

GUYdelines

A few thoughts for outdoor lovers and leaders from
WILD GUYde Adventures, LLC

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9 Thoughts for Staying Alive Out There

“Brevity,” Shakespeare said, “*is the soul of wit,*” and in this, he both captured an essential truth and epitomized it. With trepidation, I add to The Bard’s words to suggest that brevity can also be the soul of wisdom. I am always impressed when, with but a few words, someone captures a truth succinctly, accurately, and sometimes even poetically. So I share with you a collection of 9 such proverbs and quotes that, with some reflection, might help our outdoor experiences to be more enjoyable or safe, for ourselves and for those we lead and serve. Read them, think about your own experience in the light of them, and then send me more if you have favorites!

1. ***Gravity never sleeps.*** We must adapt ourselves to natural laws; they will not temporarily suspend on our behalf, no matter how good, moral, and upright we might think we are.
2. ***Look at the terrain – then imagine a carryout.*** I routinely direct my caving groups to this thought when we are back in underground a good distance. It usually sobers up the attitude and the travel pace.
3. ***Slow is safe, and safe is fast.*** If we hurry our rescue crew into another accident or navigation error, we have exponentially complicated the situation and dramatically added minutes and hours when we should have been subtracting them. Safe is the fastest that we should try to move.
4. ***Better to be aware than smart.*** Constant and broad situational awareness is the “leadership radar” of the outdoors. Cultivate constant awareness of group strength and mood, weather conditions, behavior (who is drinking water, etc.), and your own energy level.
5. ***“The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it”*** (*Proverbs 27:12*), and ***“The rigid person is a disciple of death; the soft, supple, and delicate are lovers of life.”*** (*Tao Te Ching*). These speak to flexibility and adaptability as more significant survival traits than dogged determination or rigid adherence to a pre-formed plan.
6. ***“Go carefully lads, be careful; a single moment is enough to make one dead for the whole of one’s life”*** (*G. Pecoste*). Many of our mistakes in life, both physical and moral, are the result of *hurry*.

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7. *In the outdoors, natural forces do the killing, but human attitudes and behaviors often do the selecting and positioning of the victim.* It might be cold, or water, or massive impact that actually delivers the blow, but it is often ego, competitiveness, disregard for the changing situation, or an unfounded sense of invincibility that sets us up for the kill.

8. *Don't create a second victim.* This is a favorite of my friend and Wilderness First Aid instructor Chris Tate. It reminds us that, in our efforts to rescue the perishing, we should first protect ourselves and the unhurt. You are useless as a rescuer if you give away your fleece or your water bottle and so become compromised. A dead guide is not a guide.

9. *Little things become big things in the backcountry.* Small blisters can become infections, mild dehydration can become a debilitating headache or heat stroke, and missing breakfast or allowing insulation layers to become compromised by rain can quickly complicate hypothermia. Deal with small things while they are small.

Are you coming to Virginia for a family vacation, church group trip, boys' club event, or escape weekend? Why not experience Virginia adventure with **WILD GUYde Adventures! WGA** offers guided beginner level outdoor adventures and competent instruction in activity fundamentals. We can take you *hiking, rock climbing and rappelling, caving, or canoeing*. We use various activity areas in the George Washington and Monongahela National Forests, and along Virginia's Blue Ridge. Check out the 2012 trip options below, or call to talk about your own creative adventure idea!

(540-433-1637 or lester@wildguyde.com). You may also visit www.wildguyde.com

How was your trip with the WILD GUYde?!

Lester thanks so much for such a fun adventure! My friends and I are still talking about how much fun we had and what an awesome guide you were - we would definitely love to do something like that again soon.

Lester thanks so much for an incredible trip. One mom wrote that her daughter was so excited that she talked about the trip during most of that evening. I think most of the kids felt very empowered by this experience. Prior to the trip, many were a little concerned, especially about potential dangers and feelings of claustrophobia – but they definitely overcame these feelings and soldiered on. I think they were proud of their accomplishments. The following day we reviewed the trip and wrote down all that we remembered. The kids were great at listing the three things you have to do before going caving, various safety measures, and the three attributes that make a cave. Later I passed out your cards and we read them together and talked about safety in the backcountry. This was a valuable trip for our students in terms of geology and learning about the world about them, and also valuable in learning about themselves and how to meet and master their own perceived limitations. Also it was great fun. Thanks so much! (Middle school teacher, '11)

LESTER, YOUR PREPARATION, KNOWLEDGE, AND GUIDANCE DURING YESTERDAY'S CAVING ADVENTURE WERE BETTER THAN EXPECTED. I LIKE THAT YOU HAD BACKUP EQUIPMENT, SPECIALTY ITEMS SO WE DIDN'T HAVE TO PURCHASE THEM; ALSO YOUR FRIENDLINESS WAS ALL

NOTICED AND APPRECIATED GREATLY. I REALLY DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU COULD HAVE DONE BETTER. THANKS FOR EVERYTHING!

Saturday was my first experience going underground. Really couldn't have been better. I was a little apprehensive about my reaction to being confined, but the way the cave was laid out made it easy to become comfortable before going into the tighter areas. Thought you did a great job. I'll like to give you some constructive criticism, but honestly can't think of anything to improve!

Lester, I had a great time and I know the knowledge you shared will come in handy as I head on some adventure this spring/summer. It truly was a confidence builder. For my navigation skill set, the area you selected was perfect and the instruction was straight forward. I particularly like the approach of you asking me questions to ponder and working toward the answer rather than telling me "this is what you do."

I can't even tell you how much fun the boys had caving on Sunday. They want to do this again. Granny No. 2 is really sore though, and I must get back to doing yoga!

IT WAS A PERFECT MATCH WITH THE GIRL'S AND MY ABILITIES AND EXPERIENCE. IT WAS CHALLENGING ENOUGH AND ATTAINABLE. EVEN L., OUR RELUCTANT CLIMBER, FELT SHE HAD REALLY ACCOMPLISHED SOMETHING BESIDES GETTING ICE CREAM. YOUR TEACHING OF THE TECHNICAL ASPECTS AND YOUR ENCOURAGING WAY MADE THE CHALLENGE SEEM POSSIBLE FOR EVERYONE. I APPRECIATED YOUR SUGGESTING MY ASSISTING IN THE BELAYING; BEING A PART OF THE PROCESS ENHANCED MY EXPERIENCE.

I really enjoyed our outing -- having you as our climbing instructor really made the trip worthwhile. Climbing outdoors is a totally different experience from the indoor gyms. I find it hard now to get back to what I have been doing indoors. I also really appreciated your patience and guidance; I definitely felt myself improving as the day progressed.

Lester, I am still reliving the excitement we had rock climbing and rappelling as I continue to edit the videos and the photos we took. I appreciate your professionalism, expertise, and the deep connection with nature. You made the experience fun and we learned a lot at the same time. It is very obvious you love what you do. The location was perfect. I liked the walk up to the rocks, it built an excitement. As you could tell, I was terrified at times with many bad thoughts going through my mind, but your confidence and professionalism put me at ease. I look forward to more trips soon.

Lester, we spent the afternoon eating ice cream and playing in the river. This is a trip both girls will remember for a long time to come. You were very patient and very flexible with our activities. You treated my daughters with respect, and took the time to teach them in appropriate ways. You were supportive and encouraging, but also knew when to let them say "no." You made them carry their own weight without burdening them. I also felt very safe every moment. So sum things up, it was a perfect day of climbing. It was exactly what we were looking for!