

GUYdelines

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

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Some ideas (and quotes) I try to live by

I confess -- I am a lover of quotes. Maybe it was bible reading early in my youth in the King James version that instilled the love of a truth, captured clearly and almost poetically. I like language -- searching for and finding that most appropriate word or phrase to perfectly express or frame an idea. Humor resides here -- Shakespeare both captured this idea and illustrated it when he observed, "*Brevity is the soul of wit.*" Winston Churchill's ready and sometimes acid linguistic gift leaves us both awed at his ready mind, and snickering at his employment of it. (When he returned to base as a corporal after a night in the town, the female MP at the gate accosted him: "*You, Mr. Churchill are drunk,*" to which Churchill replied, "*And you Madam, are ugly, but in the morning, I shall be sober*"). But I digress...

Meaning and purpose can also be expressed with clarity, beauty, and simplicity. So for this issue of **GUYdelines**, I propose to share 5 ideas that I find compelling, and that I attempt to live by, and then

Seneca Rocks, WV, one pitch up on Conns' West (5.4), starting to show some delightful fall color. (Photo courtesy of Logan Kreider)



offer a few quotes to buttress each. I hope the result edifies. And while I commend to you these five ideas, I also encourage you to embark on this broader exercise - sit down sometime and attempt to crystallize a few key ideas that give moral fiber and

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purpose to your life. As always, I welcome your thoughts, feedback, and ruminations. You may REPLY to lester@wildguyde.com. Happy reading!

Idea No. 1: The outdoor world is wild and powerful. It is not sentimental or sympathetic, and it doesn't suffer fools. It is unpolluted and undiluted. It is beautiful but not tame, and it has much to offer us. It can teach us both mastery and humility. It can open us, not only to God's amazing creative power, but also to God's perspective on our small but significant human lives.

"The world is not to be put in order, the world is order incarnate. It is for us to put ourselves in unison with this order." (Henry Miller)

*"Earth's crammed with heaven, And every common bush afire with God,
But only he who sees takes off his shoes; The rest sit round and pluck blackberries."* (Elizabeth Barrett Browning)

"The prerequisite for misadventure is the belief that you are invincible, or that the wilderness cares about you. The wilderness does not care about your human rights. The unvigilant perish; the prudent survive." (Daryl Miller)

Idea No. 2: Growing happens in the classroom of challenge, adversity, and the unknown. Muscles do not get stronger until they are overloaded. Similarly, our souls do not expand until they are challenged, working through hardship, fear, and discomfort is the road to greater strength. Growth involves some pain; the alternative (stagnation, status quo) is not living.

"The thing to be wished for is, not for the mountains to become easier, but for men to become wiser and stronger." (Edward Whymper)

"We are continually faced by great opportunities brilliantly disguised as insoluble problems." (Lee Iaccoca)

"There is no royal road to anything. One thing at a time, and all things in succession. That which grows fast withers; only that which grows steadily endures." (J.G. Holland)

Idea No. 3: Learning is better than intelligence. Learning implies receptiveness, an openness to new insight, and forcing oneself away from rigidity and fixed notions. Learning is letting life question us -- allowing anything or anyone that we encounter to be our teacher.

"The rigid person is a disciple of death; the soft, supple, and delicate are lovers of life." (Tao Te Ching)

"Those who never retract their opinions love themselves more than they love truth." (Joseph Joubert)

"Stupidity is the deliberate cultivation of ignorance." (William Gaddis)

"On the occasion of every accident that befalls you, remember to turn to yourself and inquire what power you have for turning it to use." (Epictetus)

Idea No. 4: Leadership is fashioning and then maintaining a shared purpose in a group. As a leader, every morning you wake up, your first leadership task should be to ask, *"What is our shared purpose, and what am I going to do today to articulate it, foster it, nurture it, and strengthen it in my team?"*

"Leadership: an influence relationship between leaders and followers who intend real change according to their mutual purposes." (Jon Stahl-Wert)

"In its essence, leadership is about learning how to shape the future. Leadership exists when people are no longer victims of circumstances but participate in creating new circumstances." (Peter Senge)

Idea No. 5: Inside the human is where safety begins. Most likely, it is the things inside us that get us hurt -- ego, competitiveness, invincibility, pride, fear (of what others think, etc.), unwillingness to ask for help or acknowledge weakness, presumption, greed. So safety begins with a brutally honest awareness of self, and then a willingness to think candidly and objectively about the interior environments of the others with us. Nature isn't dangerous until the humans show up!

"A good scare is worth more to a man than good advice." (Ed Howe)

"He may, with the good luck which sometimes attends children, drunkards, and persons of weak intellect, escape the dangers without even knowing that they were there. But if he affronts too often forces whose powers he had not attempted to understand, he will in the long run succumb." (Lord Schuster)

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 2014 trip options below, or call to talk about your own creative adventure idea!

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

Please know that I enjoyed the trip as much as the students. That was a terrific adventure concluding our trip. As for you, your pre-trip, guiding us, giving us knowledge about the environment, and helping us to understand it through questions and answers was intentional, terrific, and exemplified a true outdoor professional. Thank you! (Mike, 2014)

Thank you so much for taking us on this unforgettable adventure. I cannot stop thinking about how much fun we had and when we can do it all over again! You were an excellent guide. I appreciate the fun facts you gave us, as well as caring to teach us navigational and safety skills that we could take with us into future excursions. I like to take on challenges, rather than having someone do the hard work for me, so I am glad you gave us all the opportunity to learn something new. It was clear you put safety first as well, and I think I can speak for everyone in saying that we felt as safe as we could in a cave. The location was great and easy to get to. I think you hit everything on the mark! (Deesha, 2014)

I would like to thank you for the terrific caving trip yesterday. The kids could not stop talking about it, and Gary would like to do the lower part of the cave. You are an excellent instructor, and run a quality program. (Larry, 2014)

I had a great time yesterday. I've been trying to figure out why I had so much fun being stuck in a muddy cave with other people's children. I think it boils down to the excitement of trying something new, overcoming fear, and feeling adventurous. I thought I was doing a pretty good job exposing my children to different activities and experiences but I see now what was missing. Much of what we do is very prescribed and sanitary. The hands-on experiences that you provide allow room for creativity, problem-solving, and self-awareness. The feelings of accomplishment and pride after overcoming a physical and mental challenge can't be found in a lecture hall or a tightly controlled environment! (Heidi, Adventure Classroom mom, '14)