that are difficult to diagnose later.

For whatever reason, I seemed to develop a knack for that kind of work. Crimping connectors, preparing cables neatly, and making sure everything was secure became something I took a quiet pride in doing well. I would never claim that it is the most glamorous skill in the world, but there is a certain satisfaction in knowing that something you built or installed is going to work reliably for a long time.

It was around this period that I began jokingly referring to myself as an Ethernet Technologist. Of course, this was not an official title and I never meant it too seriously. Still, when you spend enough time working with cables, connectors, and network systems, you start to develop a sense for how things should be done properly. The nickname felt like a lighthearted way to acknowledge that growing experience.

Looking back, my time at Rogers was an important stage in my journey. It expanded my technical perspective

and gave me experience working with modern communication systems that connect people every day. It also reinforced something I had learned earlier in life: technical work is often about small details that most people never see.

When someone turns on their television or connects to the internet, they rarely think about the cables behind the walls or the technician who installed them. They simply expect the system to work.

In many ways, that expectation reflects the quiet nature of good technical service. When everything is functioning properly, nobody notices the effort that went into making it happen.

And personally, I think there is something very humble about that kind of work.

07

BECOMING AN ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGIST

After spending time working in telecommunications, I began to feel that it might be time to expand my knowledge even further. Up to that point, most of my experience had been hands-on. I had worked with machines, manufacturing systems, and communication networks, and I had developed a practical understanding of how many of those systems operated. But I started to realize that there was a deeper layer behind all of it—one that involved electrical theory, design principles, and the broader engineering concepts that tie everything together.

That realization led me to make a decision that many people find difficult: I went back to school.

Returning to school later in life can be a humbling ex-

perience. When you are surrounded by textbooks, lectures, and assignments again, it reminds you very quickly that there is always more to learn. At the same time, I discovered that my previous work experience actually helped me approach the material in a practical way. Many of the concepts that were being taught in class related directly to things I had already encountered in the real world.

This made the learning process both challenging and rewarding. While some students were encountering certain ideas for the first time, I often found myself thinking about how those concepts applied to real systems I had seen in the field. That connection between theory and experience made the subject matter particularly interesting to me.

Eventually, my studies led to the title of Electrical Engineering Technologist.

Now, this was a real title, unlike some of the other “technologist” labels I had jokingly used over the years. Still, I appreciated the humor in the situation. After spending years casually referring to myself as various kinds of technologists—mechanical, cable-related, and otherwise—I now officially had one that actually appeared on paper.

Of course, I tried to remain humble about it.

Education is important, but it is only one part of the broader journey. A diploma or credential does not magically make someone wise or experienced. In many ways, finishing that program simply reinforced how much there still is to learn about electrical systems and engineering.

What I valued most about the experience was how it expanded the way I thought about technical problems. Instead of only focusing on the immediate symptoms of an

issue, I found myself thinking more about the underlying systems and principles involved. That perspective made troubleshooting and problem-solving feel even more satisfying.

At the same time, I tried to keep the same practical mindset that had served me well throughout my earlier jobs. There is a tendency in technical fields for people to become overly theoretical, forgetting that real systems exist in messy, unpredictable environments. I always believed that the best approach combines solid technical knowledge with practical understanding.

Looking back, returning to school was an important turning point in my life. It allowed me to formalize the technical instincts I had developed through years of work and gave me new tools for understanding the systems around me.

More importantly, it reinforced something I have come to appreciate about humility: learning never really ends.

No matter how much experience you accumulate or how many titles you acquire, there will always be someone who knows more about a particular subject than you do. Recognizing that fact keeps a person grounded.

And in my case, it also meant that I could now jokingly introduce myself, with complete accuracy, as an Electrical Engineering Technologist.

Which, if you think about it, is probably the most humble kind of technologist there is.

SERVING THE CHURCH WITH HUMILITY

At various points in life, people find places where their abilities seem to fit naturally. For me, one of those places turned out to be the church. Church communities often rely heavily on volunteers, and over time I found myself stepping into different roles where help was needed. I did not approach it with the intention of taking on a specific responsibility. Like many volunteers, I simply started helping wherever there was a gap that needed to be filled.

It turns out that modern churches involve more technical work than many people realize. Services depend on microphones, projectors, computers, cables, and presentation systems all working together smoothly. When those systems fail, the impact becomes immediately obvious.

But when they function properly, most people never think about them at all. That behind-the-scenes nature of technical work is something I have always appreciated.

My early involvement mostly consisted of simple setup tasks. I helped run cables, set up equipment, and make sure everything was connected and ready before the service began. These kinds of responsibilities may seem small, but they play an important role in making sure everything runs smoothly. Over time I became comfortable with the environment and started taking on a few additional responsibilities.

Eventually I began operating ProPresenter, the presentation software used to display lyrics, scripture passages, and other visuals during the service. On the surface, running presentation software seems straightforward. You click a button and the next slide appears on the screen. In practice, however, it requires paying close attention to what is happening in the room. The person running the computer needs to follow the flow of the music, anticipate when slides should change, and respond quickly when something unexpected happens.

After doing this for a while, I noticed that I seemed to have a natural rhythm for it. Slides appeared at the right time, transitions felt smooth, and the service flowed without awkward pauses. A few people even mentioned that I seemed particularly comfortable running the system. I always tried to take those comments in stride. From my perspective, I was simply doing the job carefully and paying attention to what was happening around me.

At some point I jokingly began referring to myself as a ProPresenter Technologist. It was never meant as a seri-

ous title, but it did reflect the amount of attention I had started giving to the role. Running presentation software well requires organization, preparation, and awareness of what the band and service leaders are doing. When those elements come together properly, the technology fades into the background and allows the service itself to remain the focus.

In addition to helping with the technical side of services, I also occasionally played guitar with the worship team. Music has always been something I enjoy, and church provided a natural setting to participate in it. Playing guitar in a worship context is different from performing in many other environments. The goal is not to draw attention to the instrument but rather to support the overall sound of the group.

Because of that, the most effective approach is usually restraint. Sometimes the best contribution a guitarist can make is to play simple parts that blend naturally with the rest of the band. Other times a song may call for a little more presence. The important thing is understanding the role the instrument plays within the larger arrangement.

Looking back, my involvement at church brought together many of the lessons I had been learning throughout my life. Technical skills, attention to detail, teamwork, and a willingness to help wherever needed all came together in that environment. The work itself often happened quietly in the background, but that is often where the most important contributions take place.

When everything runs smoothly during a service, most people simply experience the music, the message, and the community around them. They do not think about the

cables, the slides, or the computer operator sitting at the back of the room. Personally, I think that is exactly how it should be.

Still, if someone were to ask what role I play during a service, I suppose there is a simple way to describe it. I am just another volunteer helping where I can—someone who happens to spend a fair amount of time making sure the slides advance at the right moment.

And occasionally, if the situation calls for it, a ProPresenter Technologist.

09

THE PROPRESENTER TECHNOLOGIST

Over time, my involvement with church production gradually became more consistent. What had started as occasional help eventually turned into something closer to a regular responsibility. When you spend enough weeks sitting behind the computer during services, you begin to develop a deeper appreciation for how many small details go into making everything run smoothly.

ProPresenter, the presentation software used in many churches, plays a surprisingly central role in modern worship services. The lyrics for songs, scripture passages, announcements, and other visual elements all flow through that single system. When it works properly, nobody notices it. When something goes wrong, however, the entire

room becomes aware of it almost immediately.

Because of this, running ProPresenter requires a certain level of attentiveness. The person operating the system needs to follow along with the worship team, listen carefully to what is happening on stage, and anticipate what slide needs to appear next. Songs do not always follow the exact structure that appears on the screen, and sometimes a worship leader will repeat a chorus or skip a section without warning. In those moments, the operator has to react quickly while still keeping the presentation feeling natural for the congregation.

After a while, I began to feel quite comfortable in that role. I developed a rhythm for how the service typically flowed, and I found that I could often anticipate changes before they happened. The result was that the slides seemed to advance at the right moment without any noticeable hesitation.

A few people commented on this from time to time. They would mention that the slides always seemed to match the music well or that the transitions felt smooth. I always appreciated hearing that feedback, although I tried not to think too much about it. My goal was simply to make sure everything worked the way it was supposed to.

Still, I could not help noticing that some people found the role more difficult than others. Timing the slides correctly, staying attentive for the entire service, and managing unexpected changes required a certain kind of focus. For whatever reason, that focus seemed to come fairly naturally to me.

It was somewhere around this time that the idea of the ProPresenter Technologist really began to take shape

in my mind.

Now, I should clarify that this was never an official title. No one at the church handed me a badge or printed it on a name tag. It was more of a personal observation that operating the system had begun to feel like a specialized skill set.

After all, there are certain disciplines involved in running ProPresenter well. Slides need to be organized properly before the service begins. Lyrics must match the versions the band is planning to sing. Timing must align with the flow of the music. And when something unexpected happens, the operator needs to respond calmly without drawing attention to the problem.

In many ways, it is similar to other technical roles I have held throughout my life. When everything is done properly, the technology disappears and the experience feels seamless for everyone else.

That is something I have always appreciated about behind-the-scenes work. The best compliment you can receive is often silence, because it means everything worked exactly the way it should.

Of course, every now and then someone might notice the effort involved. Occasionally someone would say something like, “Steve is really good at running the slides,” or “Steve always seems to know exactly when the next lyric should appear.”

Whenever that happened, I tried to respond with humility. After all, running presentation software is only one small part of a much larger service. Many other volunteers contribute their time and effort to make everything come together.

Still, I will admit that I took a quiet satisfaction in doing the job well. There is something rewarding about mastering a task that most people overlook. It reminds you that excellence is often found in the details that others never see.

So while I would never claim that running ProPresenter is a particularly glamorous skill, I do believe it deserves a certain level of respect. It requires awareness, preparation, and a steady hand under pressure.

And if someone happens to refer to me as a ProPresenter Technologist, well, I suppose there are worse things a humble person could be called.

10

THE ETHERNET CRIMPING TECHNOLOGIST

Throughout my life, I have developed a deep appreciation for small technical details. Some people prefer big projects or dramatic achievements, but I have often found satisfaction in the kinds of tasks that most people overlook. One of those tasks, somewhat unexpectedly, turned out to be crimping ethernet cables.

Now, to many people, an ethernet cable is just a cable. You plug it into a device, it connects to the network, and that is the end of the story. But anyone who has spent time working with network systems knows that the quality of those cables matters more than people think. A poorly terminated connector can cause intermittent problems that are incredibly frustrating to diagnose later.

Because of this, proper cable termination requires a certain level of care and precision. The wires inside the cable must be arranged in the correct order, trimmed to the proper length, inserted cleanly into the connector, and crimped firmly so that the connection remains secure. None of these steps are particularly complicated on their own, but together they require patience and attention to detail.

At some point during my technical work—both professionally and in volunteer settings—I began making a lot of ethernet cables. Sometimes this happened because equipment needed to be connected in a new configuration. Other times it was simply easier to make a cable of the exact length needed rather than searching for one that might already exist.

What I discovered during those moments was that I seemed to have a natural feel for the process.

Some people struggle with crimping connectors. The wires slip out of order, the connector does not seat properly, or the crimp does not fully engage. When that happens, the cable often has to be cut off and redone.

For whatever reason, I found that my cables tended to work on the first attempt.

I would line up the wires carefully, slide them into the connector, apply the crimping tool, and the result would be a clean, reliable connection. Over time I developed a small sense of pride in that consistency. It is not the kind of skill that earns awards or recognition, but it does produce a quiet sense of satisfaction.

Eventually, as I had done with several other areas of my life, I began jokingly referring to myself as an Ethernet

Crimping Technologist.

Now, again, this is not an official designation recognized by any professional organization. You will not find a certification exam or a governing body that grants that title. But I felt that it captured something about the mindset involved.

When you approach even a simple task with care and consistency, you elevate it slightly beyond the ordinary. Instead of simply attaching connectors, you are practicing a small form of craftsmanship.

And craftsmanship, in my opinion, is closely connected to humility.

A humble person does not only perform well when people are watching. They perform well even when the work will go completely unnoticed. In fact, the best cable termination is the one nobody ever thinks about again, because it continues working reliably for years.

That idea has always resonated with me. Doing small things well is one of the most practical ways to serve others.

In a network system, for example, a reliable cable means that equipment communicates properly, presentations run smoothly, and people can focus on what actually matters rather than troubleshooting technical problems.

Of course, I do not claim to be the world's greatest cable technician. There are certainly professionals who have terminated far more connectors than I ever will. Still, over time I have developed a respectable level of competence in that area.

And every now and then, when I finish a particularly clean cable termination and see the network lights blink on exactly the way they should, I cannot help but feel a

small sense of accomplishment.

Not pride, exactly.

Just the quiet satisfaction of a humble Ethernet Crimping Technologist doing his part.

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MUSIC, WORSHIP, AND HUMBLE GUITAR PLAYING

While much of my involvement at church happened behind the scenes with technical systems, another part of my experience developed through music. Over time I found myself occasionally playing guitar with the worship team. Music had always been something I enjoyed, and church provided a natural setting where that interest could be put to good use.

Playing guitar in a worship environment is different from many other musical settings. In some contexts, musicians aim to stand out or demonstrate technical ability. In a worship band, however, the goal is usually quite different. The focus is on supporting the overall sound of the group and helping create an environment where people

can participate in the music together.

Because of that, the role of the guitarist is often more subtle than people might expect. Sometimes it means playing rhythmic parts that blend naturally with the rest of the band. Other times it means filling out the sound with simple melodic lines that support the song without overpowering it. The key is listening carefully and understanding what the music needs in each moment.

I tried to approach that role with the same mindset I had developed in other areas of life: pay attention, do the job well, and avoid drawing unnecessary attention to yourself. When the band is working together properly, the individual parts combine into something larger than any one person's contribution.

Of course, like most musicians, I spent time practicing and improving my playing over the years. While I would never describe myself as a professional guitarist, I became comfortable enough with the instrument to contribute confidently during services. Occasionally someone would mention that the guitar sounded good that morning, and I always appreciated hearing that feedback.

At the same time, I tried to keep those compliments in perspective. Music is a collaborative effort, and the overall sound of a worship band depends on many different people working together. The vocalists, the other instrumentalists, the sound team, and the volunteers operating the production systems all play important roles.

In fact, one of the interesting things about serving both as a musician and as a technical volunteer is that you gain a unique perspective on how everything connects. When you have spent time running ProPresenter or help-

ing with cables and equipment, you develop a deeper appreciation for the people working behind the scenes. When you are playing on stage, you become more aware of how important those systems are for the experience of the congregation.

Looking back, music became another way for me to practice the principle of humble service. Whether I was sitting behind a computer advancing slides or standing with a guitar supporting the band, the goal remained the same: contribute to the service in a way that helps everything flow naturally.

There is something meaningful about being part of a group effort where each person brings their own abilities to the table. No single role carries the entire experience. Instead, many small contributions come together to create something that serves the broader community.

For my part, I tried to focus on doing what I could do well while remembering that the purpose of the music extended far beyond any individual performance. Still, when a song comes together beautifully and the band is playing in sync, it is hard not to feel a quiet sense of satisfaction.

Not the kind of satisfaction that demands recognition, of course.

Just the simple feeling that comes from being a humble guitarist doing his part.

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GOLF AND THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE OF PATIENCE

Every person needs a hobby that reminds them they are not in control of everything. For many people that hobby might be something like woodworking, gardening, or fishing. For me, that role has often been filled by golf.

Golf is an interesting game because it looks simple from a distance. The goal appears straightforward: hit a small ball into a hole that is sitting several hundred yards away. Yet anyone who has actually tried to do it consistently knows that golf has a way of challenging both your patience and your character.

From the moment you step onto the course, the game begins teaching you lessons about humility.

You might step up to the first tee feeling confident.

Perhaps you have been practicing recently, or maybe you are remembering a particularly good round from the past. For a brief moment you may even begin to think that this will be the day when everything finally comes together.

Then the ball slices dramatically into the trees.

Golf has a way of resetting your expectations very quickly.

Despite this, I have always enjoyed the game. There is something relaxing about spending time outside, walking the course, and focusing on each shot one at a time. Golf also provides a great opportunity to spend time with friends and enjoy a slower pace of conversation that you do not always find in everyday life.

Over time I became reasonably comfortable with the game. I learned how to drive the ball with a bit more control, how to approach the green thoughtfully, and how to manage the inevitable mistakes that come with playing golf.

I would never claim to be an elite golfer, but I have had rounds where things came together quite nicely. During those moments you start to feel like you understand the rhythm of the game. Your swing feels smooth, your shots land where you intended, and for a short time it seems as though you have discovered the secret to consistent golf.

Of course, the next round usually proves otherwise.

That cycle of improvement and frustration is part of what makes golf such an effective teacher of patience. No matter how confident you feel after a good round, the game has a way of reminding you that consistency is harder than it appears.

I have often thought that golf shares some similarities with the broader theme of humility. In both cases, the goal

is not perfection but steady improvement over time. You learn to accept that mistakes will happen and that the most productive response is to stay calm and try again.

Another interesting aspect of golf is the etiquette that surrounds the game. Players are expected to show respect for one another, maintain the pace of play, and take responsibility for their own scores. That culture of honesty and sportsmanship contributes to the character-building aspect of the sport.

Personally, I have always appreciated that environment. It encourages players to focus on their own performance rather than comparing themselves too heavily with others. Each round becomes an opportunity to challenge yourself while enjoying the company of the people around you.

Looking back, golf has provided me with many moments of quiet reflection. Walking down the fairway between shots gives you time to think about life, work, and the experiences that shape who you are. Sometimes those moments lead to useful insights, and sometimes they simply remind you to enjoy the day.

Of course, every now and then you also hit a shot that feels particularly satisfying. The ball leaves the clubface perfectly, travels exactly where you intended, and lands softly on the green.

In those moments, it can be tempting to feel a little proud of yourself.

But then you remember that there are still seventeen holes left to play.

And humility returns very quickly.

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LIVING HUMBLY IN BARRIE

After many different chapters of life—growing up in Montreal, spending time in Labrador, working in manufacturing, telecommunications, and eventually returning to school—I eventually found myself settling in Barrie, Ontario. Barrie is the kind of place where life moves at a comfortable pace. It's large enough to have everything you need, but small enough that people still recognize one another and community connections matter.

For me, Barrie became a place where many of the experiences from earlier in life seemed to come together. By this point I had accumulated a variety of skills, interests, and experiences that didn't always fit neatly into a single category. I had worked with machines, networks, technical systems, and church production equipment. I had played guitar in worship services and spent more than a

few afternoons on the golf course.

Some people might look at that mix of experiences and think it seems a little scattered. Personally, I see it as a collection of different opportunities to learn and contribute in different ways.

One of the interesting things about getting older is that you begin to appreciate how the small skills you develop over time can be useful in unexpected places. Something you learned years earlier might suddenly become helpful in a situation you never anticipated. Because of that, I have always tried to stay open to new opportunities to help when they arise.

Barrie has provided plenty of those opportunities. Between community activities, church involvement, and everyday life, there are always moments where someone needs a hand with something. Sometimes that means helping set up equipment for an event. Other times it might involve troubleshooting a small technical problem or lending a bit of practical advice.

I try to approach those moments with the same mindset that has guided much of my life: help where you can and do the job well.

At the same time, living in Barrie has also given me space to reflect on the path that brought me here. When you look back at your life from a distance, you start to see patterns that were not obvious when you were living through them. Many of the roles I have taken on—whether mechanical work, telecommunications, technical volunteering, or music—share a common thread. They all involve paying attention to details and helping systems function the way they are supposed to.

Of course, I would never claim to be an expert in every area I have touched. That would hardly fit with the theme of humility that has guided this story. Still, it is interesting to recognize that certain habits seem to carry through different stages of life.

For example, if there is a technical system involved in an event, I often find myself drifting toward the equipment area just to see how things are set up. Not because anyone asked me to, but simply because curiosity has always been part of my personality. Sometimes that curiosity leads to a useful observation or a small improvement that helps everything run a little more smoothly.

And if that happens, I am always happy to help.

After all, that is one of the lessons life has taught me over and over again. The most meaningful contributions are often the quiet ones that happen behind the scenes.

Barrie, in many ways, feels like the right place to live out that philosophy. It is a community where people value reliability, where volunteering still matters, and where you occasionally have the chance to step in and solve a small problem that makes someone else's day a little easier.

When I think about humility today, it does not feel like an abstract concept. Instead, it feels like a collection of habits built up over many years: showing up prepared, paying attention to details, helping others when possible, and trying not to take yourself too seriously along the way.

Of course, life continues to present new situations where those habits are tested. There are always new technologies to learn, new challenges to solve, and new opportunities to contribute.

And if those opportunities happen to involve presen-

tation systems, network cables, guitars, or the occasional round of golf, well. . . I suppose I will be ready.

After all, a humble person never knows when their particular set of technologist-adjacent skills might come in handy.

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FINAL REFLECTIONS ON HUMILITY

When I look back over the different chapters of my life, one thing becomes clear to me: humility is not something that happens all at once. It develops gradually through experiences, challenges, and the many situations where you simply try to do your best and learn along the way.

My journey has taken me through a wide range of environments. I grew up in Montreal, spent time working in the mines of Labrador, trained as a heavy equipment mechanic, worked on the factory floor at Honda, and later moved into telecommunications with Rogers. Eventually I returned to school and became an Electrical Engineering Technologist. Along the way I also found myself volunteering at church, running presentation systems, playing

guitar with the worship team, and occasionally enjoying a round of golf.

At first glance those experiences may seem unrelated, but when I think about them carefully, I see a common thread. In each situation I tried to approach the work with care, attention to detail, and a willingness to help others when the opportunity arose. Whether I was fixing equipment, terminating cables, advancing slides during a worship service, or supporting the band with a guitar part, the goal was always the same: contribute in a way that helped everything run smoothly.

One of the things I have learned is that humility does not mean ignoring your abilities. In fact, recognizing what you are capable of can be useful if it allows you to step in and help when others need assistance. The key is remembering that those abilities are only valuable when they serve a larger purpose.

Throughout this book I have occasionally referred to myself with various “technologist” titles. Some of them were official, like Electrical Engineering Technologist. Others were more playful, like ProPresenter Technologist or Ethernet Crimping Technologist. While those titles were often used humorously, they also reflect a mindset that I have carried throughout my life: if you are going to do something, you might as well try to do it well.

That philosophy applies equally to large responsibilities and to the small details that most people never notice. A properly crimped cable, a well-timed slide transition, or a supportive guitar part may not seem significant on their own. But when those details are handled carefully, they contribute to a larger system functioning smoothly.

In that sense, humility is closely connected to reliability. A humble person focuses less on recognition and more on making sure that the work itself is done properly. When that happens consistently, people naturally come to trust you with greater responsibility.

Of course, humility also requires maintaining perspective. No matter how much experience you accumulate, there will always be new things to learn and new situations that challenge your assumptions. Life has a way of reminding us that none of us has everything completely figured out.

For me, the most important lesson has been that humility is ultimately expressed through service. When you use your skills to help others—whether through your job, your community, or your church—you begin to see how small individual contributions can become part of something larger.

Looking ahead, I know that there will continue to be new opportunities to learn and serve. Technology will keep evolving, new systems will appear, and new challenges will inevitably arise. When those moments come, I plan to approach them the same way I always have: with curiosity, attention to detail, and a willingness to step in and help.

And if those moments happen to involve presentation software, network cables, or a guitar amplifier that needs adjusting, well, I suppose I will be ready.

After all, humility is not about avoiding responsibility.

It is simply about doing the job well and letting the work speak for itself.

Even if that occasionally means embracing the quiet identity of a humble technologist along the way.