

**Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Common Freshman Reader 2009 - Reading Guide**

Make the Impossible Possible, by Bill Strickland

Before you read:

- Think about your definition of “success.”
- Research on the Internet:
 - www.iup.edu/library. Scroll down to the Common Freshman Reader link
 - www.manchesterguild.org
 - www.manchesterbidwell.org
 - www.mcjazz.org
 - www.bill-strickland.com
 - Pictures of orchids

Chapter One

As you read, look for:

- The two programs the author created and manages
- The principles that have guided Bill Strickland’s life
- Strickland’s definition of success
- The various aspects of Manchester Bidwell that promote the students’ success and belief in themselves

Chapter Two

As you read, look for:

- Description of Strickland’s childhood
- Frank Ross
- How working with clay transformed Strickland’s life

Think about:

- Has there been a person or incident in your life that has helped you see your potential?

Chapter Three

As you read, look for:

- Differences between environment in Manchester and Ligonier, PA
- Strickland’s struggles in college and how he triumphed
- The evolution of the Manchester Craftsmen’s Guild

Think about:

- Strickland wrote, “He (Frank Ross) taught me I could dream my future the same way I shaped a pot or vase, with vision, skill, and care.” As you progress through your college career, how can you “dream your future?”

Chapter Four

As you read, look for:

- Condition of the original Bidwell Training Center building
- Jesse Fife
- Problems at Bidwell
- The various training programs started at Bidwell
- Tasso Katselas
- K. Leroy Irvis
- The sequence of events leading to the completion of the new building

Chapter Five

As you read, look for:

- Comparison between jazz and a successful life
- Fred Rogers and how he exemplifies Strickland's philosophy of success

Chapter Six

As you read, look for:

- How Strickland overcame roadblocks to build the greenhouse
- Definition of "genius" and examples

Chapter Seven

As you read, look for:

- Ambition and failure as opposed to passion and setbacks
- Passion and courage
- How does courage impact success?
- Passion and conviction
- Passion and determination and perseverance

Chapter Eight

As you read, look for:

- Dr. Billy Taylor
- "...luck favors the prepared mind."
- "swing" in jazz and in life
- The doorway to the music hall and how it evolved into MCG jazz

Chapter Nine

As you read, look for:

- The expansion of Manchester Bidwell
- How Strickland personally kept his dreams alive
- Jeff Skoll
- Norman Lear

Chapter Ten

As you read, look for:

- Strickland's message to Harvard students
- The difference between fantasies and dreams
- The idea of making a difference in the world

For reflection and discussion:

- What is your definition of success? How is it similar to or different from the success described in the book?
- How did Strickland achieve the success he dreamed about? How can you apply these ideas to your life? To your college career?
- As IUP you will hear a lot about goal setting and strategies for academic success. In Chapter Three Strickland describes the strategies he used at Pitt to be successful in college. In Chapter Six he writes about how having a specific goal and strategic planning can be limiting. How can you blend these two ideas to enhance your own success?
- In Chapter Nine, Strickland writes about making a contribution to the world. Later, in Chapter Ten, he writes about "making a difference." How can you do that right now with your life?
- On page 203, he explains how entrepreneurs view setbacks or failures. What can you, as a college student, learn from this?