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By [Better Business Bureau in Eastern MA, ME, RI & VT](#). August 23, 2022.

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Handy Harley General Contractor (Getty)

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Harley Boyington doesn't watch a lot of TV. He doesn't do a lot of sitting ever, really. He's far too busy fixing things as [Handy Harley General Contractor](#) and handyman in Harpswell, Maine. Handy Harley services homes within a 20-mile radius of the coastal town, with its authentic fishing-village feel and hundreds of miles of coastland. He's been in business for 22 years but feels like he's been helping people forever. "I like being a problem solver," he explains. "I like trying to figure out what we're going to do. There's a lot of gratification in doing a good job for someone."

Harley started his career in the steel industry like his father and grandfather before him. "That's where I got my attention to detail. You learn a lot about measurements and making things fit perfectly because steel doesn't bend." During his time in steel and later the oil industry, Harley started fixing things. He was mechanically inclined and quick to learn as new jobs were thrown his way. He helped friends who needed a hand with this, that, and the other.

He had a knack for finding the right approach for any request, no matter how big or small. He bought equipment over the years, accumulating the tools he needed as word of his skills spread around Harpswell and beyond. When a health issue took him out of the backbreaking oil industry for good, he started fixing things full time.

Harley does jobs of all sizes for all types of requests. "I've gone as far as Freeport to change light bulbs because [the homeowner] was afraid of heights. They *were* pretty high," Harley chuckles. "The hardest job I ever did was moving a shed down a 300-foot driveway closer to a house. On a trailer. Backwards." Right now, he's putting vinyl siding on a house. It sounds simple, but the house is "hodge podge," as Harley puts it, full of odd angles and uneven edges. Like many New England homes, it's a combination of new things built on top of the original structure over the years, with whatever materials are available. "I found a way to offset with the naked eye. I spent many hours doing this before I accepted the job. I found a way to make it look square for each section, perhaps using a trim board to separate the two. Then the vinyl looks square from the road," he explains wisely with a rich Maine accent. "Everyone knows the house is crooked. No other contractor would take the job. But now, when people drive by, they say it's never looked better."

More often than not, Harley can envision a solution right away. He'll take his time, walking the property and asking relevant questions until he's essentially scoped out the entire job in his head. Then and only then will he provide an estimate on the work. "I'm really fussy. I'm not going to put my name on anything that's not going to look good when I'm done. Reputation is so important, especially in a small town," he states. On the rare occasions a solution doesn't immediately present itself, Harley sleeps on it. Like all brilliant people faced with a conundrum, his unconscious mind continues to work on the problem as he sleeps. He'll often wake up with the perfect solution.

Today, Handy Harley Contractors LLC consists of Harley, three to five employees depending on the season, and Kristen, Harley's wife. "She does every bit of work that I do, plus that nasty paperwork," Harley boasts. "We've been together 25 years next month and she's been with me since day one."

Harley tries to take days off when no one needs him. He'll go to his fishing camp over Memorial Day weekend ("No one wants you at their house that weekend anyway," he explains.) He'll go bird hunting in October and deer hunting over Thanksgiving, as many Mainers do. It's important to find time for yourself while helping so many others, he says. When asked how he strikes a work/life balance, Harley states, "You have to be able to live with your own stress, because you make it. But the satisfaction of doing a job and doing it right makes it worth it. The best thing I ever did was work for myself."

Harley has advice for homeowners looking for a contractor or handyman, "Anyone can get a license," he explains. "You need someone who is insured and has good ratings with the Better Business Bureau. You can't get either unless you do good work. And if someone has a question about the quality of your work, they're going to look at the BBB."

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