

CHAPTER A11

A Model of Personal Professionalism: Ideas to Promote Discussion *Richard Beale*



Richard Beale is an independent management consultant, specialising in organisation effectiveness. He is in the final stage of editing his dissertation for a Doctor of Business Administration degree from Swinburne University in Melbourne, Australia. Research for the dissertation was conducted in both Australia and the UK, but experience living and working in Africa and the Middle East has influenced his thinking behind the ongoing development of a more normative version of the personal professionalism conceptual framework. These notes and the seminar I gave at the University of Surrey in November 2010. A recording of the seminar can be found here

<http://learningtobeprofessional.pbworks.com/w/page/32061082/Personal%20professionalism>

Background

Following extensive research into the nature of personal professionalism (Beale 2010 and in prep a & b) I am developing a model for personal professionalism that is summarised in the four diagrams below.

Personal professionalism is visualised as a complex set of beliefs, identity, ways of thinking and behaving, capability, qualities and dispositions that are integrated by an individual in a highly personal way, in the act of *being* in a professional context. These contexts are not limiting to the professions like the practice of law, medicine, engineering and accountancy, rather they are a feature of all work environments in which an individual has the opportunity to adopt a particular approach to their work. Anyone involved in work can behave in a professional or unprofessional way, however the more demanding and complex a role, the more complex is the idea of what being professional means.

The model of personal professionalism is intended to represent in an easy to digest way the most important dimensions of professionalism so that they can be explained to students who are preparing themselves for a lifetime of professional work. The model also provides a useful aid for people involved in the education and training of people whether in formal education or in the workplace.

The model provides a conceptual frame within which the idea of professionalism can be explored and further developed. It allows us to think about the way in which an individual's knowledge, understanding, skills, capability, beliefs, qualities, behaviours and dispositions are integrated and deployed within specific contexts and situations to achieve not just results but to achieve them in particular ways that are integral to an individual's presence and professional identity.

Figures 1-4 offer four generalized perspectives on personal professionalism all of which must be integrated into the act of being professional in actual work relevant situations. They incorporate the dimensions of :

Figure 1 Knowledge, understanding and skills relevant to the particular context in which professionalism is being lived and enacted.

Figure 2 Key elements of identity that frame an individual's unique enactment of professionalism.

Figure 3 The moral consciousness that frames an individual's thinking and behaviour and shapes their response to the situations they encounter when they are performing their professional role

Figure 4 The approach an individual takes to the situations they encounter when they are performing their role in the work place.

These Figures provide the starting point for examining the nature of professionalism from a range of perspectives.

References

Beale, R (2010) Personal Professionalism. Seminar given at University of Surrey on November 17th 2010. Available on-line at <http://learningtobeprofessional.pbworks.com/w/page/32061082/Personal-professionalism> (accessed December 9th 2010)

Beale, R (in prep) Personal Professionalism. In N.J Jackson (ed) Learning to be Professional through a Higher Education e-book

Beale R (in prep) Personal Professionalism unpublished PhD thesis Swinburne University

Figure 1 Knowledge and skill for professional practice are integrated and applied to the daily interactions and challenges encountered in the role and drawn together in the idea of capability to fulfil the role.

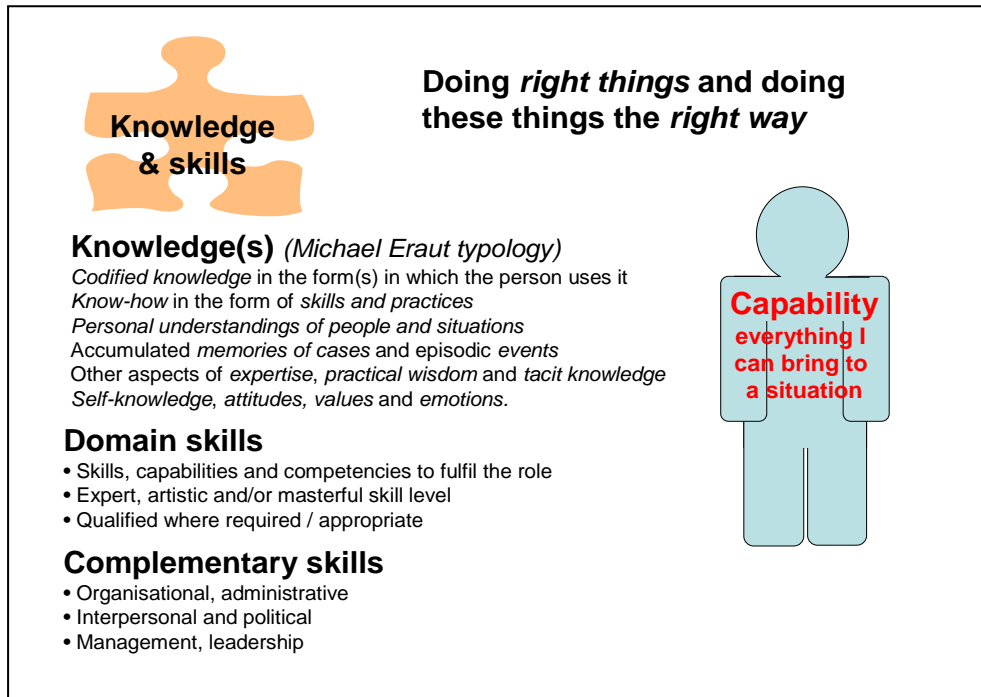


Figure 2 Key elements of identity that frame an individual's unique perspective on and enactment of professionalism

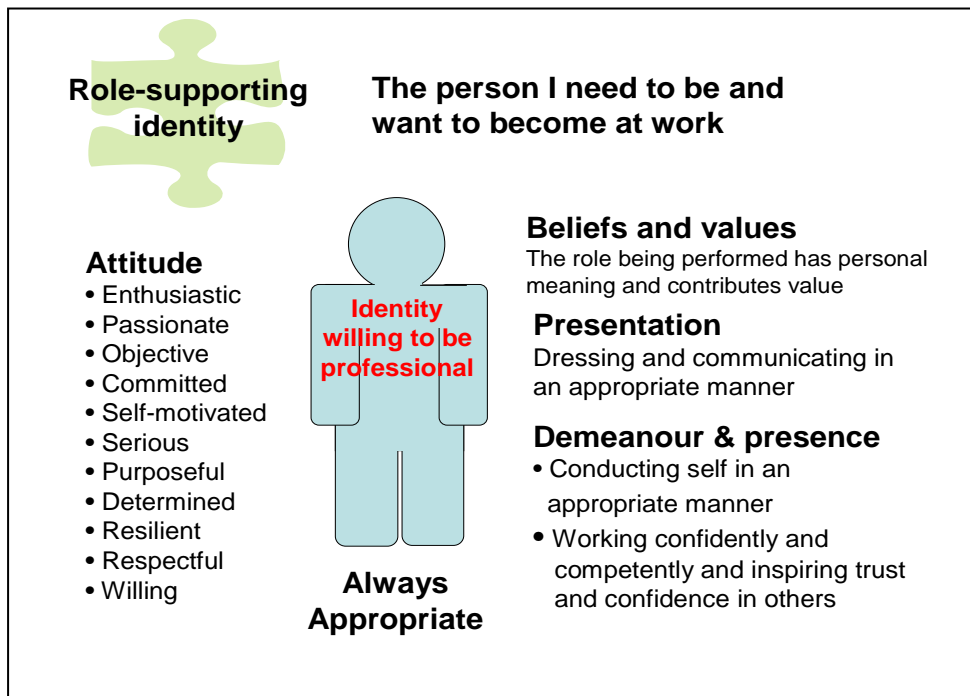


Figure 3 The moral consciousness that frames an individual's thinking and behaviour and shapes their response to the situations they encounter when they are performing their professional role

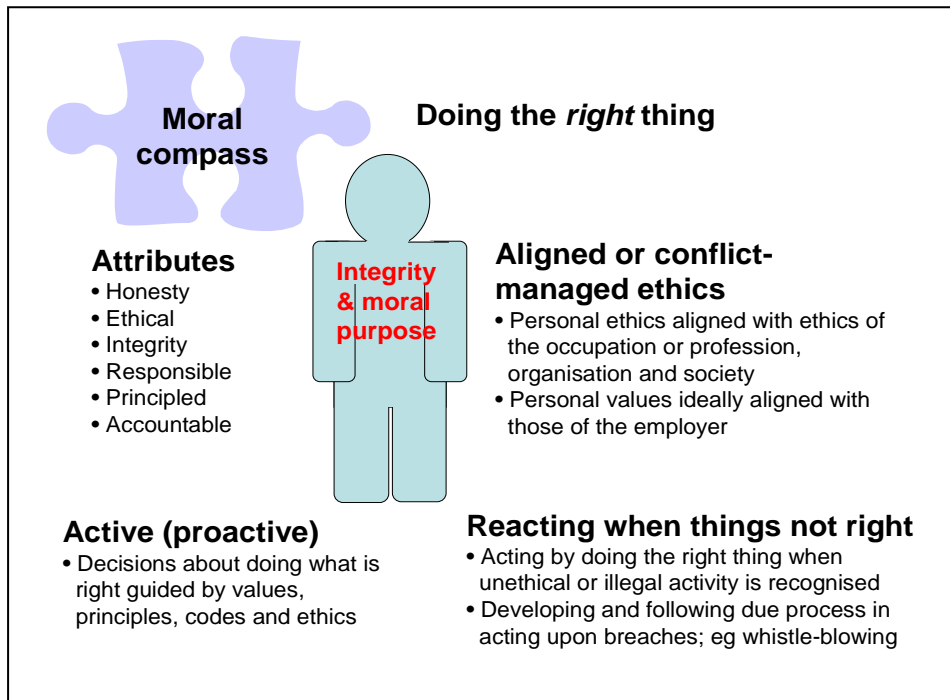


Figure 4 Generalised model of the approach an individual takes to engaging with the significant new situations they encounter when they are performing their role in the work place

