

FOREWORD

*Palimpsest**

*Every secret of a writer's soul, every experience of his life,
every quality of his mind is written large in his works.*

Virginia Woolf

VIRGINIA WOOLF'S QUOTE could have been written expressly for Sam Culbert. As you'll see in his Prologue, this is the book Culbert has been writing about, teaching about, and consulting about throughout his distinguished career. And it all began since he was an observant, wide-eyed 10-year-old, growing up in a big, expansive city in an airless, quarantined family. To quote Woolf again, "Nothing has really happened until it's recorded." In this remarkable, groundbreaking book, Sam has finally recorded his ruminations and wonders about those persistent demons that block our everyday, and often futile, attempts to establish direct, valid, candid human relationships. This is what Culbert and his book is all about: Bringing people in, not shutting them out. Scraping away those interpersonal scums that fog up the windows of human transparency. Creating the gorgeous space of mutual discovery of reality. The pleasure of really, yes really, *knowing* the others we often haplessly miss or mistake or pass by in everyday life.

* A manuscript, usually written in papyrus, on which more than one text has been written with the earlier writing incompletely erased and still visible.

This isn't the author's first time at bat, so to speak, about these human scrabbles. It's been his signature *leitmotif* for the last forty or so years. It's just that this book is more emboldened and written with telling examples and representative anecdotes that not only enliven his framework but give the reader—at least this one—a *déjà vu* feeling. Yes, I've been there. How could I have screwed up that interpersonal exchange. "Omigod," as my students might exclaim, "How could I have done such a ridiculous thing!?" All that and more.

Reading *Beyond Bullsh*t* reminds me a little of reading Erving Goffman's classic, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, about fifty years ago. It jolted me into an alarming awareness of my inauthentic "faces" I put on for the other. It made it possible for me to translate the present into something I could understand, even change. It was a reality, new to me, even a bother to me, that crucially helped me to translate the present reality. This book, Culbert's master stroke, has the power to transform the nature of how we relate to one another, freshly imagine each other and nourish our lives with others. *Beyond Bullsh*t* will become a classic in its own right.

I love this book and the courage to put it out there, which for some, maybe an unwelcome mirror to one's way of viewing reality. I'm reminded of a quote from Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*:

We need not be alone. We need to be really bothered once in awhile. How long has it been since you were really bothered? About something important, about something real?

Sam is a supreme "botherer," about something important and real.

Warren Bennis Santa Monica, CA