

# GUYdelines

A few thoughts for outdoor lovers and leaders from

*WILD GUYde Adventures*, LLC

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**Warm-up and Engage:** Do you have a mentor (or several)? Do you have a protégé (or several)? Who are they, and how active are those relationships in your life?

## Chapter 22 - The Long View (or, How I Became an Educational Grandfather)

### Educational grandfather

Sarah was a senior outdoor leadership student in my program, and after May term, was headed to Highland Retreat Camp to complete her senior internship as Adventure Director for the summer. Her May term was committed to participating in the 3-week Wilderness Seminar that I was due to lead. This is three weeks of backpacking, caving, climbing, canoeing, solo-fast, and mini-marathon run. But the core purpose of this excursion was to give upper-class students sustained experiential learning in expedition leadership, with outdoor skills learning and formative feedback provided throughout. And I also knew something Sarah did not know.

I knew that my 13 year old son, Ethan, was signed up for a backpacking trip with Sarah through the camp, and that for 5 days in July, my first-born was going to be in the capable (?) care of Sarah and her assistant in the back-country. Now, I don't think I inordinately favored Sarah on Wilderness Seminar, but I will admit that I was very conscientious about seeing to it that she mastered her skills, and that she took my feedback seriously. You see, if anything happened to Ethan on this trip, I knew I might be answering for him ... to his mother! And it was a great day when Ethan returned home at the end of his glorious week and regaled us with stories of where they had gone, all the things they tried, and how many cool skills Sarah and Mark seemed to be

able to do, like food hanging, fire-building, map reading, and stream crossing. And then he looked at me and said, "*Dad, do you know how to do that stuff?*"

This was the first time that the term, "*educational grandfather*" occurred to me. It became clear that I was entering that phase of life where I would now be teaching teachers of others. As time slows my body, I am coming to peace with the idea that I don't need to do all the climbing with youth groups any more, or keep up with the boy scouts on their backpacking trips. Maybe my past experiences and what I think I have learned can be offered as my gift and contribution. This is "*teaching to the third generation*," and for me, it is more than theoretical. I am finding, quite surprisingly to myself, that when I hear of one of my assistants or former students leading a dynamite program, I get a deep sense of satisfaction. Several of my former students have by now risen to executive leadership levels at their

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camp operations or started their own businesses. At my last count, over twenty of my former athletes were themselves in head or assistant coaching roles out in the schools and communities. The opportunity to converse with these emerging professionals and young entrepreneurs on a practical and personal level is very enriching for me. “*Generativity*” is what Erik Erikson titled this stage of life – a need to nurture and guide younger people and contribute to the next generation.

When a leader is unwilling to recognize that this is the next stage in their life’s journey, they cling to leadership, even as they decline. This is fear – fear at seeing my abilities deteriorate, fear that I have had my time of influence, and maybe fear that I may never achieve all that I dreamed of. The up-and-coming generation represents, not an opportunity but a threat. “*A cowardly leader is the most dangerous of men.*” (Stephen King) Recently, I read The Fear: Robert Mugabe and the Martyrdom of Zimbabwe (Peter Godwin, 2010), to deepen my understanding of my birth-country. If you know anything of Mugabe, you would recognize this profile of an aging leader who was both fearful and therefore very dangerous. *The fear* was not only the terror he unleashed upon his people, but the very dark state of Mugabe’s inner soul.

### How to give it away

I had a small epiphany several years ago that may not seem as profound to you as it seemed to me at the time, but here it is: When we set about to train leaders, the best way to do this is to LET THEM LEAD. Do not lull them to sleep with PowerPoint presentations, bullet-point lists, and lectures about how to. Rather, offer them some foundational information or specific areas to focus on at the front end, structure a situation and create an opportunity for them to lead others, put them out there, and then follow up with observation, feedback, and coaching. Then do it again. It really is the *Experience* → *Hindsight* → *Insight* → *Foresight* learning process all over again (**Chapter 7**). Leadership assignments can focus on whichever phase we choose: planning and organization, vision casting, public presentation and communication, conflict management, group dynamics, evaluation. But placing them in front of a clientele, giving them the experience of leading, and then helping them make sense of it, evaluate,

and set meaningful goals therefrom is the best form of learning. How might this apply in your setting?

When training staff or student leaders, I have often found this progression helpful:

***Precision***: Work until you can show me mastery in the way I want it done. While this is occurring, you are also absorbing our culture and work ethic.



***Efficiency***: As you gain mastery, you will improve your efficiency. You will learn who you need to go to for your resources, you will make fewer mistakes and backtrack less, and overall, improve your economy of effort.



***Creativity***: Now you will likely begin to see maybe other ways that things can be done to accomplish the overall goal; maybe you will begin to have your own ideas about how to get us there.



***Contribution***: This is where you begin to improve the organization – by giving us your new ideas about how to do what we do, but doing it better (more effect, less waste, greater productivity, new product). Peters and Waterman said, “*People will flood you with ideas if you let them.*” (Peter Smith)

Sometimes new employees want to jump right to Creativity and Contribution, but my point is, they don’t know enough yet. When they have first mastered the fundamentals the way I want them done, and they have internalized our values, then they begin to have ideas that are better than mine, and that is how the organization learns and improves.

Finally, in the Apostle Paul’s second letter to his protégé, Timothy, we read this: “*And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses, the same entrust to reliable (faithful) men who will also be qualified to teach others.*” (I Tim. 2:2). Here, Paul is going to the 4<sup>th</sup> generation:

Paul → Timothy → Faithful men → Others

A.B. Ramsay, said the same thing, but in a slightly different way:

*No teacher I of boys or smaller fry;  
No teacher I of teachers; no, not I.  
Mine was the distant aim, the longer reach,  
To teach men how to teach men how to teach.*

When I have taken my children outdoors, for a hike, or a paddling or climbing day, we usually take trash bags and latex gloves, and do some trash pickup at the site. I have always attempted to “leave places a little better than I found them.” And in my professional life, at the various institutions where I have worked, this same principle applies. I have attempted to create something, improve something, or leave something positive in place that was not there when I came. Here might be your opportunity to do the same. Can you envision some way to develop and coach leadership and talent where you are currently situated? Take the long view, and build something that will prepare leaders after you depart, to the third and fourth generation.

### **Leadership Toolbox**

Some helpful resources here are: [The Coaching Habit: Say Less, Ask More, and Change the Way You Lead Forever](#) (Michael Bungay Stanier, 2016), [Mentor: The Kid and the CEO](#) (Tom Pace, 2007), [Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Young Adults in Their Search for Meaning, Purpose, and Faith](#) (Sharon Parks, 2000). Some helpful thoughts and a parable of *Manhood in the Tribe* follow:

*Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity.* (George S. Patton)

*The young man knows the rules, but the old man knows the exceptions.* (Oliver Wendell Holmes)

*For aging leaders and performers: leave the stage before they ask you to, and definitely before they come to carry you off!*

**Manhood in the Tribe:** *In the tribe, the boys know that one day, they must take over for the fathers. And when they do, they will surpass the fathers in feats of strength and skill, of government, and of invention. So, every boy watches his father, first wanting to be like him, then beginning to test himself against him, using his father as the measuring rod: “How strong am I? How close can I come?”*

*The fathers do not fear this – they see it coming, and in fact, hasten it along. The father tries the boy out in his skills and his strength, and even pushes him to achieve. The boy must learn from the father, through discipline and even through punishment and suffering, if he is to go beyond. And there are tests – the Vision Quest, and others.*

*And when the day arrives that the son begins to best the father, the father is not dishonored, for it is he that taught the son. And everything the son goes on to achieve is a glory and a tribute to the father, and to fathering. The father gives manhood to his son this way, but he does not lose his own. For now, the tribe sees and confers on the father the title of elder – one who fathers a tribe. And where his body fails, his wisdom will now be his strength and the tribe’s protection.*

*The father is only dishonored if he refuses to give manhood to his son. And this is because his father never gave it to him. And so, he fears his son’s advances. He punishes the son, not to help him learn, but to hinder and to belittle -- teasing him but holding manhood away from him. This father is a boy walking around in a man’s body. And when he sees the boys of the tribe advancing on him, he becomes vengeful and rageful and bitter, because he is afraid that he is running out of time to become a man. He is afraid that he will never be a man – and vengefulness and rage and bitterness are the faces of fear.*

*The good son becomes a man and takes the place of strength for his father. And wise sons honor their fathers, now the elders, by acknowledging the foundation they provided, and the wisdom they possess. And the new man will go to the elder often to learn how he himself is to become a father. (LRZ, 2010)*

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 2021 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)

## CHOOSE YOUR ADVENTURE: 2021 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! Closer to Lexington or Roanoke? We'll visit **Goshen Pass** and climb above the gorgeous Maury River!

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

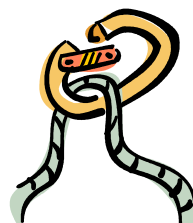


**Beginner Climbing at Seneca Rocks, WV:** After 90 minutes of curving mountain highway (okay, *country two-lane*), you'll gasp to see a spectacular blade of Tuscarora Sandstone, whose summit sits almost 1000 feet above its North Fork Valley floor. Seneca Rocks is a scenic place for the beginner or family to learn the rock climbing basics, top-roping and rappelling to an awesome West Virginia backdrop. Easy routes guarantee 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-practice 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)

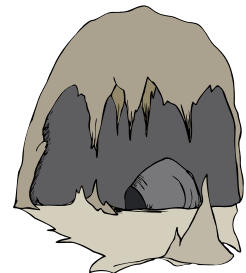


**Pick-up-the-Pace Paddling:** A fuller day of canoeing awaits further down the **South Fork**. This provides a little more excitement for teenagers, adventurous parents, & other paddle pilgrims! A casual start allows a review of canoe strokes and partner teamwork.

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 **NROCKS (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 30 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 Tapolyai** 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**

- **WGA's** guiding season is 7 days a week. Rock climbing is March through October, paddling is best in the spring and summer, and wild caving is year-round. 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, or might pose undue hazard. 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)

Your customer service was outstanding. Despite my late contact, you found a way to get us in on an adventure. The experience was excellent. The kids had a blast but you were appropriately serious in your approach. Safety was a clear priority as it must be. The experience was well structured and presented a number of great challenges. (Mark, 2012)

This was my and my husband's first time rock-climbing. All I can say is that it was an amazing experience. We have done activities from zip-lining and parasailing to sky-diving and I can say this is right up there with all of those activities. I was a bit nervous to start my repel over the edge but Lester makes sure you are confident that your equipment is holding you. Now that I have experienced it, I want to go back and do it again and again. This was a great learning experience and Lester was full of knowledge about rock climbing, repelling, nature, and just life in general. Would recommend to anyone looking for some adventure! (Krysten, 2021)

Our 3 children (25, 21, 16) went on a rock climbing adventure with Lester. They were beginners and Lester was an excellent guide. He was knowledgeable, safety and detail oriented, and an excellent teacher. They came back smiling and a little sore. Our family isn't the outdoorsy type, but they all said they would definitely do it again! Well worth the drive and the time. (Meredith, 2021)