INTELLECTUAL POSITION PAPER

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One way of understanding people: slowly, thoroughly, and without ever losing sight of kindness.

WHAT I'M TRYING TO DO

I write to understand without oversimplifying, to observe without jumping to conclusions, and to remain curious about people. My books explore the ways in which people make decisions, and the ways in which they make mistakes: cognitive biases, authority, and blind spots in judgement. They seek not so much to provide answers as to sharpen our perspective.

SIX PRINCIPLES

1. **Observe before interpreting**
   See what is happening before saying what it means. Many errors of judgement stem from jumping to conclusions too soon.

2. **Distinguish facts, assumptions and narratives**
   What we know, what we assume, what we tell ourselves: three different things, which we often confuse when under pressure.

3. **Maintain nuance under pressure**
   Complexity is not a luxury reserved for calm situations. It is under pressure that it is most useful – and most under threat.

4. **Prioritise rigour over slogans**
   An appealing argument is not proof. I am wary of simplistic frameworks and comfortable certainties, starting with my own.

5. **Balance authority and clear-sightedness**
   Authority without clear-sightedness becomes domination. Kindness without discernment becomes naivety. We need both.

6. **Know how to laugh at yourself**
   Humour is not the opposite of seriousness: it is a way of seeing oneself, and of saying things that are true without imposing them on others.

WHAT I REFUSE TO DO

- Reassurance at any cost: a book can offer comfort, but it must not flatter.
- Unique explanations for complex human situations.
- Recipes presented as laws: methods are helpful, but they are no substitute for judgement.
- Judging people: I analyse mechanisms, not individuals.

WHERE I'M SPEAKING FROM

Twenty-one years of business travel, from Club Méditerranée to FRAM, across some 150 countries: my experience in the field has taught me to look at behaviour before theories. Then came training and consultancy, particularly within the civil service, and coaching: I am a coach and a member of the ICF, and I hold a Master's degree in Educational Sciences and Coaching. My first published book, on coaching, came out in 2009; I have written more than thirty since then, ranging from essays and management books to travelogues and fiction.

HOW THIS IS REFLECTED IN THE BOOKS

Essays on decision-making, cognitive biases and authority; books on management and coaching; travelogues; a crime novel set on a golf course; and a humorous golf manual – because we also understand people by watching them play. There is a common thread linking them all: humanity, the most wonderful of adventures, which can only be properly understood through slow, nuanced and compassionate reading.

> *"Respecting the complexity of reality is not a luxury. It is a responsibility."*
>
> — Franck Bometon

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