



# Joshua Hollub

Contractor, Modern Plumbing Co.

**//When you were born,  
you cried and the world rejoiced.  
Live your life so that when you die,  
the world cries and you rejoice."**

— Native American Proverb

When asked about his favorite quote, Joshua Hollub explained, "My favorite quote is a little different. Some will probably find it a little gloomy. This quote screams Albert Hollub, my dad, to me! It is saying be a great person, be the kind of person people hate to lose. When you leave this world you want to be known for the great you did for your family, and everyone else who came in contact with you. Love is something you can share that doesn't cost a thing, and makes a huge difference in a person's life."

**About Modern Plumbing Company, Inc.:** Family-owned and operated in Pasedena, Texas for over 55 years. Active member of PHCC. Learn more at [modernplumbing.com](http://modernplumbing.com)

## **How did you get started and who were your mentors?**

I work for a family business. My dad offered for all of his kids to work for him. In my family you are in sports, involved in a club, or working. We weren't allowed to just be, we had to be doing something. When I first started at Modern Plumbing Co., I mowed the grass, cleaned "the yard", and worked the warehouse. My first field job was a 1" water service tap in Friendswood, TX. My cousin Ryan took me with him to help dig. It was that day that I realized this was what I wanted to do. It was challenging, both mentally and physically. My cousin taught me so much basic plumbing knowledge, he is the reason I have learned so much in this short time. So my first mentor was definitely my cousin, Ryan Hollub.

## **What advice do you have for people who are thinking about getting into this business?**

My advice to people, in general, is to find something that you have fun doing and gives you a challenge. I've never known anyone who is overjoyed because they can do something that is easy. My advice to someone getting into MY industry is do your research. This industry has many different options

and areas, with different specialties. This industry is of extreme importance to our everyday life. Plumbers protect the health of this great nation. It is very important that you realize this from the beginning. We need those people who are willing to be part of, what I hope to be, a nationwide band of well educated, safe working, hardworking plumbers that will be the future trade leaders.

## **Where do you see your business in 5 years? 10 years?**

Our business has been through so many phases and levels. We are actually currently in the midst of some big changes. As I've mentioned, we are a family business. By that I mean our company is owned by our family, but our business consists of several families. We have 5 father/son groups working with us. The grandparents of our residential field manager, Thomas, both worked for us, along with his brother, nephew, and sister-in-law. Most of our employees are working with their families. We have employees that have been with us over 30 years. We own an air conditioning company, a supply company, and our plumbing business. We do any kind of service work. We have been as big as 200 employees and are currently

about 40 employees. Through all of the changes, phases and levels in business, it's hard to bet on where our business will be in 5 to 10 years. But I sure hope it's a lot like where we are now. We are blessed beyond words to be where we are with the family and friends we have.

## **And the industry in general?**

Our industry is changing rapidly. Technology is changing everything in our world but probably changing our construction industry more than anything. Management devices, cameras and gadgets, bidding software, equipment, design equipment, all of these things are changing day-to-day, making things easier and more cost effective for our customers. These changes also increase safety for our techs and the lifespan of newly installed plumbing systems. In 10 years our industry will see so much change, including the technology and materials, but the biggest change will be personnel. Finding a reliable, knowledgeable, trained, safe, affordable plumber is going to be hard to come by if we don't change the direction in which we are headed. We may be 10 years away from seeing the true depth of this issue; however, when we finally see it face-to-face, it's going to be a MAJOR issue.

## DID YOU KNOW?

The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that the demand for plumbers will increase

# 12%

between 2012 and 2024. This is almost double the demand for the overall job market. (bls.gov)

Meanwhile, many experienced plumbers are reaching retirement age, while fewer young people are being introduced to the trade.

**“Plumbers protect the health of this great nation...**

**We need people who ...will be the future trade leaders.”**

Southern PHC asked Hollub the industry’s critical question of our time: **“How do we reach young people? How do we get them interested in our trade?”** Here’s what he had to say:

In my personal opinion, the problem and understanding the issue is simple. The path to fixing these issues is not an easy one, nor a short task to achieve. Looking at history, the construction industry and its workers were considered to be of high middle class. A fruitful industry that drove our economy up throughout decades. Giving men and women the opportunity for a decent, prosperous, and bright future for themselves and their families. Fast forward to today’s times and here we are as trade companies. A depleted workforce, overwhelming unemployment, and employers literally out searching for workers! There are several reasons for this, our industry has been mocked as low paying, uneducated, tough, unsafe, and as a classless job. The “butt-crack plumber” picture is burned into most peoples minds, instead of the once proud, hard-working man, standing in front of his fellow citizens vowing to “Protect the health of the nation.” There is so much pride in that statement for a guy like myself. We “ditch diggers” have been given a bad name according to an image, not reality. Educators, our government, and society as a whole have pushed higher education and college as the only means for a meaningful, successful life for people and their families in this country. This is simply not the case. The older generation of plumbers, fitters, welders, electricians, etc. have told their children “go to college, I don’t want you to have to work as hard as I did...” That’s a huge problem. I implore those folks to rethink their lives without the trades and where they would be. Nowhere in history was anyone told that they did not have to work hard to achieve something or a life that is successful. If they told you that, they lied. You must be willing to work to be successful!

I would consider this to be the MAJOR issue in our industry, so how do we fix it? We stop the negative image

and start pushing our “new look”. We start showing the opportunity. We have to get back into the high schools and start our vocational programs again throughout this country. It’s very real. When we go back to the 80s, schools and teachers were pushing trade for kids who had no interest in college. We all know people personally who literally have no business working in an office. This is a growing issue throughout all trades. This should be our first big step from all the leaders in all of the trades. We need to help push the changes and programs. Educated, success-driven, optimistic, young men AND WOMEN will want to be a part of, the future of, our industry and trades. I’m 26 and it feels a little weird to think that I’m focusing on the future generation but as I see people my age searching for a career, I can’t help but feel the passion for what I do and the success and pride it has afforded me. So many people don’t even know there are such opportunities. Without a huge push from our leaders in the industry, we won’t see this change fast enough.

The lack of information for young people, our blindness to the real issues, our school systems failing to offer the curriculum, are the reasons we have gotten to this point. If we share, educate, and advocate on our own, as leaders, we can close this gap. This is an almost recession-proof career. Service companies will always be needed! Tradesmen will not be automated out of a job. Most skilled trades people are earning between \$50,000 and \$120,000, and are often afforded the opportunity to work for a small business. These are the things we need to be sharing with young folks. We have to do something and this is merely a start, but at least it’s a start. It’s going to be a long road but it’s not going away. We can give people the opportunity for a great life and save our industry. We have to start now.