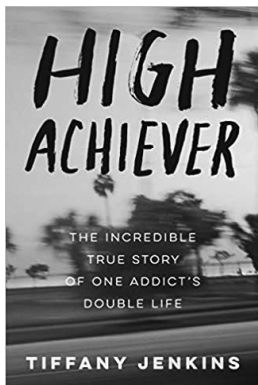


## High Achiever: The Incredible True Story of One Addict's Double Life

Tiffany Jenkins

New York, Harmony Books, 2019, 384 pp., \$15.99, paperback



*High Achiever: The Incredible True Story of One Addict's Double Life*, is a deeply personal and honest telling of Jenkins' struggle with severe opioid addiction. It details how her addiction started and was maintained, her attempts to obtain sobriety, and the process of going to jail and through rehabilitation treatment.

Beyond these pieces, Jenkins takes the reader on a private tour through her raw emotions, thoughts, and behaviors. For example, she describes her desperate attempts to hide her addiction through extensive lying and her motivation to keep using, despite wanting to quit. Additionally, she provides an honest look into what contextual and personal factors led to her eventual engagement in a few suicide attempts. She also explains how her personal relationships were impacted by her addiction, particularly with her boyfriend, who was employed as a law enforcement officer.

The book starts in the middle of Jenkins' journey and takes the reader back and forth from her time in jail to the events that led up to her being incarcerated. The book then leads the reader through the residential treatment process, including her psychotherapy experiences and interactions with other patients. She also provides thorough description of her struggles and achievements to help the reader better understand what patients go through during their stay in a residential facility.

What makes this book unique and relevant to family medicine education is that the author's brutal honesty and insight personalizes addiction and, therefore, produces empathy. This book provides a deeper understanding of addiction by giving a glimpse into the daily thoughts of someone experiencing addiction

and why someone with an addiction would continue to use despite substantial suffering, isolation, and wanting to stop. It challenges common beliefs held by many people who do not suffer from addiction, such as people with an addiction just do not care, are not stopping their use because they do not want to, can just quit, or cannot function in daily life. Having this insight and information can easily be translated into family medicine because family medicine is often the place where people take their first step in their recovery journey. Also, family medicine is the place where patients obtain continuity of care during their substance use treatment and is where they follow up after treatment. Family medicine clinicians can take the empathy inspired by this story and generalize that to their patients to care for them in a new light.

Truthfully, while reading this book I found myself feeling exhausted at times. This fatigue stemmed from repeatedly reading about how the author was lying again, engaging in unhealthy behaviors once more, and not seeking help, despite being adamant she would. Although exhausting, Jenkins writes her story so honestly that it teaches the reader to understand the person suffering from addiction and how all of this could happen. The text is deeply thought-provoking at times, and a particular question I pondered while reading this book was, *If I feel this drained reading the story, how exhausting was it to be Jenkins?* Jenkins explains how people in her life viewed her extremely negatively once they learned the truth of what was going on with her, but that did not compare to the negative internal dialogue she experienced on a daily basis for years prior to them ever finding out.

In addition to all of this, the author delivers insight into the lack of quality and humanistic treatment she faced while in jail, some of which was illegal. Further, she describes the poor and unfair legal representation she received. Her experiences elicit an internal emotional response within the reader for her injustices. This information can be quite helpful for clinicians in family medicine in deepening empathy for patients who have been to jail and experienced improper and possibility

illegal treatment. It also can be useful when understanding other mental health diagnoses that may be present in those who have been to jail, such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress.

In the end, Jenkins' story provides hope to the reader. Jenkins engaged in 6 months of residential substance use treatment and her life now includes years of sobriety, employment, family, love, and posttraumatic growth. The prominent messages left with the reader are that any severity of addiction is treatable, people change, and those with substance use concerns need others to hear them, support them, and help them. These others do not just include family, friends, and specialized substance use treatment clinicians, they include family physicians as well.

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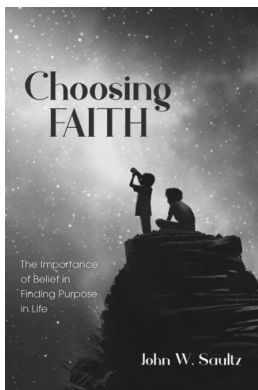
**Deirdre Paulson**

Mayo Clinic Health System – NWWI Region  
Eau Claire, WI

**Choosing Faith: The Importance of Belief in Finding Purpose in Life**

John W. Saultz

Resource Publications, Eugene, OR, 2019, 98 pp., \$15 paperback, \$35 hardcover



*“We all believe in something, whether we recognize it or not.” (p. xi)*

In this concise and thoughtful book, John Saultz, MD, sets out to guide readers through considering the ways we develop and use our systems of belief.

While faith can be thought of as the content of specific religious doctrines or teachings, in this book Dr Saultz takes the broader approach of considering faith as the values that guide our decisions in life, whether big or small. As a seasoned clinician, an experienced academic, and long-time member of a faith community, he brings insightful personal and philosophical analysis to a methodical exploration of faith.

The book is organized as a step-wise exploration of philosophical, ethical, empirical, and religious building blocks. Part I discusses the ways beliefs are learned and developed from childhood into adulthood. Part II describes

different types of beliefs, the boundaries between opinion, knowledge, and belief, and the relationships between moral and religious beliefs. Part III explores the ways beliefs change over time and examines approaches to marketing and propaganda utilized by others in attempts to change our beliefs (whatever they may be). Readers are encouraged to examine each chapter thoroughly while considering their own beliefs and experiences. In Part IV, the book concludes by exploring how we prioritize belief and find moral purpose, and discussing how we choose religious faith.

Research suggests primary care clinicians have played an important role in advancing our understanding of spirituality in health care,<sup>1</sup> but the clinical literature addressing spirituality in family medicine has been limited to a handful of articles primarily addressing spiritual assessment.<sup>2-4</sup> While there is literature addressing what religious traditions have to say about health care in their teaching and practice,<sup>5</sup> this book is unique in addressing the perspective of the individual exploring, questioning, or growing in faith.

For the reader who is skeptical of faith, this work provides a readable, engaging, and epistemologically sound introduction. For the reader seeking to understand faith in relation to life, this book offers both guidance and challenge. And for the clinician who may be unfamiliar navigating areas of faith, this book provides a useful tour through areas and issues that are important to the majority of our patients. As we care for whole persons in family medicine, we must compassionately approach our patients' lived experiences in their entirety. If Dr Saultz is correct that “we all believe in something,” then it behooves all clinicians to grasp what is at stake in “choosing faith.”  
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**Stella King, MD, MHA**

University of Rochester Medical Center  
Rochester, NY

**William Cayley, Jr, MD, MDiv**

Prevea Family Medicine Residency  
Eau Claire, WI

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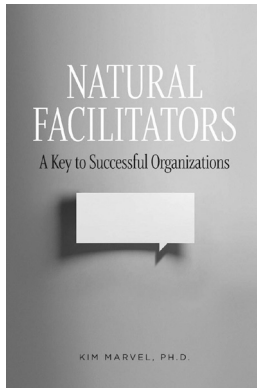
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## Natural Facilitators: A Key to Successful Organizations

Kim Marvel

Fort Collins, CO, RGH Press, 2020, 157 pp., \$15.99, paperback



Kim Marvel, PhD, has spent his family medicine educator career carefully observing individuals, teams, leaders, and learners and providing performance feedback. He brings these talents as an intentional observer to his recent book, *Natural*

*Facilitators: A Key to Successful Organizations*. The book expands on the paper he published in 2019 with Kristen Bene, PhD.<sup>1</sup>

Many faculty members in family medicine have learned how to facilitate conversations and projects either formally through training or informally by reflecting on successes and failures. In this book, Dr Marvel turns his attention and curiosity to those facilitators in organizations who come to their role intuitively and with energized passion. Marvel describes the phenomenon cogently: “Ultimately, I added the term *natural* to emphasize these people are not trained facilitators. Their facilitation skills are inborn or learned at a young age. They bring facilitation skills with them into their formal job responsibilities” (p. 14).

The book is the culmination of an extensive qualitative analysis of research interviews with natural facilitators and their colleagues. What would he learn about their talents and capacities and the ways they contribute to their teams? What could they tell us about what makes them tick? How are they looked upon and valued by those who supervise and work with them?

The book is accessible due in great part to Marvel’s inviting writing style that is chock full of personal sharing and illustrative case examples. After an introductory chapter that lays out definitions and contours of natural

facilitation, Marvel dives into a rich description of the qualitative research study that is the backbone of the book.

Dr Marvel approached a variety of organizations in education, government, health-care, private business and public utilities and asked a leader of each of 11 organizations to nominate natural leaders for him to interview. This process led him to his 17 research participant interviews and 12 supervisor interviews which became transcripts that he coded for key themes.

The results of this qualitative analysis make up the central core of the book that explicates the attributes of natural facilitators. These range from staying organized and having a positive presence to remaining calm and genuinely caring about the organization and teammates. Direct quotes from the interviews breathe life into the concepts and skills that underlie successful natural facilitation and leadership, and the reader will recognize many of these capacities in themselves and others. For example, regarding the caring and compassion of facilitators, Claire describes herself in this way: “What brings satisfaction? People’s success: that makes me happy... but I’ll also get these cards or candy, and things like that, for them (coworkers). Kind of getting them out when they’re down in the dumps” (p. 91). Claire’s supervisor describes her in this way: “Claire is someone who, first and foremost, genuinely cares. I mean, that’s the start of it... some level of internal knowledge of ‘Hey I made a difference’ ‘Is this person’s life better?’ ‘Is this person’s job easier?’ I think those are the biggest cup-fillers for her” (p. 92). The reader meets many extraordinary individuals in the book who would be fantastic to work with.

Given that this book and research is primarily qualitative and descriptive, the reader who is looking for recipes and skill-building guides to grow natural facilitation will be disappointed. Toward the end of the book, the author does provide a few suggestions about how the findings from the book might translate into leadership development, but they are not particularly elaborated nor detailed.

The book would perhaps be strengthened by a reflection on the findings through the lens of Angela Duckworth’s writings on grit.<sup>2</sup> Duckworth argues that success is built less on one’s natural talents and more on what one does with these talents. To what degree are the facilitation behaviors collected in this volume representative of truly natural gifts or reflective of the shaping and honing of these

interpersonal skills by individuals with grit who have applied them to success (theirs and those around them)? What are the roles of passion and perseverance in combination with natural talents in determining how one shows up in the workplace?

Dr Marvel's cohort of interviewees is narrow in representation and would be improved with greater breadth of inclusion. Whereas the author concedes that his recruited sample is composed almost completely of White women, bereft of any People of Color, this admission does not make up for important limitations on relevance, generalizability and inclusion, and reflects a lost opportunity to explore the importance of natural facilitation in a complex and diverse world. A future extension of this work built on data from a more diverse sample

may yield precious wisdom about the role of natural multicultural facilitators in healing the divisions in our organizations and our society at large.

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**Jeffrey Ring, PhD**

Los Angeles, CA

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