

## ...with James Bray

Past President of the American Psychological Association and commissioner of the Presidential Task Force on Psychology's Contribution to End Homelessness

### One conclusion of the APA task force on homelessness (<http://bit.ly/bcwl2g>)

Providing psychological services to people who are homeless can help them become productive citizens again. We have significant research in this area that helps inform us about the plight of people who are homeless, and interventions that help them overcome and manage their mental health problems, stress, and develop positive coping skills.

### One psychological heroine

E. Mavis Hetherington has been a long-time friend and colleague. As an early pioneer in developmental family research she conducted groundbreaking research on the effects of divorce and remarriage on children.

### One problem that psychology should deal with

The big problems of society. Despite our outstanding research on divorce, remarriage, violence,

substance abuse, obesity, etc. we continue to have large numbers of our population with these problems.

### One book that you think all psychologists should read

I would recommend *Change: Principles of Problem Formation and Problem Resolution* by Watzlawick, Weakland and Fisch (New York: Norton, 1974).

### One difference between homelessness in the USA and the UK

The UK appears to have a stronger and better safety net for its citizens than in the USA, although there are some variations in the different states within the USA. This is because of the difference in our governments and political perspectives.

### One alternative career path you might have chosen

Early in my life I strongly considered being a physician, minister or marine biologist. Later in my career I almost left

the profession to become a professional pilot.

### One great thing that psychology has achieved

Every year, millions of people safely fly across the world. Psychologists developed the safety procedures and methods that are used by the commercial aviation systems and pilot training. These methods are now being applied to increase patient safety in medical settings.

### One challenge

In the USA, traditional psychological practice is challenged by reimbursement policies and encroachments from other mental health professions. We are in danger of losing our unique place and becoming generic mental health providers and consultants. We need to refocus our efforts on branding our profession of psychology.

### One thing that you would change about psychology

We spend too much time and energy talking to psychologists and not enough interacting and talking with

other professions and the public. We need to be more collaborative.

### One nugget of advice for aspiring psychologists

Stay focused on your goals and enjoy yourself in all that you do. In leadership, 'lead, follow or get the hell out of the way'.

### One cultural recommendation

*The History of the English Speaking Peoples* by Sir Winston Churchill. It is worth the time and effort to read the complete four volumes.

### One way to increase the outreach of US psychology

Psychologists across the world have made major strides that can be helpful to US



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psychologists, but most do not know about them. I strongly encourage US psychologists to participate in international conferences to gain these perspectives.

More answers online at [www.thepsychologist.org.uk](http://www.thepsychologist.org.uk)

#### resource

Bray, J.H. & Stanton, M. (Eds.) (2009). *The handbook of family psychology*. Wiley-Blackwell.

'A wonderful compilation of the work of the latest family scholars and practitioners.'

#### coming soon

Articles on politicians, impostors, the work of the British Red Cross, blushing, trauma and much more...

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