

# GUYdelines

A few thoughts for outdoor lovers and leaders from

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## Four Facing Directions of Leadership

Lester Zook, *WILD GUYde Adventures* (1-2-20)

A great challenge in training young leaders is getting them to slow down and think before they charge into the task or challenge. Western thinking tends to tempt us to think of leadership in very activitistic terms – getting things done. And that is ultimately what leadership is in place to do – to take a group to a future that does not yet exist. But preparing to lead require us to first contemplate, and thus to do the personal preparation and foundation building so our eventual active leadership will be sound and effective. So prepare to do some contemplation and introspection; think of it as “doing a vehicle tune-up” before tackling the extended road trip.

One way to think about leadership is that it is *the permission that others give us to have an influence in their lives*. We can get that permission from Authority; some outside individual or entity bestows the leadership label upon us, and inasmuch as our followers respect the outside authority, they accept our leadership. Authority leadership, while necessary at times, is the weakest way we have of influencing a group. We might, rather, depend upon Authoritativeness – our competence, superior knowledge, and knowing more than they do. This gives us one domain in which we can expect true respect, but it still leaves other broad swaths of our relationship with our followers disconnected. Finally, we can earn the permission to influence with Authenticity – being real and honest about who we are, and demonstrating reciprocal respect, genuine care, and integrity. This, along with self-mastery, is our most powerful and enduring source of permission for influence. Here, I propose 4 “looks” that a prospective leader can take, to first measure and then to strengthen personal readiness, authoritativeness, and authenticity. Within each, I will simplify the concept by proposing a few reflective questions or exercises to do some personal probing; this can be done individually, or perhaps more productively, with an accountability partner or in a leadership learning group.

The look *inward*: Who am I? (SELF aware)

When I was first called into departmental leadership at the university, I had not had much formal leadership training. Nonetheless, I quickly found myself making decisions and rendering judgments about issues that I seemed to have ideas about. I shortly realized that, though I had not been trained in the specific administrative

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Lester R. Zook, *WILD GUYde Adventures*

1047 Stuart St., Harrisonburg, VA 22802

(540) 433-1637 [lester@wildguyde.com](mailto:lester@wildguyde.com)

areas of the organization (personnel supervision, budget preparation), I had built some solid convictions and beliefs about our mission, people (staff and clients), honest practice, workplace culture, and how things should be done. In short, it was my convictions and values more than my technocratic skills that were carrying me. So, a first look for leaders might be within – what do I believe, what are we really striving to accomplish here, how do I come down on certain philosophical or ethical questions broadly? Simon Sinek suggests “*Start[ing] with Why.*” What is the animating reason I am here? What is the great need in the world or in our local community that we are aching to meet? What are our ideals when it comes to how people should work together, what we are trying to build, and how we resolve certain perpetual dilemmas and questions that arise in our work? Spend some time thinking and writing your answers to a few of these questions (maybe under the title, “*Some core beliefs undergirding what we are doing here*”), and you will begin to have a foundation for decision-making when it is in your power to act.

A second way to engage the look inward is to ask: Who are some leaders (in my actual past life, or vicarious to me, like heroes and authors) that I admire, and why? Who are some leaders that I do not respect, and why? Thinking of actual humans who have modeled either admirable or unenviable traits is a great way to create a concrete image in our minds that we will strive toward. Educators know that “*more is caught than taught,*” meaning that life-to-life influence is a powerful source of learning and growth.

Finally, the look inward can take the form of a personal inventory (to strengthen our authoritativeness). What personal skill and fitness areas am I exemplary in? Which ones need improvement? In the outdoor leadership world, the guide standard is always that “*the guide must be able to exceed program demands.*” Essentially, any demand that you are going to ask a client to perform, you the guide must be able to surpass. So whether it is hiking 10 miles with a fully loaded pack or paddling a difficult rapid, you should be able to complete the task with “gas to sell,” in case a rescue situation emerges, and you are called on for double duty. If your domain is not the outdoors, you can consider other relevant skill areas in your inventory such as public speaking, facilitating and processing, media skills, writing, tech skills, and teaching ability.

Personal inventory can also include personal qualities like ego strengths or deficits, need for approval, conflict avoidance, perfectionism, self-consciousness, or uncertain moral stances. We can include the area of self-care. Do I understand my physical and emotional needs (health, rest, support, boundaries, work/life balance), and do I find ways to nurture myself, so I am fit to lead others? In the airplane, we are told to put our own oxygen masks on first, before assisting others. In exploring these personal inventory areas, working with a small group or accountability partner is invaluable for honest self-assessment.

Here, let’s introduce a metaphor that can serve to illustrate the 4 looks we are taking. Imagine that you are driving a vehicle on the highway. *The look within* is checking the interior of your car – checking dials to see amount of fuel, speed and RPM’s, what “music” is playing, are the internal distractions like phone or agitated children in the back seat adequately managed, so we can begin to look outward to drive.

The look outward: What kind of team player am I with my peers? (OTHERS aware)

We don’t acknowledge it often enough, but it is nonetheless true, that to drive on public roads, one must be something of a team player. Your driving skills are one thing, but your safety and success at getting to where you are headed depends in another large measure on the actions of fellow drivers on the road, how they behave, and how you respond to them. So, here are a few issues to address as we attempt to discern our level of *Others-awareness* with our peers.

**Trust:** Am I a trust builder and maintainer in the relationships that I am part of? Do I appropriately entrust myself into the care of others, or do I hold back or evince suspicion and self-protectiveness? On the other side, do I make myself worthy of the trust of others (trustworthy) by speaking the truth, following through on commitments, and protecting the dignity of others, particularly when they self-reveal or make themselves vulnerable? When trust has been compromised, do I take it upon myself to authentically own my part and move

toward reconciliation, or do I blame-shift or rationalize? Are there any current relationships coming to mind that need some genuine and remedial attention?

**Communicating and interpersonal dynamics patterns:** Is my peer to peer communication marked by clarity and forthrightness, or am I vulgar, ambiguous, snarky, self-centered, distracted? Do I offer full engagement in conversation (consider cell phone use as part to this question), and do I practice active listening? Do my physical expressions (gestures, touch) strengthen or weaken my relational attempts? Do I surrender my personal agenda for the team purpose? How do I respond when confronted or corrected? Am I teachable and coachable? Here, reflecting with an accountability partner can be invaluable in helping us to be objective in these areas.

**Blind spots:** In our driving metaphor, who “pushes your buttons “on the road? Is it the overly aggressive driver who constantly lane-switches and cuts you off much too closely? Is it the timid driver ahead, waiting much too long before pulling through a busy intersection? And how do you find yourself responding – holding a grudge, getting needlessly aggressive yourself, swearing, honking the horn, or offering them a gesture? What happens to your driving quality when this occurs? So, let’s apply this question to your work relationships generally. What kind of person predictably “jerks your chain, and what do you tend to do about it? When you allow someone else’s behavior to push you into a nonproductive response, you have yielded personal control and power in the situation, and neutered your effectiveness in this area.

The look *upward*: How do I respond to leadership above me? (**TEAM** aware)

Even when we eventually arrive at our own leadership label, we will have a superior above us, so it is wise to think ahead about how we respond to authorities in our lives.

How do I think about authority? Using our driving model, do we see speed limits and other rules as optional? Suggestions? Are the rules of the road simply inconveniences to be skirted around whenever possible, or are they covenants we share with fellow drivers to maintain a safe overall highway environment? How do we apply these answers to guidelines in our workplace about decorum, budgeting and expense procedures, lunchroom cleanup, etc.? Do I understand the spirit of the law, and do I uphold it consistently, even when no one is watching?

What about the actual person inhabiting the office of leader above me? Do I defer to this person mostly on the basis of his or her Authority, Authoritativeness, or Authenticity? Do I make them overwork to earn my obedience and respect, or do I give them a down-payment of respect simply because of their title and position? What would I hope for if I were in their shoes? What is my relationship to the values and mission of the sponsoring organization?

Finally, how is my followership? Do I come prepared and contribute positively in team meetings? Do I ask good questions? Do I volunteer and pitch in enthusiastically for team projects? What is my typical role or contribution in a struggling group: cheerleader, individual affirmer/encourager, creative ideas contributor, constructive skeptic, workhorse?

One other somewhat counter-intuitive way we can be great followers is by second-guessing our supervisors. This does not mean undercutting their authority in public. It is, however, always positive to be asking, “*What would I be doing if I was in their shoes, and how might my leadership be different than theirs?*” Consistently entertaining this thought exercise expands our creative problem-solving capabilities, helps us to ask great questions of our boss and our team, better prepares us for our own eventual leadership role, and regularly tests our convictions (from Look No. 1) against the realities of actual leadership scenarios.

The look *forward*: Where are we going? (**PURPOSE** aware)

We have looked inside the car (*inward*), we have looked out at our responses to other drivers (*outward*), and we have examined our responses to the signposts, traffic signals, state police officers, and other authorities on our way (*upward*). It remains for us now look at where are going. We are now in a leadership role, and our look is *forward*, to our destination. This could be a vision of an actual future reality that we are going to try to create, or it could be a vision of how we want to be with each other as a group for our time together.

I will often start an adventure outing with a question for my group: “*What is the difference between a **team**, and a **random group of people** who happen to be in the same place at the same time?*” After some initial offerings like, “*A team cares about each other,*” or “*A team works together,*” we stumble on the answer: **Shared purpose**. When we are working toward a common aim and have subjugated our personal aspirations to a group goal, we are a team. Conversely, we can be on the same court, wearing the same uniform, and aiming at the same basket, but if your goal is to make every shot you can, and my ambition is to get as many points for myself as I can, we are not a team. **Shared purpose**.

It stands to reason then that the enemy of team is individuation – anything more distinguishable by its individual traits than by its shared ones. Competing purposes might be ego, protectionism, and self-interest. Paul Petzoldt shares a story that makes the point:

*The attempt to plant a United Nations flag atop Mt. Everest in 1971 was a classic example. Thirty-two persons representing eleven different countries and speaking eight different languages led an army of four hundred low altitude porters and forty-two Sherpas to the highest mountain in the world. Renowned climbers from the United States, Great Britain, Switzerland, France, Italy, Norway, Japan, Austria, and India were brought together for the assault.* →

*A French political hopeful, an Italian, and a Swiss woman were bent on becoming the first Frenchman, Italian, and woman on top of Everest. However, when progress slowed to the extent of their being asked to assist the Sherpas in carrying supplies to the upper camps, they claimed insult to their native countries and abandoned the expedition. The leader attempted to coax them back, but the woman responded by pelting him with rocks and snowballs.*

*Death struck an Indian representative of the party when he attempted a difficult rope traverse during a storm. He had been too proud to admit that he had no previous experience with such a rope traverse, and delayed calling for help until it was too late.*

*Someone broke out a bottle of whiskey in hopes of relieving growing tension; this only provided a catalyst for a monumental row with invectives shouted in four languages. (The Wilderness Handbook, 1974, pp. 128-9)*

In any meaningful relationship (marriage, athletic team, climbing party), some sacrifice of self is essential in order for members to enjoy the larger benefits of being part of the relationship. The interesting thing about the Mt. Everest story is that it was not the variety of nationalities and diversity of languages that fragmented the purpose – it was the competing and self-centered objectives. Nothing can be more fatal to an outdoor expedition, literally and figuratively, than unbridled self-interest.

What then is the primary task of leadership? One team member may be the best navigator, and another may be a better fire-builder or a stronger climber, but the task that the leader cannot abdicate is **to fashion and then maintain shared purpose**. The shared purpose may represent a host of prior discussions, negotiations, compromises, and eventually commitments that are shared. There can be lots of back and forth to arrive at it, but the leader eventually must clearly articulate it, and then nurture and maintain it. Some specific applications for leaders then are:

1. Lead in fashioning a purpose together. This can be a concrete goal (“*Make it to the summit and return safely*”), or a shared commitment to certain values (“*Keep it safe, keep it natural, keep it positive*”). A good purpose is both aspirational (visionary) and practical. On the one hand, we never quite achieve it

perfectly; on the other hand, we should be able to point to many examples of it occurring among us each and every day.

2. For it to be truly shared, there must be meaningful buy-in. This ownership can happen because the group actually hashes it out and produces it together, or it can be that the leader invites members to symbolically and genuinely adopt his winsome plan. It can accommodate some individual interests, but not idolize them.
3. Symbolize it. Interestingly, the climbing rope is an excellent symbol of this shared purpose. We all clip in, it holds us together, and it becomes difficult to go different directions if we are on the same rope. Occasional rituals can effectively remind us of what we have agreed to and what is important.
4. Return to the shared purpose frequently in little and big ways throughout the day – throughout the experience. Repeat it, reaffirm it, discipline toward it, hold team members accountable to it, and debrief around it at the end.

In a positive experience, leaders can unite team members toward achieving an outcome greater than the sum of the individual parts. John Gardner states, “*Leaders can conceive and articulate goals that lift people out of their petty preoccupations and unite them in pursuit of objectives worthy of their best efforts.*” And in a crisis, the shared purpose becomes the hope – the survival vision to strive toward -- that may be the saving grace for a struggling team. “*With vision, there is no room to be frightened. No reason for intimidation. It’s time to march forward.*” (Charles Swindoll) A team is formed when there is shared purpose, and the number one job of leadership is to fashion and then maintain that purpose.

### Summary

The four facing directions of leadership (*Inward, Outward, Upward, and Forward*) are four forms of awareness (*Self, Others, Team, and Purpose*). In other areas of outdoor leadership, we refer to awareness as your **Leadership Radar**. A basketball coach once told his team: “*It is better to be aware than smart.*” Meditate on that for a while, and strive constantly to build your broader awareness, for the strengthening and edification of your leadership, and the benefit of the teams and groups who follow you.

Are you coming to Virginia for a family vacation, church group trip, troop 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, along Virginia’s Blue Ridge, and in the Potomac Highlands of West Virginia. Check out the 2020 trip options below, or call to talk about your own creative adventure idea!  
(540-433-1637 or [lester@wildguyde.com](mailto:lester@wildguyde.com) )  
You may also visit [www.wildguyde.com](http://www.wildguyde.com)

**2020 Adventure Trip options and details below!**



## CHOOSE YOUR ADVENTURE: 2020 Daytrips with WILD GUYde Adventures, Harrisonburg, VA

**Top-Roping at Hidden Rocks, Virginia:** This is the rock climbing trip for the adventurous beginner – you don't have much experience, but you want a great outdoor day with your family or special friends. Thirty minutes west of Harrisonburg, we'll park just inside George Washington National Forest, gear up, and hike a scenic 20 minutes through rhododendron and hemlocks and across some mountain streams to a secluded sandstone cliff. There will be pink and white mountain laurel in June, and wild huckleberries in August. You'll be introduced to harnesses, knots, helmets, and the *belay system*; then we'll try some easy warm-up climbs to remind you that the kid inside you still likes to clamber on things. We can go on to some harder climbing that invites you to try new skills and movements. And we'll finish the day with a rappel – backing over the edge, with nothing between you and the ground below but 60 feet of air and a great view! Closer to Luray or Northern Virginia? We'll visit **Waterfall Mountain** in the Massanutten Range, or **Little Stony Man** on the Blue Ridge for TALL climbing and spectacular Shenandoah Valley panoramas!

(Full day \$250 for 1-3 people; \$60 for each additional. ½-day \$175 for 1-3, and \$45 for each additional)



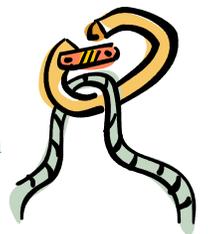
**Beginner Climbing at Seneca Rocks, WV:** After 90 minutes of curving mountain highway (okay, *country two-lane*), you'll gasp to see a spectacular blade of Tuscarora Sandstone, whose summit sits almost 1000 feet above its North Fork Valley floor. Seneca Rocks is a scenic place for the beginner or family to learn the rock climbing basics, top-roping and rappelling to an awesome West Virginia backdrop. Easy routes guaranteed early success, but more challenging climbs also wait to test your skills. Seneca Rocks is an awesome place to climb, just beyond the sign: "*Here ends the realm of the hiker!*" (Full day \$275 for 1-3 people; \$65 for each additional. ½ day \$200 for 1-3; \$50 each additional)

**Multi-Pitch at Seneca Rocks:** A little more experienced in climbing? Maybe you tried it at camp or the local rock gym? Ready for the next step? Join me for the multi-pitch experience, seconding the route as we lead-climb to the top of the fabled South Summit! This is the only technical summit in the U.S. east of the Mississippi. Seneca has routes at all ranges of difficulty, from starters like *Old Ladies Route* (5.2) to mid-range classics (*West Pole* 5.7) to old school hardman routes like *Crack of Dawn* and *Madmen Only* (5.10). Every one of them will give you a new appreciation for the expression "*high and vertical.*" Register your accomplishment and ruminations in the summit journal, wave to tourists way down in the valley, and then head down to *terra firma* via the three-pitch rappel. Finish the day with a splash in the North Fork River swimming hole at "Gravel Beach"; then pick up a cold drink and a West Virginia memento at Harpers General Store before sleeping the ride back to Virginia and "the Burg."

(Full-day: \$225 1<sup>st</sup> person; \$150 each addl.)

**Instructional Climbing:** This is a tutorial for those who have a little exposure to climbing, and want to gain eventual autonomy. Lots of instruction in current best-practices and hands-on trying it for you in rigging top anchors, belaying skills and equipment alternatives, movement coaching, and rappel setup and protection. There will be individualized attention and repetitive practice, as well as some exploration of the historical evolution of climbing equipment and protocol. You will finish the day with a lot more confidence in your basic skills. Bring a partner so you'll have someone to climb with later.

(\$175 1<sup>st</sup> person; \$125 each for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>)



WILD GUYde Adventures offers two other rock climbing options: a **Boy Scout Rock Climbing Merit Badge** tutorial for troops and leaders. We send a booklet to get troops started on their knots and First Aid requirements ahead of time, and then spend two days going through all the climbing, gear spec., and rappelling activity requirements (\$90 each). We also offer the **PCIA (Professional Climbing Instructor Association) Top Rope Climbing Instructor Certification** course and exam. This 3-day course (\$450) and 1 day exam (\$150) is for recreational climbers who want to add an instructor certification on their resume. It's also very useful for individuals guiding with club, camp, or university outing programs.

**Peaceful Paddling:** Canoe a ½ day stretch of the **South Fork River**. This Class I and II water is ideal for families with elementary school children – just long enough to be engaging without getting boring. As we wind through pastures in the Shenandoah Valley, you'll learn basic canoe strokes and maneuvering. Dangle your feet or plunk your head to cool off. And keep watching for blue herons, turtles on logs, and cows in the water!

(\$140 1-3 people; \$35 each additional)

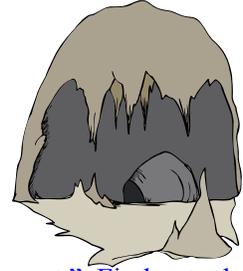


**Pick-up-the-Pace Paddling:** A full day of canoeing awaits further down the **South Fork**. This provides a little more excitement for teenagers, adventurous parents, & other paddle pilgrims! A casual start allows a review of canoe strokes and partner teamwork.

An amazing rope-swing breaks the quiet – you won't believe what comes out of your mouth when you let go (“*Geronimo!*?”) More paddling through runs and pools, always under the shadow of Massanutten Mountain. Lunch on the bank and then back into the boats. Finally, at Milepost 17, *Compton's Rapid* – a great shoot-through with some higher standing waves! Paddlers call it a “Fat II” but stay wide of Pillow Rock! Below, there's a jumping rock for another cool-off before paddling the final mile to the take-out. Load the boats and start the drive home – happy, tired, and maybe a little sun-tanned! West Virginia travelers may want to visit the gorgeous “Trough” on the **South Branch of the Potomac**. High and remote mountain walls on each side of the river, and keep your eyes open for bald eagles!

**(\$175 1-3 people; \$45 each additional)**

**Half-Day Caving:** The underground sidewalk and the tourist cave light show are not for you. You want to see it the way it was before the electrician got there! Primitive caves have all the features of the subterranean world – *speleothems* (stalactites, flowstone, soda straws, and columns), *lots of real mud*, and sometimes even *bats* (but most of them are asleep, and all of them are harmless). Pull on your coveralls, clip on your helmet, adjust your headlamp, and down we go. There are squeezes if you want them, and belly crawls for the adventurous --- but there are also corridor ceilings higher than your house, and large cavern rooms for the claustrophobic. Learn cave travel safety, underground navigation, and some “total body movement.” Find out what the year-round underground temperature is, and then finally emerge back into sunlight with a new appreciation for what happens underneath Virginia when limestone and groundwater meet. The gleam of your smile might be the only thing shining through the mud on your face! Caving trips can be **Beginner Caving** (mostly horizontal movement – walking, stooping, or crawling) or **Intermediate Caving** (for folks fit enough to handle strenuous vertical moves, and more sustained physical effort). Various locations are available in both Virginia (20 minutes from Harrisonburg), and West Virginia (between Franklin and Elkins). *Caving trips are not advised for individuals who might be unfit, excessively overweight, or who live an extremely sedentary lifestyle, or for very young children.*



**(\$125 for 1-3 people; \$25 for each additional)**



**Design Your Own Adventure:** Numerous other options exist, including hiking and climbing guiding along **Virginia's Blue Ridge** or at the **Nelson Rock Outdoor Center (WV)**, group orienteering challenges in the National Forest, a climbing self-rescue clinic, outdoor fitness training, and flatwater paddling instruction for beginners and children. We can customize to meet the interests of your family, scout troop, or youth group. Call to talk about your needs.

**Things you oughta know:**

- **Lester R. Zook** is the **WILD GUYde**. He is a *Wilderness First Responder*, and is a certified member of the *American Mountain Guides Association (Single Pitch Instructor)*. He has been leading wilderness adventures and training camping leaders for 25 years, and loves to take people outdoors! **Ethan Zook** has been a camp counselor and adventure leader at numerous camps. He is a *Red Cross Lifeguard* and a *Virginia Paramedic*. **Aaron Zook** is a climber, caver, and paddler, a *Red Cross Lifeguard*, and has been through *Wilderness First Aid*. **Mary Zook** is a *WFR*, and a *Leave No Trace Master Educator*. Together, we are a small family business that strives to provide exceptional service, and create value in the lives of our guests.
- More detail on activity possibilities is available by visiting [www.wildguyde.com](http://www.wildguyde.com). Call or e-mail to ask questions and to arrange dates, rates, and meeting points:



**(540) 433-1637 or [lester@wildguyde.com](mailto:lester@wildguyde.com)**

- **WGA's** guiding season: Wild caving is year-round. Best paddling is April through July. Climbing is usually good March through October. Call early to reserve; weekends in particular can fill quickly.
- **WILD GUYde** will provide all technical equipment (ropes, harnesses, helmets, etc.). A personal *things-to-bring list* (clothing, water, lunch, etc.) will be provided.

- We can also help with **lodging ideas**. We can recommend from *primitive* to *posh* – National Forest campgrounds, drive-up motels, and some delightful Bed and Breakfast inns!
- For groups of 10 or larger, we disregard the starter fee and simply bill the per-person rate.
- Payment is by cash or check, payable to WGA; unfortunately, credit cards cannot be accepted at this time. Gratuities are never expected, and always appreciated!
- Some activities have inherent risks – that’s the meaning of the word *adventure*. Participants will be asked to fill out a *Medical Form*, and sign a *Participant Agreement* acknowledging certain dangers. Some activities are physically strenuous, emotionally demanding, or require sustained cognitive attention to task and detail. We make every effort to create a great day, but **WGA** guides do reserve the prerogative to deny access/participation if, in our judgment, the client is not likely to be successful. Clients also may not be “under the influence” or “feeling the effects” of alcohol or recreational drugs at the time of the event.
- **WILD GUYde Adventures** incorporated in Virginia in 2004, and is fully insured. **WGA** is a permittee with the George Washington and Monongahela National Forests, and along Virginia’s Blue Ridge. **WGA** is an equal opportunity provider and employer. **WGA** practices environmental stewardship, and is a member of the *Access Fund*, the *National Speleological Society*, the *Virginia Tourism Corp.*, the *Christian Adventure Association*, the *Shenandoah Valley Travel Assoc.*, and the *Harrisonburg-Rockingham Chamber of Commerce*.

## How was your trip with the *WILD GUYde*?!

Thanks again for guiding us – the trip was awesome! I’m a little sore and bruised today but it makes me happy because it reminds me of everything we did. The info was clear and the location appropriate. I also really enjoyed how you incorporated learning and team building elements into our trip. (Sarah, 2012)

We arrived back in Florida late Thursday night. We had a wonderful time on our adventure with you and we have all been raving to everyone about how great the trip was! Your professionalism and encouragement allowed us to continue on even when some of us were reluctant to try (me, of course)! The boys raved about the caving and the fact that it looked scary, but once you got through it, it wasn’t as difficult or scary as you thought it would be. Todd and I were both thrilled with the learning experience for the kids and feel that we have all grown as a result of facing our fears. Everyone talked about what a great guide you were for us! Overall, our adventure was a wonderful experience and the highlight of our trip to VA! (Christine, 2012)

We had a blast, everything was perfect, and you did an amazing job! The pictures are AWESOME! We would recommend you to any outdoor lover! We agreed that we learned so much from you. (Nina, 2012)

Thank you so very much for a wonderful adventure rock climbing last week. It was wonderful to share the time with my daughter. We both really appreciated your teaching style and the knowledge you imparted. I found a whole bucket-full of sermon illustrations. The location was excellent. We appreciated the fact that we were alone on the climb (except for the beautiful hawk). The photos you took came out well, and we showed them to my wife who appreciated our joy, but was thankful that she chose a more Hobbitish way to spend the day (reading). (Pastor Chris, 2012)

