The background of the cover is a photograph of a mountain valley. In the foreground, there is a field of tall, golden-yellow grass. A small, clear river flows through the middle of the field. In the background, there are green pine trees and a rocky shoreline. Further back, there are blue mountains under a clear blue sky.

# **The Lizard Way: A Guide to How the World Really Works**

**by  
Doc Roberts**



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A Guide to How the  
World  
Really Works**

**By**

**David (Doc) Roberts**



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Disclaimer: Since this book was written in the land of the free, you can disregard any or all "advice" in the book. If you have a brain in your head, but choose not to use it, the problem is yours. Also, my lawyer told me to say that all the information in this book is purely for entertainment, and has no socially redeeming value, and is not intended for human use or consumption. Always consult a professional before doing anything, including clipping your toe nails... I hate that clipping too close thing...

If you rip off this book (steal it) my children will starve and I will have to put my mother in a rest home. A lot of sweat and work went into this book and other additions will follow... if you simply pay for the value received. If you ignore this plea for honesty, I will find your thieving butt and make your life miserable.

Note that all the names of the guilty, innocent, dumb and really dumb have been changed. If you

recognize yourself in the book... don't tell anyone.  
Don't bug me with mean, nasty stuff... I didn't do  
it... It was probably some other guy who looked  
just like me.

## Table of Contents

Introduction, Foreword, or Whatever you Want to call it .....	vi
Chapter One, "Keeping it simple" .....	1
Chapter Two, "There may be other ways to do things" .....	9
Chapter Three, "Good enough" .....	16
Chapter Four, "More Time" .....	22
Chapter Five, "No Brain, No Pain" .....	25
Chapter Six, "You are what you dress" .....	29
Chapter Seven, "You can be lost and still enjoy yourself" .....	33
Chapter Eight, "Life is tough, but it's tougher if you're dumb" .....	39
Chapter Nine, "It is better to be lucky than smart" .....	47
Chapter Ten, "The matrix is real" .....	50
Chapter Eleven, "Leave early, before you're asked" .....	55
Chapter Twelve, "It is easier to get into stuff than get out of it" .....	58

Chapter Thirteen, "Life is way too complicated to figure out, so just pick out the parts you like" .....	61
Chapter Fourteen, "If in doubt, don't" .....	70
Chapter Fifteen, "The higher the Lizard climbs, the more you see of his behind." .....	77
Chapter Sixteen, "Forgiving good, forgetting bad" .....	82
Chapter Seventeen, "You are probably not as bad as they are saying" .....	85
Chapter Eighteen, "Plan one fun event every day... Look forward to it and remember it" .....	92
Chapter Nineteen, "The Spring of Forty-seven Doors" .....	96
Chapter Twenty, "Learning the Bad Stuff First" .....	110
Chapter Twenty-one, "Pay yourself first" .....	114
Chapter Twenty-two, "The art of the probable" .....	117
Chapter Twenty-three, "Teddy can bite" .....	123
Chapter Twenty-four, "I'll be right there" .....	127
Chapter Twenty-five, "The too easy life" .....	131
Chapter Twenty-six, "Not that bad" .....	135



Chapter Twenty-seven, "It rains on the rich"	138
Chapter Twenty-eight, "Good ideas have no owners, just followers... Bad ideas have owners, and victims" .....	143
Chapter Twenty-nine, "Is it safe yet?" .....	149
Chapter Thirty, "Sled ride to heck" .....	157
Epilogue, "Everyone has a story" .....	161

## **Introduction, Foreword, or Whatever you Want to call it**

Normally introductions can be skipped if you want to “get to the meat of it” quickly. But I wouldn’t do that... or you may start in a very confusing place.

In this introduction there will be no thanks for all the folks that made this book possible. They know who they are and I have taken the liberty of thanking them in person. There will be no long list of “those gone before” or opposing theories. No, we will be to the meat of it... the core of the text and our starting point.

It is my simple belief that most people need help. Not just the groceries out of the car help... real help. They live lives of quiet desperation, or maddening confusion. Most people are either lost or blindly following leaders who are equally lost, but just not publishing that fact. And the sad part of it all is that we have no idea how life got “that way.”

During periods of self analysis, we often voice, "If I had only done \_\_\_\_\_" (fill in the blank), or, "I knew I should not have \_\_\_\_\_." But rarely do these observations lead to any productive behavior. More often they lead to feelings of helplessness and more self examination.

It is my hope that the Lizard Way will provide not just the reasons of why life "got this way," but also some useful help.

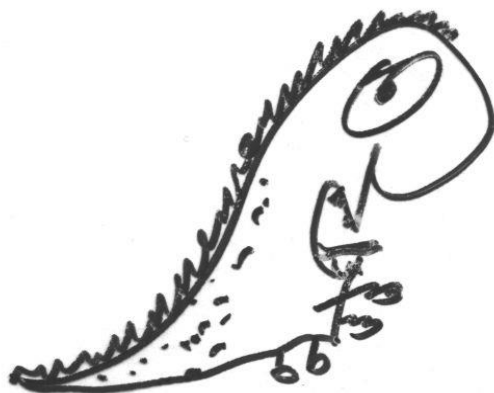
Hopefully the reader will find the book entertaining enough to read through to the end. Stories of camping, hiking and "mild adventures" are liberally sprinkled through the text to both keep the reader awake, and provide some life examples of subject ideas and principles. But on a larger scale the stories provide personal reference points that may aid the reader in digesting the information.

The book is broken up into thirty chapters, and is intended to be read at a chapter a day. The idea is that the "rules" or concepts need to be yours. You need to see if they apply or not, and

how could you work them into your life. Slowly digest the concepts, think about the ideas during the day, and look for opportunities to apply the concept of the day.

The author also belongs to the Las Vegas school of teaching which basically adheres to the philosophy that an entertained student is a learning student. The intent is to mildly amuse while embedding life modifying ideas deep in your subliminal mind... kind of like watching TV.

So without further delay, let us start at the beginning...



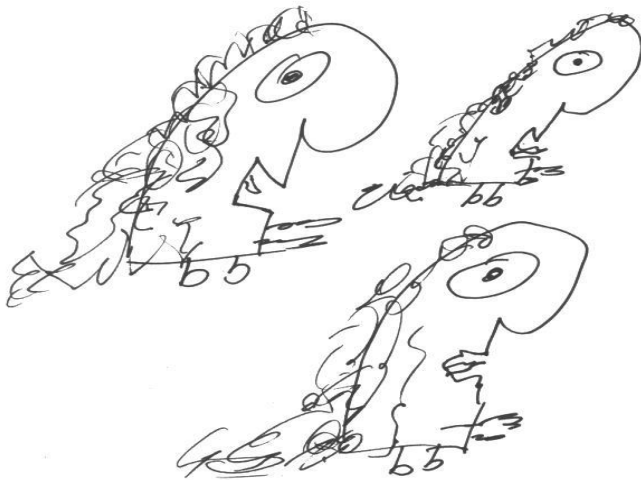
## Chapter One, "Keeping it simple"

The meaning of it all... How did I get here? What is my purpose in life? To these and other "big" questions we will turn our attention and provide the answers. Other issues, such as the quest for eternal youth and endless riches will also be addressed. Throughout our journey together we will solve most of the world's problems, end hunger, and, of course, provide a path to world peace.

By now you are either thinking the author is quite mad, or has studied with the mystics of the East and has found the path to true enlightenment ... neither. Rather, we will take a trip together and learn the simple... the easy... the way often forgotten... the Lizard Way. And we start with a story, the birth of the Lizards...

The Lizards were born in the late Sixties. A group of well intentioned Berkeley professors wishing to enlighten some of the student body, gathered a small group of "never been in the woods" together and gave them only one instruction, "Bring whatever you think you will need

for a week in the woods." A drive to Yosemite and one week later the group was being formally ejected from the Park by the rangers and told never to come back again... It seems the group had run out of food on the third day and had resorted to dressing up in homemade "lizard" outfits (bark, leaves, and pieces of old canvas) and raiding campers in the lower valley. After reports of giant lizards running loose in the woods, the Rangers had caught the group and issued the now infamous Lizard greeting, "Get out and never come back."



Well now you have it... the genesis of our camping, skiing, hiking band. But you ask, how can any earth-shattering discoveries come from such simple minded roots? But you must understand that the Lizards of the late Sixties and the Lizards of the Twenty-first century are very different creatures. And it is that evolution and understanding of that process that makes the Lizard Way so compelling and insightful.... the value of simple observations and even simpler stories to illustrate them.

For example, while it may be a disturbing fact to some that a "C" student (George W. Bush) could rise to the highest position of the most powerful nation on earth, it reaffirms the notion that life's rules are much simpler than we would like to think. It would seem that Mr. Bush's meteoric rise to power followed one simple rule, "If you're going to run for president, make sure that your father was a president." Clearly the rule had worked in the past (the Adams) and worked quite well for George B.

So our first life lesson of the Lizard Way is, "Reduce a thing to its simplest form." As in the

early days of Lizardom, "Fire hot... burn Lizard," was a valuable rule for keeping hands out of the campfire, later-day Lizards took value from more sophisticated rules like, "It's nice to be nice." Simply put, early Lizards needed to be careful not to fall into or "overdue" the warming effects of the campfire. Later-day Lizards have learned to benefit from a basic spirit of kindness, and the fact that kindness is its own reward. Being nice is just a good thing.

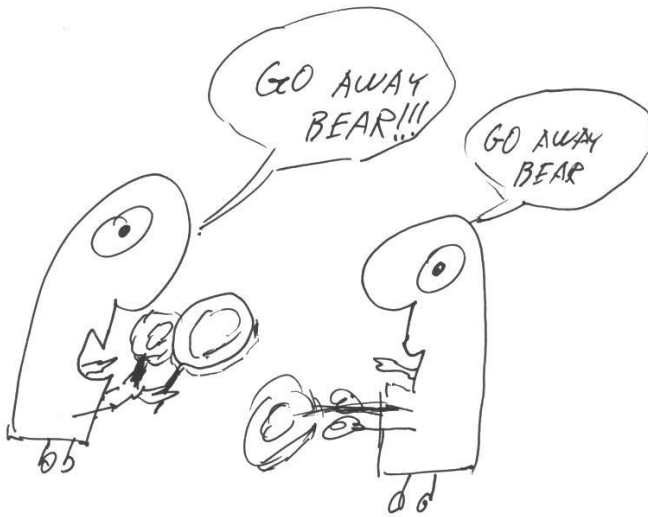
Having stated the first life lesson... the actual doing of it is a difficult thing. To find the simplest state of a thing means stripping away much of the useless, or needless complexities of life... but to illustrate we need another story...

The expedition started like most... a rush to leave the lights of the city behind... a stop in Bishop, California to buy more lights, and a generally disorganized scramble to base camp at Laura Lake. Starting late at the trail head, it soon became obvious that Laura Lake was beyond physical prowess of the two Lizards (Jeff and Doc) in the lead group and that an alternative site was needed at the Shadow Lake midway point. Because



of the impact of campers on the area, though, camp sites were limited to a few spots on the far side... no problem.

Set up camp, gather some firewood, and kick back... Oh, the life of the Lizard in the woods... then, the night. After diner, food sacks had been hung high in a tree using time-honored Lizard technology... the double bag counterweight with a pull rope drop (bear-proof). Doc Lizard put in his ear plugs and jumped in his bag. Note: Doc Lizard used ear plugs because #1 snoring woke him up (especially his), and #2 he felt that if a bad thing was going to happen to him, he would rather not wake up in the middle of it.



2:00 AM Lizard Jeff yells, "There's a bear in camp!" Doc Lizard hears nothing... the ear plugs work. 2:02 AM Lizard Jeff is now beating on pots and yelling, "Go away bear!" Doc Lizard wakes up and shines the light of his flashlight (a new one purchased in Bishop) in the direction of the intruder. Ten feet away the beam of the flashlight stops at two yellow eyes on a huge black head. 2:03 AM Doc Lizard in BVD's and boots joins the chant, "Go away bear!", beating on pots, and jumping up and down. 2:10 AM the bear has a headache and leaves.

2:15 AM, now the dilemma, go back to sleep and the bear comes back, or stay awake with a huge fire and be safe... 2:30 to 6:00, the Lizards sit around the fire thinking very primitive thoughts... bear eat Lizards... not good... keep fire big... fire good...

By daybreak the Lizards were still trying to figure out the failing of Lizard technology, but it soon became apparent that this was no normal bear. Behind the campsite was a twenty foot wall of rock. The bear had jumped off the wall and on his way down slashed open the food bags and landed in a bed of pine needles. And, this was not his first attack! Closer inspection of the area revealed a summer of carnage... a trail of candy wrappers, cocoa containers, food bags...

The Lizards gathered up the food the bear had not eaten, counted their blessings, and added yet another rule to the book of Lizard wisdom, "Never bring food to the woods that even bears will not eat." Yes, the Lizards' freeze dried food had been rejected by a far wiser animal.

Yes, the Lizards had not only learned a valuable camping rule about negative value of freeze dried foods, they had started down a far more valuable road of enlightenment... food should taste like FOOD! The fact that freeze dried food weighted less, and was easy to prepare missed the fact that it tasted like rabbit droppings. Far wiser Lizards of the twenty-first century have learned to shop in "real stores" for real food for their camping expeditions.

The simple life lesson of "food should taste like food" had been lost in the complexities of the planning and the doing. And so the value of one of life's most pleasurable experiences had been lost. Needless to say, bear attacks may lie on the extreme side of "reducing a thing to its simplest form." The point is that it may take a great deal of effort to arrive at some very elementary conclusions... and for some, additional help may be required... which brings us to yet another bit of Lizardom...

## **Chapter Two, "There may be other ways to do things"**

Like a matador dressing for his encounter with the bull, Doc slowly and carefully donned his wading boots, then the special camouflaged coat, thirty-two pocket vest, and, of course, the lucky wide-brimmed moth-eaten hat. Then, the weapon... a hand crafted nine foot instrument of terror for any scaly advisory. Flies, wrap-on weight, plenty of leader material... Doc spent the next ten minutes checking off items in his pre-flight ritual. Then with a glow of satisfaction he announced, "We're ready Dear... get your fishing pole." Mrs. Lizard grabbed what looked like a garage sale refugee (it was) and followed Doc down to the beach.

The Lizard couple was camped on a sand bar at the mouth of the Klamath River, about sixty miles south of the California, Oregon border. On one side of the sand bar the pounding ocean surf, on the other, a wide smooth expanse of fresh water. The scene was framed with redwoods on the bluffs above...

During the walk down the beach to the mouth of the river, Doc reviewed the details of the plan. "We will fish the river side of the sand bar, about fifty yards apart." The logic of Doc's plan was simple... No one was fishing on the ocean side.

As the fishing couple took their place among twenty other fishing hopefuls, the months of preparation were about to pay off. Doc's "special order" fly rod could easily spit line twenty yards farther than anyone on the beach, and brilliance of his orange and gold flies could be seen halfway back to camp. Yes, it was just a matter of time before Doc would land his dream salmon.

The Mrs. interrupted Doc's dream episode with a shout, "Honey, I'm going to fish on the ocean side away from all these people."

Doc just shrugged his shoulders and yelled back, "OK, Sweetie, be careful!"

Doc didn't really like the idea of the Mrs. being out of sight, but he had learned long ago that

the Mrs. was a self-directed individual. She would obviously not land any salmon on the ocean side, but peace would be maintained in camp.

What seemed like hours of furious water whipping followed... Actually, twenty minutes in non-fisherman time. But they were minutes of sweat and retying of broken off flies, undo knots in leaders, changing weight...

Then the yell from down the beach, "Is your name Doc?" a fellow fisherman yelled."

"Ya," Doc yelled back.

"There's a woman yelling for you down here," he shouted.

"Thanks," Doc yelled back.

As Doc contemplated on the problem, he packed up his gear and started down the beach.

She's probably got a lure stuck in her sweater, or maybe she's hurt. Doc picked up the pace.

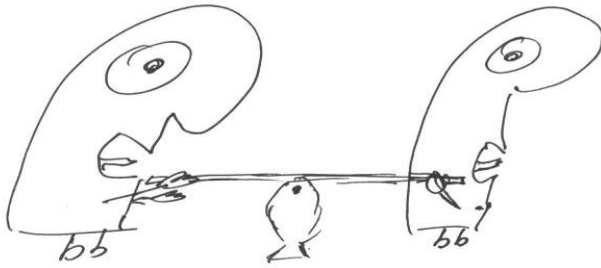
As Doc topped the rise in the middle of sand spit, he could see the Mrs. jumping up and down waving her arms. Now Doc really picked up the pace, but running downhill in sand with waders was more of a controlled crash. As Doc was about twenty feet away the reason for the fuss became apparent... A three-foot salmon lay at the Mrs. feet.

"How, how?" Doc blurted out, "How did you land him?"

"Well, this big wave hit," explained the Mrs., "And when the wave went out, the fish was on the beach, so I grabbed him."

Doc just scratched his head. Obviously the salmon had confused this small inlet for the mouth of the river and had not reckoned with the speed of the Mrs.





Hours and days later, Doc never did catch his salmon, but the fishing duo did feast on the one that did not get away, and added another bit of wisdom to the Lizard Way... "There may be more than one way to do things."

Doc finally did "get it" (the lesson, not the fish), and while it may seem obvious to the "uninvolved" that there may be many ways to catch a fish... to the involved, the "obvious" is not so obvious. And so it is in life. Caught up in the complexities of the planning and the doing, we fail to see the alternatives. It also may be a bit of "me-ness." Our way is the right way, and the opinions or "ways" of others may not be very important.

The idea that there may be many ways to do a thing is both very liberating and offers a whole new set of problems. For example, the goal of finding Mr. Right, or Mrs. Right is often seen as the end of the dating quest. But, if the concept of "alternative solutions are possible" holds true, then there could be many Mr. Rights, or Mrs. Rights. OK, let's take a deep breath and try that one again.

We are out on a date, and our "intended receiver" is saying and doing all the right things. They have a job, good future potential, but most of all they seem to be enjoying our company. Points towards "Rightness" add up during the evening and the date ends well. In the following weeks, the object of our interest is crowned the title "Mr." or "Ms. Right" and long and happy relationship follows... sometimes.

What we are not getting is the simple principle of "many alternative solutions are possible." There may be more than one person that could qualify as "Right." And to further complicate the equation, our idea of "rightness" changes as we season with age (mature). As gravity and the years replace youthful concepts such as thin and good

looks, the right choice may be that "good old reliable" shoe rather than the Italian stiletto. Fortunately we have help to make the right choices... they are called friends and family.

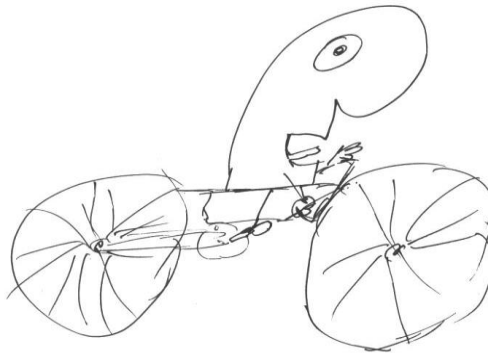
The simple litmus test of, "Who has my best interests at heart?" is the one and only way to ask for and receive "free" advice. "Friends" are not competitors, are quick to gloss over your minor failings, and most of all, want the best for you. Similarly, family members who are not trying to beat you out of the family fortune, or refer to you in the third person (even when you are present), are the best sounding boards for "Should I?" and "What do you think of?" types questions. Listen to their advise, consider it well, and make it part of your selection process.

Allowing for the possibility that humans are very adaptable creatures... we can also learn to change our goals, or at the very least, learn to expect less. So often we inflict self-beatings for not picking "right", when in fact we picked pretty well. Doc may never have caught his salmon, but he did have the presence of mind to pick the Mrs., who turned out to be a pretty good catch.

## Chapter Three, "Good enough"

Picking up where Chapter Two left off...  
Good enough may be good enough. While much effort can be spent doing the best job that we can do, or driving the best car that we can afford, or being our best, I would propose that "the best" often costs too much. And considering the costs, "good enough" may be intelligent choice.

It has been stated, with some degree of authority, that the most efficient form of human transportation is the bicycle. Yes, that toy of children, and the macho-athlete, ill-smelling office guy, is dollar for dollar the most efficient way to move people in an urban situation.



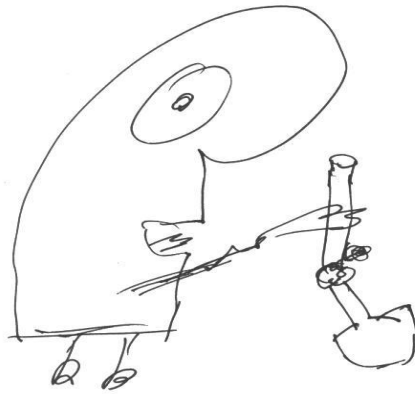
The bicycle would hardly qualify for the fastest, or most comfortable, or even "coolest" form of transportation, but it is "good enough" for millions of people around the world to get around. Hardly a choice for a double date, or hauling freight across the US, the bicycle is good enough and cheap enough to provide a logical alternative to vehicles costs hundreds of times more, and squandering resources we don't have. Yet city planners and mass transit providers rarely provide a "place" for the lowly bicycle in the design of roads, paths, or public transit vehicles.

For the enlightened Lizard, choosing a bicycle for a daily thirty mile ride to work, may not be an option, but the principle should be considered. How many times may the simpler, easier, cheaper solution be the overall better solution? What is being suggested is, back up from the hype, the advertising blitz to push us into the best and shiniest. Consider the older, easier, and good enough solution. And for the first time, don't think of "good enough" as a step down, but rather as an informed choice... we have only so many resources available and we can "choose" to spend them wisely.

But what about the human equation? Is "good enough" a policy that breeds poor interpersonal skills? Is "good enough" the mark of a mediocre society? I would argue the opposite that the quest for the best is often at the root of poor people to people interactions. In a society that advertises the finest, and best, and biggest, the consumer is often buying more than "good enough," and more likely, more than they need. And closely linked to "the best" is working harder and longer and perhaps losing sight of the overall goal of a higher quality of life for ourselves and those around us. In the rush to have the best and biggest often "the important" is sacrificed. The "pain to gain" ratio is never considered and we end up with far too much pain with only temporary gains.

Again, don't think of good enough as a step down, but rather a better life choice. Do the math... Is a one hundred thousand dollar car better than a twenty-five thousand dollar car? Of course, it may be, but is it four times better? Is it four times more comfortable, or reliable, or safer?

The principle of "good enough" is actually at the core of modern economic principles. In the introduction of a new product, let's say the electric shovel, the cost for the first models will typically be very high. You could be one of the first on your block to own an electric shovel and might be willing to pay the high initial price. We call these "got-to-have-it-first" types, early adopters. They want the newest models and newest technologies and are willing to pay for it. We should all thank these folks for their quest for the best and newest because they often pave the way for the following wave of cheaper, more reliable, better working products. Early adopters typically pay for initial product research and development so the "masses" (folks like us) can pay a fraction of the cost.



Product developers, like our inventor of the electric shovel, well understand this early adopter phenomena and refer to high early profits as "skimming the cream." After the initial high profit "skimming" is over, the product typically settles into its "good enough" stage. During this stage, the product's features and quality may improve only slightly, but its cost will drop significantly. The manufacturer may try to restart the cycle with new features like headlights for the electric shovel in the hopes of re-attracting the early adopter crowd, but more often cheaper look-alike products will continue to drive costs and profits down.



The simple lesson from all of this pseudoscientific magic economic analysis is, the "good enough" choice may be the smarter, more informed one.

Note the following disclaimer on my economic background: While taking the final exam of my "Introduction to Economics 101" class in college, I raised my hand for the instructor's attention.

"All the questions are the same as the mid-term," I blurted out.

"Yes," the instructor replied, "But all the answers are different."

## Chapter Four, "More Time"

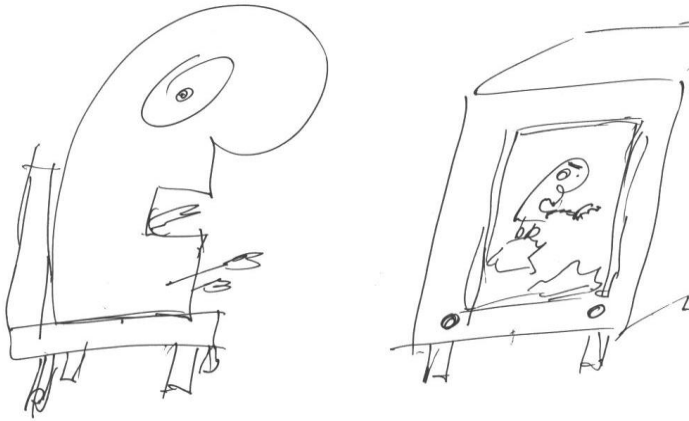
Most of us the lack of time to make needed changes in our lives, to give us that break... if we only had more time.

For example, most of us need to make room for more television in our lives. While the average American watches this source of all information and learning four to five hours every day, few could argue than more would not be better. Why not TV in the workplace, adding another eight hours per day? Most of us are capable of multi-tasking... why not work and watch our favorite game show, or soap opera while helping customers, or doing routine surgery? And what about portable battery powered TVs for those quiet times in the woods, or walks in the park. Clearly lost hours on the drive to and from work... more quality TV hours.

As in the Paul Simon song Kodachrome, "It is a wonder I can think at all with all the #\$\$%@ I learned in school." The same could be said about TV. With all the #\$\$%@ we watch on TV, it is a

wonder we can find time to do anything. If you need time to get an area of your life straightened out, I have a pretty good idea of where to go to get that time...

First understand that TV is addictive and that you are mainlining. Yes, you are a drug addict of sorts and you will probably never break the habit... unless we run out of electricity and couches and beer all at the same time... and the sun runs out of fuel. Understand that this is not some social commentary on the evils of television. It is simply an observation of one possible place that may offer up a few hours for alternative use. The subject of TV addiction is far outside the scope of this simple book, and would be better covered on one of those hot TV news shows... like The Daily Show.



I doubt, though, that anyone reading this book would argue with the notion that a few less hours of TV is possible. So if you are really interested in improving or fixing areas of your life, and you need a few more hours in the day, consider the off button on the TV... but not while I'm being interviewed on The Daily Show.

## Chapter Five, "No Brain, No Pain"

A simple lesson of life is just to ignore stuff... no brain, no pain. We have all seen extreme examples of this axiom... the children running wild in the restaurant and the parents in another world of blissful ignorance. The other patrons of the restaurant are either leaving or swearing never to return. Obviously, this is not what I am suggesting. Rather, let go of the junk, the trivial, the things that don't really matter. Choose to turn off your brain and not to receive the input. The single best example of this was demonstrated on a favorite TV show. The setup was that the owner of the business would not return the change for a small purchase and tell the buyer that it was the store's policy not to make change...

The following sequences were predictable but funny. Patrons would literally go crazy over not getting their change. The store owner would explain their policy and the patrons would threaten, yell, and use language that required beeping, and so on. And then my favorite guy stepped up to the counter, bought his item, didn't get his change and left without a bit of

complaining. Even the show's host was taken back by this behavior and cornered the fellow.

The host asked, "What's the deal? Weren't you upset that you didn't get your change back?"

The answer came back calmly, "I don't rent space in my head for stuff like that."

The answer was not one of a saint, rather of a sane man who wanted to remain that way. A few cents was not something worth thinking too much about, let alone raising a fuss. Worse case, the patron might not come back (for a second ripping off), but that was the extent of mental turmoil the patron was willing to commit.

Bad traffic, bad drivers, and we make a bad situation worse by letting it get to us. Might I suggest an alternative based on the popular Lizard saying, "When dealing with mean people, smile a lot." The roots of the saying, of course, are in the finest tradition of passive aggressive behavior. Absolutely nothing drives a bully, or perceived power broker, crazier than a smiling victim. Having

applied this maxim to its logical extreme, I have had a supervisors tap their pointy finger on my desk exclaiming, "Yelling at you doesn't work, does it?"

Smiling back I answered, "No it doesn't."

The point of the maxim is that bad behavior doesn't have to be reflected back to the sender. Like our customer in the store, a few cents is not worth changing behavior. Similarly, we can smile rather than change our behavior to match wacky people doing crazy things.

Next time you encounter a socially challenged driver, smile a lot, make eye contact, and smile some more and shrug your shoulders. Either, the nut behind the other steering wheel will smile back, or be confused. In either case, you will keep your sanity and the situation will not escalate into the gun fight at the OK Corral.

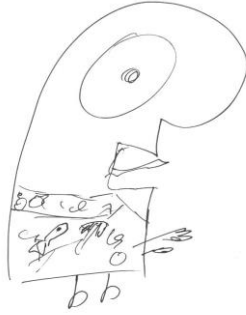


No brain, no pain is all about deflecting hurt, or choosing not to deal with it. If it helps, invent a story in your head, that the malefactor in question was raised by wolves in the depths of a swamp and was just exhibiting acceptable wolf behavior (smelling groins, urine marking, etc.). In fact you may be close to the truth.



## Chapter Six, "You are what you dress"

Hawaiian shirts... picture it... a sea of Hawaiian shirts, and at the head table of the world conference, all the leaders dressed in brightly colored Hawaiian shirts, shorts, and sandals (no socks). The ladies of course are equally attired in bright and cheery island wear, with flowers in their hair.... OK, flowers for the guys too.



Now the topic of the conference turns to the major points: land mines, nuking each other, and biological weapons (poor man's nukes). Not a very realistic scenario? I would have to agree. Such conferences are often attended by humorless men and women in well cut suits and traditional garb.

A popular theme of the business world has always been "Dress for success." The notion has

been the subject of mandatory leadership training episodes... and even company policies. Some companies even promote a specific look... white shirts, thousand dollar suits, and a clean shave (ladies too). The image of the company can be as telling as its policies and politics. I have even seen this doctrine of dress carried to its illogical extreme where style counted more than substance... More important than the inside of the head, were the bits of cloth and leather worn. Clothes did not make the man, they were the man...

OK, you get the picture, clothing is a big deal to a lot of people. Clothing can define our social status, or want-to-be social status. In our world... Style counts.

So OK, what is all this discussion about clothes doing in this book? Simple... "You are what you dress." The single fastest, quickest, easiest, bone-head simplest way to change your life is to change the way you dress. Yes, I said it... change your clothes.

Want proof? Dress up like a circus clown and walk into work (unless you work at a circus). Both the boss and all your co-workers will notice... especially if you have one of those cool red rubber noses. Everyone in your workplace will treat you differently, and may even join in your moment of fun. Then you will probably be fired, or at a minimum be ordered to go home and clean off the grease paint.

The point of my exercise is not to get everyone fired or committed for observation, but rather to consider the powerful effect a particular style of clothing could have. At a basic level we all understand this very primitive notion. The nurse in a starched white uniform, or the nurse in the Hawaiian print are both nurses, but one speaks with authority and the other, a relaxed confidence.

So here is the hundred dollar payoff, and at least one piece of advice that may help you recover the price of this book... Get some clothes that match where you want to be. Do not run out and buy a police uniform, or surgical garb, because that would be dumb. But if you want to become a doctor, consider looking like a candidate for

medical school. If you're interested in a career in law enforcement, present an image would be the first step to that goal.

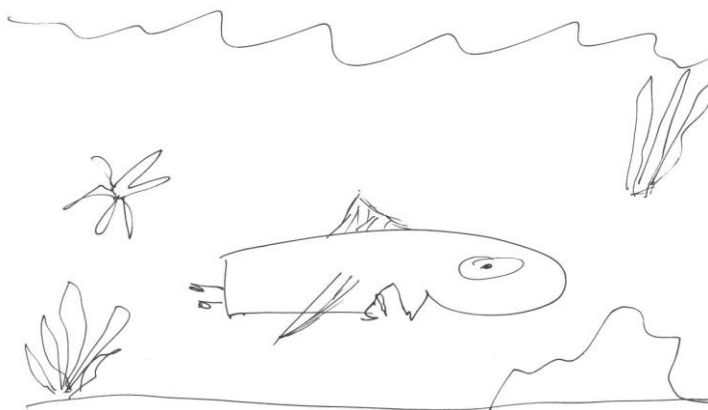
If you are dressing like @#\$, and people are treating you like @#\$, consider a simple change of wardrobe. Changing the way you dress is easy compared to other aspects of life, but it is often a first step in self image and in the eyes of the rest of us.

## **Chapter Seven, "You can be lost and still enjoy yourself"**

If life is a journey, then most of us are lost. We may have some idea of the general direction (East?), but no real idea of when we will get there. Destinations (goals) come and go, and change priorities, and some destinations are clearly repeats of previous encounters (do over's). And to make matters worse, our "leaders," or at least the ones doing the loudest yelling (government, media, etc.), are probably more lost than we are. Proof of our leaders' rudderless navigation can be found on any Saturday morning, in any barber or beauty shop where the subject of politics is permitted. A major portion of the "clipees" will freely offer up alternatives to the present administration's leadership combined with a good dose of common sense. It's all there, in the Clip Shops of the heartland, freely offered... all the guidance we would ever need, but largely ignored by the smart folks in charge of us.

So OK, you are lost... really lost. The sooner you admit it, the happier you will be. Granted, you may have moments of clarity where you "sign up"

for four years of college, or the army, or marriage. But admit it... six months into this commitment, you have no idea what is coming next, or why you are doing it. We usually "stick it out" and get a degree, or a discharge, or a divorce, but only because we don't want the time invested to have been wasted. The folks in charge of us are equally confused and bewildered, but still offer their solutions that seem to defy the Saturday hair councils... but why? Why can't we live our lives with some degree of clarity?



Imagine you are a fish swimming in a nice pond with plenty of food and warm water, with lots of fish friends and social events. Life is more than OK... not a worry in this pond world in your fish head. As you are swimming around, one of your fish

buddies (a daredevil type) talks about the big jump he made the other day to the "other world." As he rambles through his description of this waterless world, you begin to think new thoughts. What would it be like to live in this world?... to be able to breathe without water?... to be able to move effortlessly, without the resistance of the water?... What would it be like? How would you stay wet? Or would you need to stay wet?

Our fish friend could have many "new thoughts," but those thoughts would only be one step away from his fish world. And that is our dilemma, that we see only the next thing in our world. If the fish were an Einstein of his world, one of his new thoughts might be the concept of breathing air by gulping a bubble from the surface. He might understand this very complex notion of breathing without water, but he would never be able to deal with concept of fire, or building a condo on the beach, or "other world" concepts.

In a similar way, the world we live in limits our ability to see the future and even form ideas about the "other world." It is not that we are stupid or lack foresight... it is that we lack a

framework to base our understanding. We may understand general concepts of education, and money, and love, but even these notions are filtered through the lens of our personal world. What we eat, smell, and even see passes through our personal lens of understanding. For example, the catsup bottle that is invisible to any male and requires the guidance of a female to be made visible. This phenomenon has been both witnessed and tested by most human couples.

"Honey, where is the catsup?" the burger ready male asks.

"In the frig, right in front of you," replies the female.

"I can't find it," the male whines.

And as the female crosses the room and points at the catsup bottle in the frig, "Here!"

The point of this phenomena is that the male did not put the catsup bottle in the frig and lacked



the "bit of knowledge" needed to make the mental leap of its location. The female, though, knew her pond well, and could make the catsup leap.

So back to our notion of being lost... Why are we lost? Back to our fish example: the pond is changing from fresh water to salt water. Oh, and by the way, there are new predators in the pond that have really big teeth. Dreams and notions of breathing air without water may have to take a back seat to survival.

In our people world the landscape is constantly changing and new environments present new challenges and new notions of how to swim in this new pond. Unlike our fish friend, our changing scenes require new ways of thinking and great leaps of understand beyond the next thing, but have heart. We can be lost and still enjoy ourselves.

For most of us, a general direction in life may be more than OK. We can still enjoy the journey. Short range plans of family and friends may be the best we can hope for, with an

occasional peek around the next corner of the future. And if you stop to think about it, we all have one common destination... the bone pile. Come to think of it maybe we might consider slowing down, worry less about the direction, and enjoying the journey more.

## **Chapter Eight, "Life is tough, but it's tougher if you're dumb"**

It has been said that common sense is not so common and there are points in my personal experience where I would have to agree. We all have experienced the really dumb, and may have even been the "dumbee." But our present discussion is not about the occasional dumb, but rather the consistently dumb... The individual who chooses to ignore the voice in their head that whispers, "If you do that, it's really going to hurt," and does it anyway, and curses their "bad luck"... failing to see that it was just that their luck caught up with them...

In addition to the simple math that your "number" will eventually come up, is the notion that really stupid decisions build on each other... increasing the possibility that really bad stuff is going to happen... stupid actions are cumulative. The insurance industry well understands the laws of stupidity, and raise premiums for risky behavior and actions that may lead to their paying for your adventurous life style. Continually spinning the cylinder and pulling the trigger of "bad stuff can

happen," while balancing on slippery log, over pit of vipers is a recipe for something unpleasant to happen. One set of stupid actions combined with additional stupid actions not only increases the possibility of something "going wrong," but can also increase the overall impact.

We have all seen the gangster movies where a life of crime has led to the final options of "bad" and "really bad" options... Enough bad choices leading to the final scene of gun fire, car wrecks, and explosions. A series of dumb ideas (robbing banks, shoot out with police, etc.) leading to a reduction of good possible outcomes.

At a smaller scale our lives must deal with the cumulative weight of bad choices and dumb stuff. The fast car that cannot pass a gas station... The friends that are always "getting us into trouble." The list of dumb stuff that eventually leads us to the final shoot out with the cops scene.

OK, while we are on the topic of dumb stuff you also need to understand that really stupid

ideas are contagious. The dumber the idea, the more likely it will be adopted, especially by a group of young males.

Case in point... It was a hot sunny day. The temperature hovered at over one hundred degrees, but since it was in the middle of the Mohave Desert, that was normal. We were having a good time cheating death and driving our four by fours through the dry washes. Then, if by some invisible signal, we stopped under a railroad bridge. Actually, being the only shade for twenty miles the location made perfect sense.

Then it appeared as if some desert mirage propped up against the underside of the bridge.

"What's that?" Doc exclaimed, walking up the device.

The object of the group's interest was about eight feet long and about four feet wide with curved edges, with a chair mounted to the inside surface.

Members of the group were now achieving some higher level of excitement, touching and leaping around the object... Scenes of 2001, a Space Outing, with monkeys alternatively touching and dancing around the obelisk. This was clearly an object of great importance to the group.

"This," in a calm voice, "Is the sand sled," explained Army Bob.

Pointing to the features of the sled, he started, "See we welded a chair to an old Buick hood, with springs in the back of the chair, so the impacts won't break your spine."

Further going over the details of the device, "And we got hand holds on the side of the chair to hang onto, and for steering."

I was beginning to feel the burn of excitement as Bob enumerated the features of the sled.

"We got a tank shackle here up front to attach the tow strap, and it ain't gunna come loose," Bob finished with a note of pride in his voice.

Well I was impressed. A device to be pulled through desert dry washes at breakneck speeds behind a four by four... Impressive technology. I was humbled in the presence of these master funsters. We were clearly headed for a blast.



First up was Allen who was a pro on the sled and boasted of the co-inventorship of this fun machine. Twenty feet of tow strap was attached to the sled and to the back of Bob's vehicle. And with a burst of rocks and sand the four by four dug in and it was sled time. Contact with the ground was

only momentary as the sled skimmed through the wash. Through the turn the sled seemed to overtake Bob's vehicle on the outer edge of a larger arc. Rocks the size of melons flew from under the tires of the four by four, and sheets of sand formed two perfect rooster tails. It was over almost in an instance, as the sand sled pulled up in front of us.

"Who's next?" Allen yelled, picking pieces of sand and debris from his hair and teeth.

"Next?" was silently spoken as we looked at each other. The impact of the sand sled adventure was still sinking unto the group.

"This is crazy," I muttered to Pete and Frank. "I don't know if I could do that."

"I know," Frank replied.

"Tell you what, Frank," I answered, "If I do it, will you do it?"



Frank answered, "Ya, if you ride that thing, I will."

I said, "OK," and got on the sled.

We all rode the sand sled that afternoon with the exception of one sane Lizard member, with rocks flying, in a four by four created sand storm, and through some miracle of the unenlightened, nobody was killed or maimed. The point of this story, of course, is that stupid ideas are truly contagious. With the momentum of the Lizard pack, individual decisions were funneled into a shared vision of fun and frolic.

This concept of group stupidity holds as one of the few constants across time and cultures. We see it in the news every night. "Group" decisions that no one individual would call sane. Whether Watergate, or the sand sledding adventure, the notions of the group mind would not pass any "single" intelligence test.

Note: The final chapter in the sand sled adventure was the posting of the group's activities

on the Internet. The area ranger promptly confiscated the instrument of terror, because he didn't want to fill out the accident report.

## **Chapter Nine, "It is better to be lucky than smart"**

Having used up through a major portion of my life, and arriving near the golden days I have to admit, my good fortune was mostly a matter of luck. If I had married my first girlfriend in college, I don't think I would have won any prizes... definitely not a lucky choice. Years in the military were spent pushing a pencil and setting up chairs (for the lady's club meeting, or church services)... pretty lucky, considering the alternatives of mud, jungle, and real bullets a continent away.

Yes, given the choice of dumb luck or book learning, give me luck every time. There is no substitute for being at the right place at the right time. But I am not talking about the lotto winning kind of luck, rather everyday luck. Catching a fish, or meeting a new friend, or even having a good neighbor, is the kind of luck that most of us should look for. Smart is OK, but lucky in the small things of life makes the most sense.

In the Lizard quest for the "good life," luck has always been considered a major ingredient. The question, though, is "can you increase your 'luckiness'?" Is there a formula or method that will bring more luck? The answer is obvious, "YES!"

OK, think about the last time you were lucky. Where were you, and what were you doing? Were you in a bar fight, or maybe riding a sand sled (previous chapter) and you didn't get killed or seriously injured? Or maybe the only guy with a German cruising bike at a chopper rally? (Note: One non-American motorcycle + five hundred red, white and blue hogs = one butt kicking) Chances are that you were not in a "bad" place when your "good" luck happened.



So, one component of good luck might be a "good" location. Or better yet, in the company of "good" friends, or people that will not use you as a drip pan for their hogs. And if we were to press this analysis to its logical conclusion, perhaps we could agree that real good luck occurs at the overlap of good times, and good friends, and good family. And maybe we could even increase our odds of good things happening to us by increasing the number of good things in our lives. And maybe the luck thing is overrated... maybe we make much of our own "luck" as a by-product of a good life.

## Chapter Ten, "The matrix is real"

We all have a need for order and structure in our lives... some idea of "rightness" or "wrongness." Like puppies that need newspapers on the kitchen floor to show them where to go, we need instructional material to tell us where to go, when, and how much. We need discipline in our lives, or so we are told, and that's why we have bosses. Bosses at work, bosses at home, and even bosses on our vacations (get off bus, get on bus).

Now I know what you're thinking... "He's is going off on some anarchy, return to nature, naked in the woods thing, 'We don't need no stinking bosses'." No, quite the opposite. We need leader and bosses. What is needed, though, is an understanding of the matrix. The matrix is not an especially difficult concept to grasp but it does explain our reluctance to be ruled, governed, and bossed.

There are only two dimensions of importance in the matrix. The first dimension stretches from dumb to smart, and the second dimension runs

from nice to mean. That's it, and there ain't no more. All of bossdom can be reduced to this simple matrix.

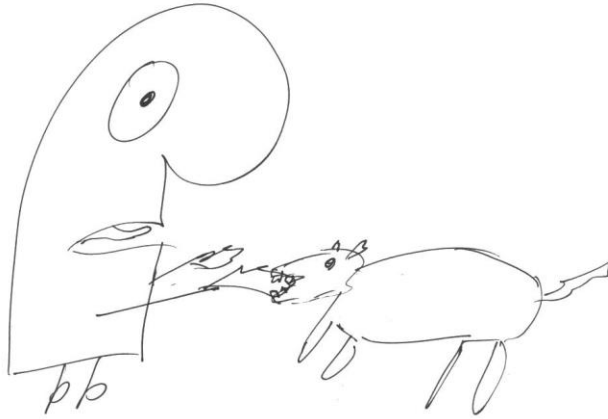
	Nice	Mean
Smart	+++	+
Dumb	+	---

Charted out we see that the dimensions form four quarters. The matrix can be used to classify any person, but is especially useful for categorizing bosses. For example, ideal quarter is the "Smart and Nice," leaders that are inspiring, are liked, and get lots of work done. "Dumb and Mean," though, explains the really bad going really wrong. It is the quarter of "We don't believe in anything we can't barbeque." (As is global warming.)

It is the quarter of dumb ideas inflicted on the masses, "for their own good." It is the quarter of man-made suffering and zealot beliefs. Much of the problem with "Mean and Dumb" is that leadership (other bosses) often mistake mean behavior for smart behavior, or "leadership stuff." In actuality "mean" is more commonly associated with "dumb"... bosses covering up their incompetence with mean actions. Their hope is that fear will prevent anyone "calling" them on their stupid decisions.

"Nice and Dumb," on the other hand is the hapless lot most of us have for bosses. They just want to get through life with all their fingers still on their hands, and don't want to give anyone a hard time. They have a job to do and don't know much more than we do, so they try to be nice and muddle through.





"Smart and Mean," are folks that know they are smart and we know they are smart because they can do things. They just lack the moral compass of most humans and treat people like #\$. We tolerate their behavior because we need them, and they may even believe we like them... which means that they are not that smart.

Armed with the knowledge of the matrix, you can determine your "boss type" and start formulating your Lizard plan...

"Smart and Nice"... Life is good. Enjoy your time with this boss. It generally doesn't last long.

"Dumb and Nice"... Enjoy the office parties. Go along for the ride while the company goes broke, unless it's a government job... then just enjoy the ride.

"Smart and Mean"... More smiling and "Yes, boss, that's right." Be seen as "useful" but not threatening (too smart).

"Dumb and Mean"... Don't be noticed. Smile a lot and shake your head like you actually understand what they are talking about.

## **Chapter Eleven, "Leave early, before you're asked"**

The concept of "timing" is not something understood by the young.

"OK, it time to leave," mom would explain, and the pleading for more play time would begin.

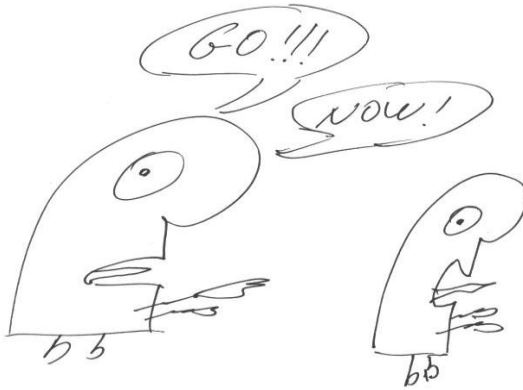
"Just one more hour," we would whine.

"No," mom would fire back, "Get your stuff and get ready to leave."

And what had been a pleasant visit and enjoyable day fast turned into a whipping session (literally) where no one was the winner... If we only had sense to leave well enough alone and leave at the first urging. But children are just that, just "kids." But if the lesson was lost on them, at least adults should "get it." When we are told to leave... we should. Or better yet, anticipate the request to remove ourselves and leave before we are asked.

Both guest and host leave company on the correct note, and a welcome back may be possible.

Unfortunately this common sense of knowing when enough is enough is not always "common." We wear out our hosts and our welcome. But extended to the larger lessons of life, this understanding of knowing when to leave would pay big dividends. The popular entertainment motto, "leave them wanting more," could be translated as, "leave early with them wanting to see you again."



This sixth sense of knowing when you are about to be kicked out is really not as difficult to acquire as more difficult items like blinking and swallowing. All we need to do is read body language... host is looking at clock... they are

yawning and stretching arms... they are turning out lights... The signs may not be that obvious, but there are signs... learn to read them.

And if you want to extend visits with friends and family, buy more time. A gift of a reasonable nature (bottle of nice wine,

something for the hostess) will add time to your "length of permitted stay" quotient.



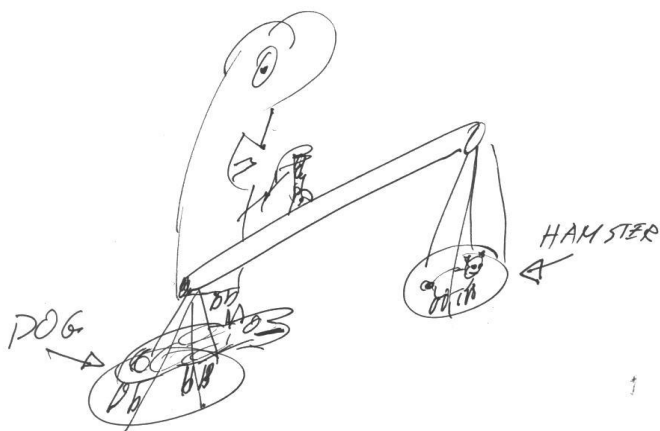
## **Chapter Twelve, "It is easier to get into stuff than get out of it"**

Most of us put far too many miles on our bodies with our gas tanks on near empty. We are over committed, over extended, and rarely get anything done, before we have to do it again. And why do we have such complicated, overly full lives?... simple, "It is easier to get into stuff, than get out of it." Signups are ease. Work release programs are few.

Understand that once you commit to anything, the un-committing will take five times the effort. And if that isn't bad enough, whatever gains you made will be cancelled and negative points will be assigned for being a "quitter." Obviously, we are not talking about occasional, anonymous good works... the key words being "occasional" as in once and a while, and "anonymous" as in they can't find you to sign you up for more stuff. We are talking about items that will require multi-hour or multi-year investments.

Whether it is pets for young children, joining a club, volunteer work, or any other noble task, be aware of the rules of engagement. If for any reason, if the commitments don't work out, there will be penalties.

Thus, two Lizard rules... #1, Do the math, and #2 Just say, "No." The first rule is the easy one. If you do the math, what is the pain to gain ratio? If the choice is a happy child with a hundred pound eating, digging, chewing the furniture pet, or a slightly less happy child with a hamster... do the math. Is the pain worth the gain?



The coffee club at work, while a great way to save a few bucks, comes with the usual

assortment of burned up coffee pots, supply shortages, and the "Who didn't clean the pot?... Make a new pot?..." verbal beatings. Do the math... are the few dollars gained worth the pain?

And rule #2, sometimes, "No" is the correct answer. When the neighbor asks if you would like to join... Start forming the words in your mouth... "No." Having done the math, and seen past neighborhood groups gone bad, just saying, "No" can be a good choice.



## **Chapter Thirteen, "Life is way too complicated to figure out, so just pick out the parts you like"**

You may have figured it out by now that this book is not too deep into the psycho-babble stuff of deep introspection and self-analysis. And there is a good reason for that... life is just too complicated to really figure it out. My life is pretty much a big question mark and not being inside your head, your life is an even greater mystery.

As a child you were told to eat junk because it was good for you, and eat that stuff because starving kids in China didn't have any. But life is all about being an adult... you don't have to eat everything on your plate. You can pick out the parts you like. You can even eat dessert first (Note to self: Go to more buffets).

The way the Lizards see it is: You can spend a lot of time trying to figure out life, or you can just enjoy the parts you like. A general direction of where you want to go may be a good idea, but learn

to enjoy the little detours and surprises along the way, and to illustrate the point...

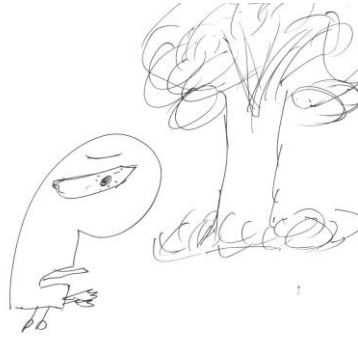
"You dudes comin' into Zion from Babylon?" This was not the greeting Doc Lizard had expected from an Indian living at the bottom of the Grand Canyon, but this was no average Indian. He wore jeans and cool western clothes, and he had dread locks... you know those big curls that Jamaican guys have. While Doc still was wondering about the strange greeting, the other Lizards were dropping packs and running for a little country store in the middle of the village... ice cream break! Doc was obviously going to be the last one to get his ice cream, but he couldn't get the Indian's words out of his head.

A few candy bars, ice cream, coke, and other goodies later the Lizards were ready to move on to the camping area. The morning hike had started with diesel fumes filling Lizard sleeping bags and a new rule, "If you're going to sleep in a parking lot, don't sleep where the buses park." A few miles of downhill switchbacks and across the valley floor had brought the Lizards to this side canyon off the Colorado River.

The next few mile revealed one beautiful view after another... waterfalls, rock walled canyons, the young ladies from the buses (a private girl's school on vacation). The Lizards had died and gone to heaven... But not for Doc Lizard...

Now don't get me wrong, stupid Lizard practical jokes form the fabric of Lizard society, but Crazy Don and Lizard Jim were going for a new level of stupidity... It seems Don and Jim during the ice cream debacle had discovered that many of the locals had "converted" to the Rastafarian religion shortly after being visited by no less than Bob Marley himself. Mixing in local historical legends with Rasta lore, the locals had come up with an interesting spin on their history and end of the world. It seems, the locals now regarded themselves as the last of the Ancient Ones (Anasazi... pre-Pueblo people) and it was to be their lot to repopulate the world after the scientists kill everyone off in some evil techno war.

All of this had been too much for the dim witted duo... a scheme was hatched. After the initial cultural exchange (Lizards buying beads), Crazy Don convinced the "Ancient Ones" that Doc Lizard was indeed the "Scientist Mon (man)" that would cause the end of the world, and, of course, Idiot Jim provided even more details. With the seeds of ignorance planted, the pair sat back to enjoy their ill conceived plot...



Doc Lizard and the rest of the crew reached base camp. A quick setup... No tents because of the warm weather, but bevy sacks instead... a kind of waterproof human sausage thing over the sleeping bags. But then something new! A new Lizard marvel! Doc Lizard, also known as the Eddy B of the woods, had brought a new mosquito screen that had built-in supports for over his bevy sack. The Lizards laughed at this new contraption, but Doc knew better... a creek bottom + middle of

summer = lot's of bugs at night. And then the Indians arrived...

At first look, a typical welcoming party, but evil Don and Jim knew better. Since Doc was sitting at a picnic table, the Indians sat at the table. As Doc got up, the Indians got up.

Then the questions began... "Are you the Scientist Mon?"

Doc replied, "Well... ya, I work with computers and stuff."

And then the heavy duty questions, "OK, mon, tell us the secret."

Doc was now sensing trouble, "A secret? What do you mean?"

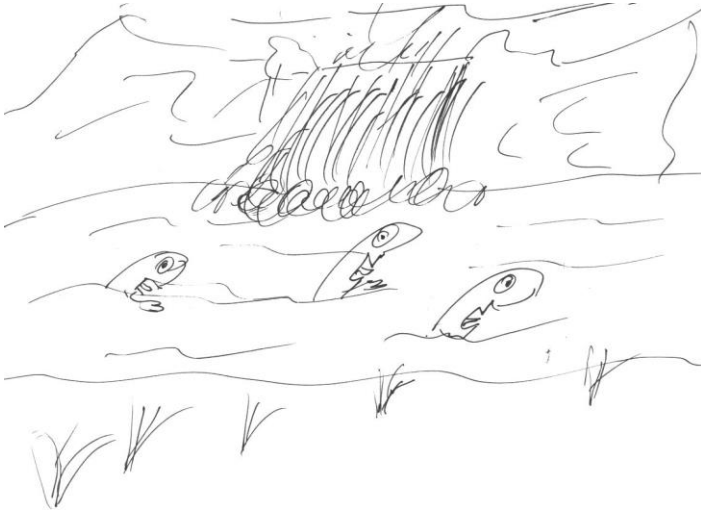
"You know," they presses forward, "The secret about how you gunna end the world?"

Doc was now swallowing lots of spit, and trying to figure out what the @#\$\$% these guys were talking about. The grilling went on for over an hour with no breaks in understanding on either side. Then they left...

"What the %&\$! was that!" Doc exclaimed.

The evil duo were now laughing uncontrollably and more than willing to confess to their deed, since there was now no chance of "fixing" anything.

"You guys really are idiots," Doc was mad, "They're going to kill me to save the world. I can see it now... Asleep in my bag and they cut me up and throw me in the creek... All to make world safe." Doc's angry retorts only served to push the group into higher states of laughter and mimicking of lethal blows.



The day proceeded as any other Lizard day... swimming in crystal clean waters, eating sausages and cheese, enjoying the views (friends from the bus), and all the time "they" were watching Doc.

The evening meal was one of the Lizard specialties... rock spaghetti. Frozen hard as a rock, the first night treat was thawed out and eaten with garlic bread and cheese. More goofing around... Crazy Don fell in the creek while showcasing his new down filled booties. And then lights out...

The Lizard crew collapsed at day end with Doc in his sleeping bag, inside a bevy sack, wrapped in a cocoon of self-inflating mosquito netting. With the addition of ear plugs, Doc was cut off from the world and safe.

2:00 AM, Doc awakes to find a hand on his shoulder shaking him... The ear plugs work great... It's one of the Indians knelling over Doc! Doc panics and tries to protect his throat, but gets caught between the bag, the sack, and a piece of the netting for good measure. The Indian thinks Doc is nuts, and can't figure out why he doesn't answer. Doc was now yelling something about dying and help, and the Indian still can't figure what's happening. But God really does protect fools and idiots... one of the ear plugs pops loose and Doc hears, "Hey mon be cool... You got any of that spaghetti left?" from our midnight muncher.

The Lizards shared the left over spaghetti with the visitor, he thanked them, and as Lizards drifted back off to sleep, you could hear cries of, "Oh, the bad Indian is killing me...", "He's beating me with spaghetti...", "Help me... Help me..." And lots of laughter.



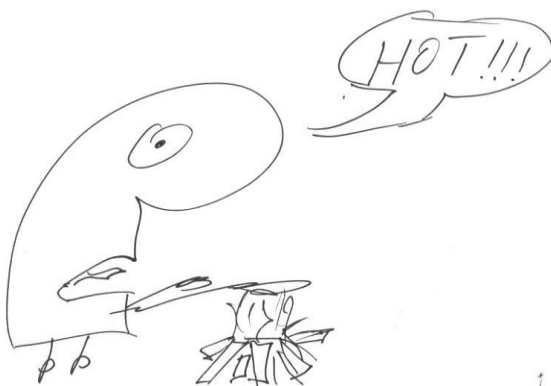
There were no further panic attacks or interrogation episodes. And the locals did eventually discover the truth, but could not figure out why anyone would invent such a stupid story. A lot of goody trading went on and sharing of stories with new friends... And the Lizards survived yet another adventure.

The moral of the story is, of course, too complicated to understand, so just pick out the parts you liked.

## Chapter Fourteen, "If in doubt, don't"

If you have to ask, then you probably shouldn't, is a good rule, followed by, "If in doubt, don't." The questionable actions in life are not really as difficult as we would claim. We just don't want to hear the answers.

Simple rules like "Keep your hands out of the fire, you idiot" are easily stated and should be as easy to understand, but some knuckle-heads can't even get that concept straight. What does "out" mean? Or, how long is "keep"... forever? Or which "you"?



The mental battle between evil-self and goodie-guy rages in the empty wasteland between our ears. And it is in this wasteland that we lose our way. Confusing and conflicting do's and don'ts drown out our deep reptilian sense of harm and danger... We are left with burnt fingers and hard learned lessons.

All of this assumes, though, that we have some kind of moral compass and some sense of "correct" behavior. Psychopaths and extremist hate mongers can skip this chapter... They have few doubts and are always right.

For most of us, doubt, is our brain's railroad crossing signal. Something big and potentially life changing is just out of sight, and a small Lizard voice in our head is telling us that, "If you do this, it is going to really hurt."

If I have learned any lesson in life, it is that wives have a better sense of impending doom than husbands. It's not that men don't have a "doubt-o-meter," it's just that its calibration runs from dumb to really stupid. Case in point...

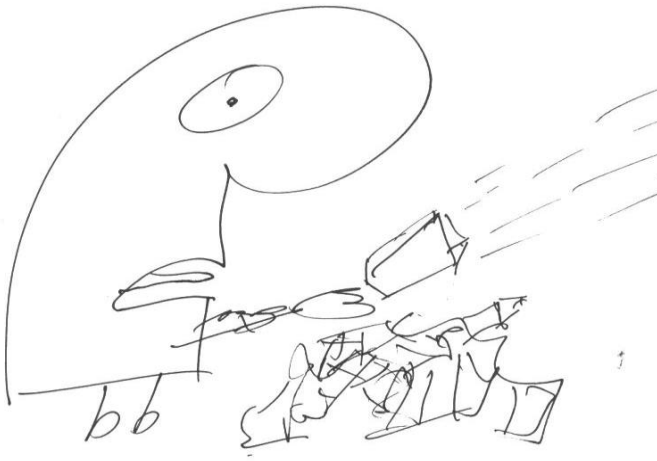
It was a warm summer day like many in southern California. The workers were busy "busting out" the old sidewalk to make way for the new room addition. Bang! Crack! Pop! The pry bars and sledge hammers found their mark and were making quick progress on the sidewalk. As the pieces of concreted were "busted out," the workers were throwing them twenty feet down the slope into a growing pile at the bottom.

Then, Doc Lizard got an idea (the first of many errors)... Why not collect the broken pieces of concrete to make a little wall around the Mrs.' flower garden? Since she wasn't home (error #2), the job could be completed and surprise her on her return.

But wait... the good pieces were being covered up in the pile by the more recent additions. Some quick action was needed! Doc jumped to the task, with bare hands pulling the good pieces out of the pile, while the workers were still throwing twenty pound pieces of concrete twenty feet down the slope (error #3). Now anyone reading this story knows what happened

next, and it does illustrate the point that Doc's guidance control (no wife) was not plugged in.

Of course, a stray piece of concrete took a "bad hop" (error #4) and landed on Doc's right hand, middle finger (yes, the "f#@! you" finger). To Doc's credit, though, common sense did return very quickly after the impact, since the first thought that entered his head was, "Maybe I can fix this before my wife gets home."



After futile attempts to "stick the finger back on" the next wave of sanity was, "Maybe I can

go to the hospital and get this fixed before my wife gets home."

The workers were starting to freak out over the finger mashing, but Doc reassured them that it was an accident and nobody was going to get fired. He would be going to the hospital, and to tell the Mrs. that he would be right back, after he had fixed something.

"Keep on working," Doc waved his towel wrapped hand at the workers, as he drove off.

At the emergency room the doctor confirmed that the finger was broken, actually "really broken," was the descriptor used by the doctor, since the next question from the other Doc was, "Do you really want that finger?"

Doc replied, "Ya, I have one on the other hand that matches it."

"Alright, we'll try to save it," the doctor replied, and continued, "We're going to give you something for the pain."

A few minutes later the doctor returned and explained, "I'm going to give you a shot. This is going to sting a bit."

Doc was pretty familiar with the concept of "stinging" by now and told the doctor to go right ahead. At some point after the "pain medicine" kicked in, Doc was feeling no pain, and led the doctors and nurses through a merry romp through the mind of a heavily drugged Lizard, retelling the flying concrete story with full embellishments. And even the piano joke worked... "Doctor am I going to be able to play the piano after all of this?"

"With a little recovery time, you should be able to play," the doctor replied.

"That's great, I couldn't play the piano before this," was the punch line. And while the drugs continued to work their magic, nurses and doctors alike joined in the emergency room party.

After hours of surgery and merriment, with a cast from fingers to upper arm, Doc was released to the guardianship of the Mrs., and since he was too buzzed on pain killers to make much sense, a verbal lashing was avoided... Besides, the lesson had been learned. Even without the supervision of the Mrs., "When in doubt, don't."



## **Chapter Fifteen, "The higher the Lizard climbs, the more you see of his behind."**

"Clamp... Sponge... Get that clamp tightened down," the surgeon ordered. The surgery was going well... as well as could be expected. The patient was past normal therapy and pills, and had only one hope left. The pain had started in his head, migrated to the shoulder and upper arm area, and final ended up in his butt... Yes, another case of a pain in the @\$\$.

The leading cause of this malaise has yet to be pinpointed, but the leading suspect is stress caused by poor management. The correlation of suffering workers and happy managers is difficult to overlook. It is almost like management caused the stressful conditions rather than provided solutions to workplace stress.

A popular notion in manufacturing and assembly plants is "Just in Time" inventories... Through planning and foresight, materials to be assembled arrive at the correct time and place. The idea is that inventory is not "in the back

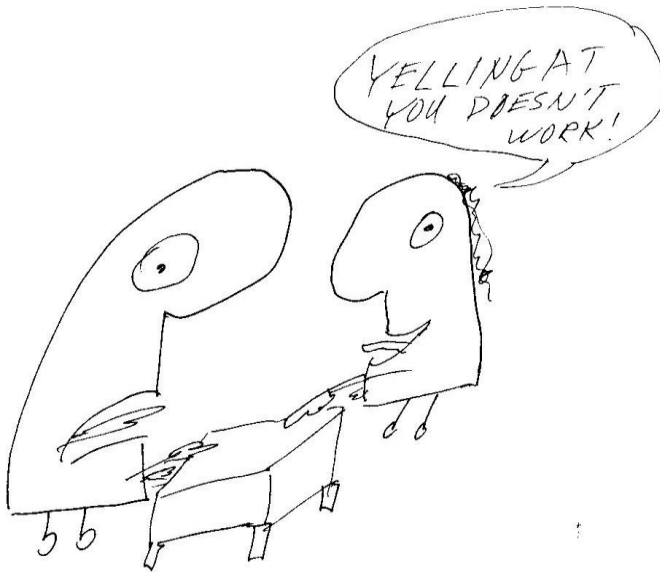
room," but rather on its way to the assembly floor. This effective method of reducing inventory levels implies planning (when the stuff needs to arrive) and discipline from the supply chain. A trust relationship is established from the assembly floor to the producers of the raw goods.

The Just in Time process is built on the sound business principles of planning and trust, and that should be the core of all business models. Without an understanding of "how many" and "when"... planning, the system doesn't work. And if suppliers cannot be relied upon... similar failure.

Taken to the next level of Lizard understanding, planning and trust are ingredients often lacking in the workplace of the future (aka: high tech sweat shops). And often management doesn't understand its role in reducing stress and increasing worker productivity. Ok, that's about four concepts in two sentences, so let's break it down.

Think real hard... the kind of hard thinking that produces beads of sweat dripping down from

your eyebrows. When was the last stressful day at work? I mean boss's underwear in knots, cursing, and nerves on fire event that you never want to repeat. Note: If you have never gone through such an event, read on anyway... your turn will come.



In the middle of the "stressful day" reason and sanity were gone... Only raw nerves and accusations remained. Now think back... I know it will be painful. How much of that \*&\$% could have been avoided with a little planning? Maybe a backup plan? Or, additional resources held in reserve? Of

the hundreds of "days gone wrong" that I have experienced, rarely was too much planning on the positive side of the ledger.

But you must understand the larger picture! In most western cultures managers do not get paid to plan... They get paid the big bucks to solve problems. Occasionally planning and problem solving do overlap, but more often a good plan prevents problems... thus, reducing the need for high priced problem solvers. You see the conundrum? It is kind of like that episode where Spock tells the computer that everything he says is a lie, and then tells the computer that he is lying. Of course the computer blows up and the crew is saved. A good plan, and the "no problems thing" are sort of like that.

If a manager is viewed as a problem solver, then a poor plan is his best friend... thus, the suffering workers. In a previous life I had the occasion to work for a "by the book" boss. Every day she would ask, "What were the problems?..." and every day I would answer that we had no problems. Eventually she tired of my ways and

replaced me with a manager who was a problem solver.

My feeble excuses of having alternative plans, and backup plans to those plans was the primary reason why the project was not experiencing "problems." The lack of chaos was clearly my undoing.

On the opposite side of the equation is the good manager... I have worked for my share of those too. The "good" manager starts with a vision, shares it with "his" or "her" people, and draws up a plan to make it happen. In addition to enabling people with enough time and resource, a good manager deflects distractions, and creates a "happy place"... smiles, praise, and the occasional office party.

The only real point of this chapter is that as you climb the ladder of success, don't show your butt (aka: as a butt monkey).

## Chapter Sixteen, "Forgiving good, forgetting bad"

Forgiving is not an option, it is just getting on with your life. When someone "does you wrong," you only have two options... do them wrong right back, or forgive them and move on. It is all a matter of the value of the wrong and how much you are willing to pay. A previous chapter (No brain, no pain) went into some detail on the concept of just blowing off the junk of our lives and not dealing with it. This chapter deals with the hurts and wrongs that we must deal with.

"Cut! Let's get it together people," yelled the director, "We are going to keep doing this scene until we get it right."



"OK," the director yelled again, "Places,... scene five, take ninety-two. Roll it!"

"She shouldn't have said that," Jessie growled, "Why did she do that? What could I have done to change her mind? What was her problem? What was the reason?"

The what, why, how, she did... he did, one person play continued on... and on... and on... In reality the scene is replayed, rehearsed and re-recorded hundreds of times for days, weeks, and even years on end. The scene is actually being played out in the mind of the injured party. Titled, "Hurt and Disrespected," the scene is replayed in different versions, with dozens of different endings, but never with an ending that truly "ends" it... just more retakes of the scene. For some reason beyond the simple Lizard ways, many otherwise normal people choose to replay hurtful events in their mind, looking for the bit of understanding or the missing link of logic.

May I suggest an alternative approach... either confront the "hurter" or tell the voice in your head to, "Shut up!" Trying to make sense of the senseless, or trying to understand the motives or reasoning of people who have harmed us, is rarely a productive exercise. In some cases you

don't really want to understand... You don't want to wander around the mind of the mean, or self-absorbed. There are truly people in this world who you don't want to understand.

Not rehearsing the hurt is the first step to healing. The Second step is forgiving, and from the Lizard perspective that means moving on with life. Choosing not to hate or waste energy on the offensive is a viable option.

Understand, though, that forgiving (moving on) and forgetting are not the same thing.

Rather than thinking of yourself as the victim of a wrong, think of yourself as the survivor of a wrong. And part of being a survivor is learning from the incident and trying not to repeat it. An underlying principle of the Lizard life style is not to repeat dumb stuff. Pain avoidance, and not being a victim, is a good plan.

To forgive is a healthy idea, but to forget is dumb. Learning what hurts and avoiding it is the recommended Lizard path.



## **Chapter Seventeen, "You are probably not as bad as they are saying"**

Eat any babies today? Or, throw anyone out a thirty story window? With the exception of a few psycho killer types, or upper level managers, few of us would qualify for the "Worst of Us" award, and are probably not as bad as they are saying.

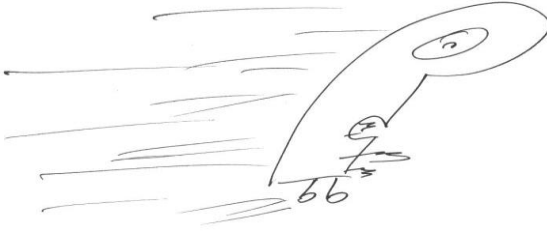
Some people would qualify as a "butt monkey" of sorts, generally given to stressing out fellow workers and p!\$\$ing people off, but they are probably not that bad. Granted, people stop talking when they enter a room, and pretend to smile, but they are not all that bad. Yes, some individuals seem to enjoy creating situations that only have unhappy conclusions, but are they really that bad?

NEWSFLASH: Some people are walking, talking toxic pools. If you come in contact with them, you will have only regrets. They have no socially redeeming reason for existing, and bring only harm and hate. They are truly worst than they

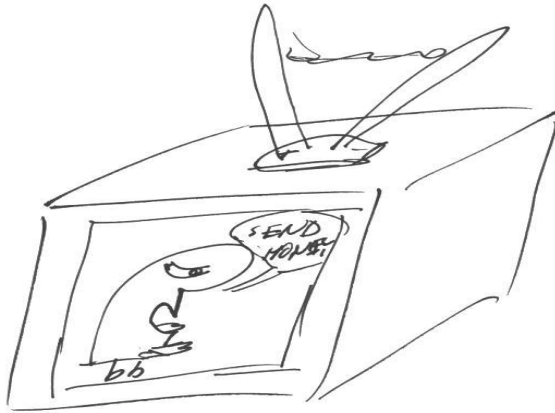
could ever admit. And they are worst than people are saying about them.

Unfortunately, I have met people that would qualify in both a religious and social context as "evil." They actually derived pleasure from harming others. Their skills were spreading lies, trickery, forming "power" groups, and, of course, the old favorite, sexual intimidation. Confronted with these types of people you only have a few options: run like heck, avoid at all cost, or build a cocoon.

The best advice when dealing with the certifiable evil is to run away... not walk slowly to the nearest exit, rather run as fast and as far as you can, and then run some more. And hope that you ran far enough. Explain that, "No, I don't want any," as you are backing out the door and then turn and run... and don't look back (that pillar of salt thing).



This strategy applies to TV too. When the guy on TV starts into the, "You can be as rich as me" deal... quickly run (i.e., turn the channel)! Or, when you are told to "Send in your money as a seed" and the TV guy will plant it in his backyard and send you part of the harvest... run like the wind! And remember power management rule #1, "You can kick someone's butt all day as long as you smile while you are doing it." These evil TV guys will actually be smiling as they are ripping you off.



And after you have run away, avoid contact with these toxic types. Because you are "good people," your tendency will be to forgive and that is a good idea, but do not forget (previous chapter). You need to understand that you will never understand what motivation, or pleasure, really bad people have in inflicting pain in their victims. The best you will get out of dealing with evil people is not to be their victim. Stay away from them. Do not ask them how they are doing, or are they having a nice day? If you "try" to "convert" them you will be the loser. Leave such people to the mental health professionals and law enforcement officials. Avoid the "really bad" at all costs.

What if you can't get away? I have had the unhappy occasion of working for a person who was mean, and nasty, and enjoyed providing miserable working conditions. This boss made it a point of leaving the restroom windows open in winter so employees would take shorter potty breaks. He would refill "bottled" water containers at the wash sink before the employees came to work... Cheated employees on hours, raises, and worst of all, instilled a climate of fear and worry in the workforce. Coming to work was not pleasant, but I and the others needed the job. What to do?

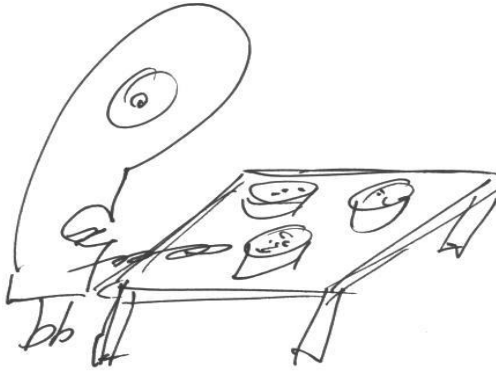
Build a cocoon. Just as developing insects build a protective layer around themselves, you need to insulate yourself from the toxic situation. This first part of your cocoon is the knowledge that it is not your fault... nothing you have said or done warrants mistreatment by others. Just understanding that you are OK and the butt monkey giving you the bad time is the one with the problem, is first building block of your cocoon.

The next building block is understand that nothing you do or say is going to influence the jerk

weed giving you a hard time. Smile and move on may be the best you can do (see the previous chapter). And finally, select your building material... either mental, or chemical.

The cocooning materials of choice are simple... either get some help from a support group or a mental health professional, which may include a chemical barrier of one of the many helpful mood altering "legal" drugs. (Obviously talk to your doctor.)

In the case of one of my living nightmare, half of the staff was on mood altering drugs of various varieties. Tuesdays were even declared "double dose day," since the weekly staff meetings meant more verbal abuse that average dose would handle. Since there was such a variety of mood altering drugs in the office, we even joked about putting out little candy dishes with the different colored pills so that visitors could come early, and pick out a few pills before they entered the evil one's office.



Of note, I stopped taking any mood altering drugs the day I escaped from the evil @#\$. My chemical cocoon worked until I could run... run like the wind...

Note to self: DO NOT SELF MEDICATE! Do not "borrow" drugs from friends, self diagnose, or use street drugs. ALWAYS consult your doctor who will be more than happy to give you some pills... Not only is the doctor route safer and "legal," you will save a lot of money over street prices.

## **Chapter Eighteen, "Plan one fun event every day... Look forward to it and remember it"**

"Christmas is coming, the goose is getting fat," the song bounced around in my head and periodically came out of my mouth in pieces and parts.

"Please put a penny in the old man's hat," I continued. "If you don't have a penny, then a hap penny will do." I liked that hap penny part.

"And if you don't have a hap penny, then God bless you."

"Stop with the song," my brother growled, "It's driving me nuts."

"Not a long drive," I replied... and the fight was on. Not a full up beat you 'til you bleed fight... Just a good brother whipping fight.





"What the heck are you guys doing," mom yelled from the kitchen. "It's almost Christmas and you guys are fighting like dogs. Don't you remember that Santa is watching?"

To my eight year old mind the thought of Santa watching was more than a veiled threat... It was the intended jolt back to civilized behavior that the myth reinforced. Santa watching us was the primary reason for good behavior during the fall months.

For the life of me, I can't remember what I got that Christmas, or for that matter, most Christmas... with the exception of a red bike. What I do remember is the feeling of Christmas coming, and for a brief period, a let up on brother abuse. The feeling of "Christmas is coming," far outweighed any toys or physical gifts... it was weeks of anticipation and excited waiting.

As adults we also experience the joyful anticipation of graduations, weddings, parties with friends, and the like. But why not take the next Lizard step of consciousness... instead of waiting for "events" to occur, why not actively make them happen? Why not plan one event to be anticipated, enjoyed, and remembered every day? Obviously, we are not talking about trips to Rome, or a new husband or wife. Those items may be on our list, but are not the subject of our present discussion. Little things like a nicely made sandwich with that great Italian cheese, a drive by a park on the way home, or a game of catch with the kids... easy, but fun things that you can anticipate coming, and remember during dull office meetings.

Build a sense of anticipation into your life, and the smiles will come naturally. Note to self: Let people around you know of your new anticipatory life style, to explain all the smiling. Otherwise they might think you've gone nuts.

## Chapter Nineteen, "The Spring of Forty-seven Doors"

Just a note, "Please see the registrar as soon as possible," slipped under the door of my dorm room.

"I wonder what this is about," I mused, or, "Maybe this is more fallout over the Laundromat incident, or the recent free language lessons."

A short trip across campus and a knock on the registrar's door solved the mystery.

"Your scholarship has been 'withdrawn' and we need you to pay in cash for next semester," was not what I wanted to hear.

The statement actually did make sense since a mutual distain had been developing over the "laundromat incident"... but that's another story. The exchange of epithets of "racist" and "trouble-maker" left no doubt of the position of the school

and my assessment of their pre-civil war social policies.

So the "pay up" statement did make sense, but not economically.



"What are my options," I asked.

"Well you can either pay for your tuition now, or you can sign up for the student work program, to pay your tuition," was the response.

Since work was an OK option, I replied, "I'll take option number two... the work thing."

With no change of expression and in the same monotone voice, the registrar answered, "OK, we will set you up with something."

Turning around she opened a small box of three by five cards and began leafing through them. After a minute or so, she pulled out a card and said, "Here's a good job, you might like."

Without looking up, she read, "Carpenter's helper, part time, no experience or skills needed," she added, "That may fit you."

Well that actually suited me perfectly... I definitely had no experience or skills in the field of carpentry, but was a willing candidate.

"Ok, I'll take the job," I replied.

Without looking up or answering, the registrar jotted down a time and a location on a piece of paper and handed it to me, "Be here at this time, and Mr. Brown will be your supervisor."

"Is that it?" I asked, "Will that pay off my tuition for next semester?"

"Yes," was the monotone reply.

As I walked out of the office, I mused, "I'm an assistant carpenter... how cool is that?" All the way back to the dorm visions of building fine furniture or homes of famous people danced in my head. I could be a kind of renaissance guy working with my head and learning a skilled craft. This was going to be way cool.

Two thirty in the afternoon, in front of the dorm, just like the note said, I was ready to start my apprenticeship. Two thirty-five, still waiting... Quarter to the hour and waiting some more. Now I was starting to get nervous. Maybe I was standing in front of the wrong dorm... there were two men's dorm. Maybe I needed to run over to the

registrar's office and make sure. Maybe they had changed their minds on the job offer. Doubts and confusion danced in my head.

And then I saw it, a weathered pale green Chevy pickup with a carpenter looking guy driving, turn up the driveway. But there was already a passenger in the pickup... another student? Was this going to be a competition between potential assistants?... More doubts and confusion. As the pickup lurched to a stop, the passenger-side door swung open.

"Get in," the carpenter looking guy shouted. "I got to drop off this guy," nodding towards the student looking guy now squeezed between us. The student looking guy gave a brief smile but seemed in a trance-like state.

"I'm going to drop off this guy to do some cleanup and then we can start," as the driver engaged the clutch. First gear, second gear, and third gear at fifteen miles per hour. The pickup responded with a lurching, banging motion as we slowly made our way across campus.



"OK, kid," as the banging sounds and lurching stopped, "Keep cleaning up the leaves and junk and I'll be back later to check," as my competition got out of the truck. The kid picked up a rake, and the banging and lurching started again.

"I'm Ted Brown," the driver informed me. "I'm in charge of fixing and keeping this place running right. You can call me Mr. Brown. I got two rules, 'Do what I say' and 'Shut up.' Got it?" as the Chevy lurched into third gear.

"Ya," I responded, "I got it."

No more words were exchanged as the Chevy wandered back across campus. I figured this was going to be one of those test things. Mr. Brown was testing how good I remembered rule number two... no talking. As much as I wanted to ask about what I was going to learn and all the way cool carpenter stuff, rule number two had to be kept. And why was he driving in third gear at fifteen miles an hour? It must be all part of the same apprenticeship test. Mercifully the Chevy came to

a stop back at the dorm where Mr. Brown had picked me up... yet another mystery.

"OK, out," he commanded, "And get my tools in the back."

The bed of the pickup looked like ten garage sales in various stages of completion, with oil soaked rags, pieces of wood and unrecognizable metal.

"Which tools?" I asked with caution.

"The ones in the box, and bring the saw horses, cords, and saw," he replied.

Now I was really confused... boxes and horses and cords and saws, amid the garage sale chaos, in the bed of the beat up Chevy. My career as a carpenter was quickly coming to an end as Mr. Brown walked out of sight.

"I can do this," a small voice inside my head pronounced.

"I can do this. I can figure this out. I am a college student and this is something I can do! I get good grades and I am pretty smart and...", the voice in my head went on.

Thirty minutes later I had found the box with the tools and the cords, and saw, but no horses... where were the horses? Mr. Brown was now heads back to the truck.

"You got everything ready?" Mr. Brown asked, as he picked out bit of a sandwich from his teeth.

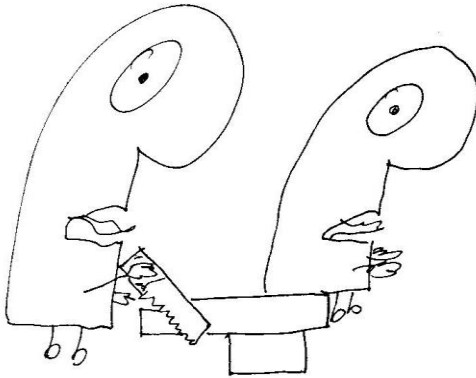
"All ready, except the horses," I replied.

"Here they are," pointing to some two by fours, "They go in these brackets, here."

Sure enough the pieces went together and made saw horses and I was learning from the master... way cool...

"OK, kid," the master commanded, "Take this stuff up to the dorm and set up in the lobby. This is a big job."

And the job that spring was a big one. It entailed replacing forty-seven doors in the dormitory that were in various states of broken or abused conditions. My job was to sit on the door while Mr. Brown cut it and installed the hinges and a handle. My job was essentially a human clamp. No words were required (rule number two). Just sit on the door when told to, and shut up. Every day I would show up and perform my human clamp functions and few words were ever exchanged except to "Sit," or "Get up." Everyday I would watch this master carpenter measure with his eye (I don't think he even owned a tape measure), cut the door, install the hardware, and hang the door, and move on to the next one.



The job lasted through most of the spring semester and did pay my tuition, but more importantly I learned a valuable lesson from Mr. Brown. Of the forty-seven doors we installed, not one of them worked correctly. Some would not stay closed, or would jam in the closed position, or the lock did not line up with door jam part, or... Not one of the doors locked or opened with any degree of normal "door-ness." Of course, the Dean of Students and some other school officials went absolutely crazy over the dorm door job, and Mr. Brown was eventually "let go," but not before additional building adventures (e.g., two baseball dugouts that looked like shelters the homeless had built from old garage doors).

The lesson I carried away from that spring of forty-seven doors was that some people live in an alternative reality. They live in their own space and time, and operate with a set of rules that we can never understand. These alien minds operate outside our laws of physical reality and "don't know what all the fuss is about." Any normal individual would question a second or third door not fitting correctly and tried to understand the problem and correct it. Mr. Brown, though, operated most aspect of his life like his Chevy, in the wrong gear... I can only conclude that at some level of understanding, it all made sense to him.

One of the smartest people I ever meet was a retired teacher in Tyler, Texas. She was my wife's friend before I had met either, which probably means that smart people can be found in clumps, or at least frequent the same places, but I digress. My retired teacher friend drove a Buick, and she drove very slowly. I don't know whether she just liked driving slowly or that she was getting up in years and no longer felt the need for speed.

While on one especially slow trip, I was rattling on about social change or the meaning of life on Mars, or some equally inane subject, when my teacher friend chimed in.

"Never bait a person too old to change," she said.

"You will waste your breath, and time, and nothing will change," she added.

I still don't remember what I had said or why she shared this tidbit of knowledge but it did make a lot of sense. Like so many youthful findings of wisdom the details are lost. What wasn't lost on me, though, was the notion that learning, or rather, re-learning of new ways may be close to impossible for some of us. Whether it was age, hard-headedness, or just plain "I don't want to change,"... Change may not be something that all can accept or embrace.

I know the tiny salesman inside of all of us whispers, "Try again... Sweeten the offer," or, "Maybe they don't understand how good this will be

for them." Or maybe they do understand, and they just don't want to change.

On a global scale we may not understand that the twenty-first century may come with a lot of unwanted baggage that others may not want. They may be "happy" with one leader and one way of doing things, and the notion of a political free-for-all is something they have no interest in. But the salesman in us pushes us on to offer "better deals" of way cool clothes, and cars, and other neat stuff, and when they say, "no", we act as if they don't understand.

Whether it is arguing with people who can not change, or trying to change people who will not change, it is often us who doesn't understand. Our ideas could be better ideas for others, but other notions such as "free will" and "self determination" are trump cards. Truly on a larger scale we all have the right to be as happy or as miserable as we choose.

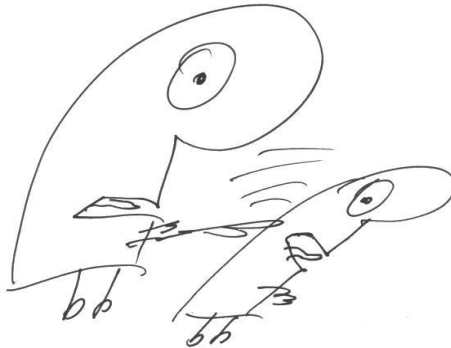
I guess the larger lesson is to know when to back off and leave folks who will never change



alone in their own version of reality. To try to impose our version of life on the immovable is only a test of our own stubbornness. As for Mr. Brown, I think we will never understand the mystery of the Chevy in the wrong gear, or forty-seven doors badly hung doors. All we need to take away is the notion is that Mr. Brown was someone that we may never understand.

## Chapter Twenty, "Learning the Bad Stuff First"

Of course, we have all spent a lot of time and effort learning to curse, and some of us are quite accomplished. A favorite pastime of mine in college was teaching well intentioned American student to greet foreign students on campus. The "joke" was, of course I would be teaching them horrible curses as "friendly greetings." Whether it was German, Spanish, or Arabic, my vocabulary of insults covered a wide assortment of references to incest, eating of excrement, and even some culturally based slurs. Unsuspecting smiling graduates of my language school would learn firsthand that "words can hurt you."



Looking back at those college days, I am amazed that I knew so many words and phrases that had no useful purpose except to cause mental distress in the recipient. A major portion and even the first elements of my language acquisition in a variety of languages had been the "dirty words." And I believe I was not unique in this learning experience. Among tourist, learning to order food, asking for directions, and the worse possible dirty words rank high in their vocabulary building. This quest to fulfill our basic needs of eating, shelter, and learning to curse well, seems to be a universal trait.

This behavior of using colorful sentence enhancers can be observed in any meeting of peers... around the campfire, locker rooms, or even bridal showers. And along with the colorful language, often colorful stories follow. It's as if we have a magnetic attraction to the forbidden fruit of dirty words.

Not being one of those psycho analysis guys, it is difficult for me to understand my, or anyone's reason, for this attraction to the "bad stuff." I know that there is an element of perverse glee in

the use of the "naughty," and it does fly in the face of my religious tutelage. But then my religious upbringing had several points of discontinuity. Beating kids was OK. Locking them in coat closets was also OK, but cursing was bad... Subject to more beatings and coat closet imprisonments.

The bottom line is I don't really know why we do it... curse that is. I can kind of figure out why frustrated individuals would beat children not their own, or lock them up in dark rooms, but I don't think I get the cursing thing.

What I do understand is the impact... What words do in our lives and the lives of others. The term I used earlier of "sentence enhancer" is quite correct. When we use abusive or dirty words, we multiple the effects of our comments. And we well understand this impact to achieve the desired effect.

Per previous lessons in this book, if we have to think about the negative consequences of our actions, we have no business doing them. I would

hold up a similar magnifying glass to take a look at the impact of "spiced up sentences."

If our intentions are to agitate or inflame a situation... then cursing works. If we want to embarrass ourselves in the eyes of our children... a good stream of filthy words will do the trick. If we want to assume the role of a bully or abuser... then curse away.

In fact the only rational use that I can find for curse words is my college prank (School of Greeting Curses) that resulted in hours of enjoyment by the perpetrators and even some of the graduates.

Bottom line: Clean up your act. Use words that heal rather than cut. Learn to de-fuse situations rather than enflame them.

## **Chapter Twenty-one, "Pay yourself first"**

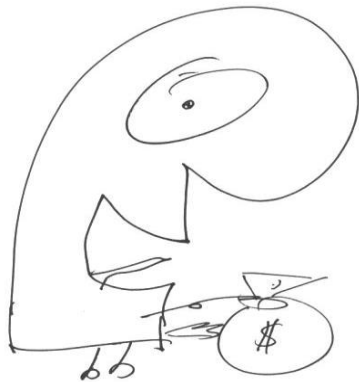
So how do I do it... change the stuff in my life that is dragging me down? How do I get enough resources to change some of the negatives in my life? Simple... pay as you go. Change an easy thing... something small. Re-invest the emotional capital in another larger area of life, and so on. Rarely are big changes possible. All of us have too many things going on in life and never enough time to do the things we want to do. We postpone, put off, and sometimes leave the important tasks and people to last.

Just as important as finding the small nuggets of things that can be changes, is to take care of the important aspects of life first... but rarely is it that simple. Life takes on a momentum of itself and things just happen. Rarely does a planned day stay planned. Work continues into family time and the truly important takes second place.

A popular notion among financial types is to "Pay ourselves first." To "get rich" can be as simple

as saving a small bit of money each month before we pay our bills and spend the rest. The notion is that a lot of little things add up to one big thing... wealth.

Similarly, rather than trying to change a major aspect of life, look for something simple, but still time consuming. Take the time saved and re-invest it in something you really need to do. Through the miracle of compound interest your "time saved" for more practical endeavors will yield handsome returns, or at least enough time to actually achieve some minor goal.



The "trick" is to do the important stuff first and if you run out of time on the "junk"... so

what. There is no such thing as quality versus quantity time. Quality time is kind of like photography... if you take a lot of pictures, some will be #\$\$%, some will be pretty good, and once and a while you have a prize winner. Quality time happens as we spend quantity time... once and a while we get a prize moment that was worth all the effort.



## Chapter Twenty-two, "The art of the probable"

I know you are waiting to win the lotto and your reasoning is only too clear. Somebody has to win and why not you? You have the same odds as everyone else, and besides, you've got those "lucky" numbers from a fortune cookie, or your birthday plus the size of your waist line, or some equally scientific source. Or maybe you are using an authoritative source like an Internet web site, or a weird aunt for the correct numbers. In any case, your numbers are going to hit and life is going to be great!

### NEWSFLASH!!!!

The likelihood that your numbers will be coming up any time soon is off any predictive chart. You are thirty times more likely to be stuck by lightning than win the lotto... Don't press your luck. And that is



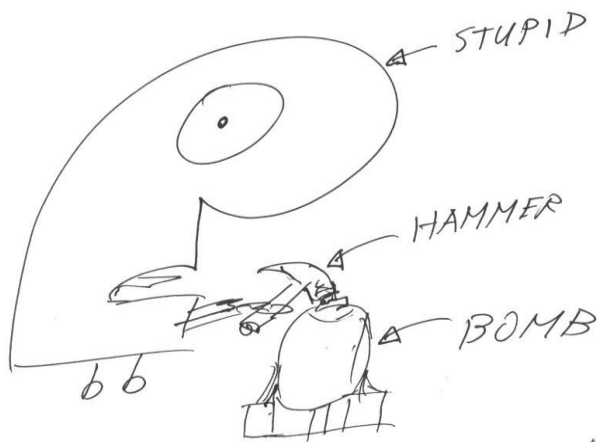
our next topic to ponder.

It is not your fault. We have been told from birth that "you can become anything you want... if you just try hard enough." This is a popular and pervasive myth told to small children to inspire them to greatness, or at least to do their homework. I recall several, "you could be the next president of the US" lectures from my parents, usually associated with eating everything on my plate, or some other odious task. How my future was tied to green beans was a great mystery, but the possibility of running the whole country was something not to turn down. Looking back, I am sure my childhood would have been a more pleasant one if someone had told me the real odds, or at least freaked me out with the lightning strike example.

Dreams are good things. And it is not that the adults around you were mean or had a sick sense of humor. You were told the "standard line" that all good parents told their little ones. But since this book is all about fixing stuff in your life, I am here to tell you that they were full of #\$\$@&... Piles of steaming, smelly #\$\$@&. It is an

illogical and basically stupid idea to tell children (or anyone) that they could become anything they could imagine. Life is not constructed of imaginary notions carried by trans-dimensional beings to fairy castles where the princess marries the prince and... pure bull #\$\$@&.

Unfortunately some of us actually believed this line of bull and transitioned into adulthood thoroughly damaged. Members of the "You never know... It might work," school of management are willing to try the useless, the unplanned, the really dumb, in the hopes that "it might work"... somehow... "Don't give up hope," like my mama told me. After all, anything is possible, and one dumb scheme is as good as the next.



Many a career and even whole lives have been spent chasing the possible, but not the probable. But the dream dies hard. It is a very pleasant notion to think of ourselves as rulers of the land, or rich, or famous, but the reality is that unless some strange quirk of fate occurs (like a spot on The Daily Show), we will live out lives of the "normal," the un-rich, the un-famous.

Well now that I have shoved a few pins in your balloon... time to recover a few dreams. As long as you are not making stupid life choices based on an illogical understanding of the universe... like

not "believing in gravity," dreams are OK. It is OK to have a dream, but have a backup, and a backup to the backup. Understand the likelihood of your dream coming true... the odds, the real probabilities.

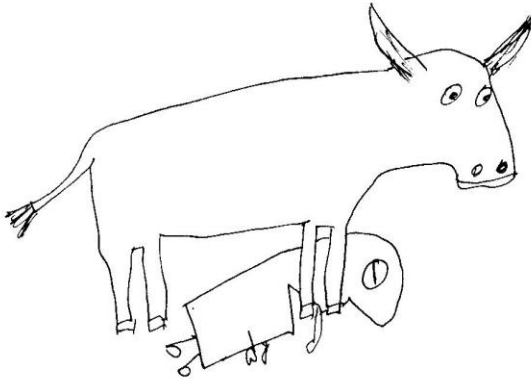
And if you were really smart (that's why you bought this book... right?), then you will invest as much time or effort in your dream as the probability of it occurring. Let's do the math with an example... So you want to be a famous star like Jon Stewart with your own TV news show. Now the math part... There are billions of people in the world, and hundreds of millions of people that speak English. There are probably a hundred or so newscasters of the quality of Jon Stewart and only one Daily Show. I would say the probability of you replacing a star like Jon would be at least five hundred million to one. Now divide your probable life span (75 years or 2,365,200,000 seconds) by five hundred million and you get about five to six seconds as the amount of time you should devote to trying to get Jon's job.

Even if you increase your possibilities to replace the famous newscaster by a hundred fold

through special voice classes or the wearing of well tailored suits, the odds will still be overwhelmingly against you. Even though the payoff is high, the probability of achieving it will always be very low. Even eating all the green beans on our plates, the only way we may get to the Olympics is to buy a ticket.

## Chapter Twenty-three, "Teddy can bite"

Every year at national parks tourist are trammeled, gored, and bitten. Yet the carnage continues, despite the warnings, pleadings, and even pictures displayed by the uniformed guardians of the parks. "Don't feed the thousand pound buffalo," or "Leave the bear with six inch claws alone," falls on smiling plaid skinned visitors like snow in the jungle... Nothing sticks. An hour later a pummeled person report is being filed, and next of kin notified. What's the deal? Are these folks some kind of sick thrill seekers? Or trying to cash in on their life insurance? No, these folks have never been told that Teddy can bite.



A major portion of the world has been damaged, and perhaps beyond my meager attempts, by cartoons, images of talking deer, walking trees and the like. From early childhood these visions of unreal and illogical events are poured into our head on TV, in the movies, and even through well-intentioned literary sources. Our heads are filed with notions that animals are people too, and that they are "like us" but just different. Of course bears speak bear, but they have retirement plans (we call it hibernation) and wear clothes (fur), have family and friends, and in general are pretty similar to us. Hunters are mean nasty people who kill the parents of poor innocent fawns. But not to worry, the fawns are raised by the other forest animals and grow up to save the forest from a terrible fire...

From early childhood, we are loaded up with some pretty wacky ideas of how the world works, and may even sleep with stuffed replicas of Teddy and his friends. Is it a wonder that we carry these ideas into adulthood and want to get up close to a live Teddy? That is not to say that adults believe a bear cannot hurt them... It is just that at some deep level of understanding, they believe the bear



would not hurt them. What possible reason would a singing picnic basket carrying bear have for harming them?

To evolve to the next level of understanding of how life works, some sorting of the real, pretend, and stupid is necessary. The reality of bears may consider us a food item, or at the least an intruder in their territory, needs to replace notions of bears acting like people. I know this will be hard for many of us who consider pets as part of the family, but there needs to be a reality check for many of us. Given the choice of saving a child or a pet from a burning building, there should only be one choice. Spending resources on pets or people... one choice. Using medical facilities for pets or people... one choice. Realizing that this may be a very sensitive issue for many, I would only add that the "people" being considered only need to be family or friends, and the equation takes on new meaning. It is unfair to think of your pet, and some abstract "person." Rather, consider the choice between a pet and a "person" we love.

This book is all about understanding how the world works, how you got to where you are at, and

how to fix yourself. My point in this chapter is that a realistic notion of the workings of the world is at the heart of any life resolutions. Wishing will not make it so. Notions of human behavior may not fit neatly into the animal kingdom. Pets can provide company, but they are different than people friends. If any of these ideas do not make sense to you, consider buying the next book in the Lizard Way series. You probably need more help.

So let's go through at least one point together. Bears are not anyone's friend. They have behaviors that have served them well through many years of living along side of humans. Forgiving more modern behaviors of tearing up parked cars, and digging through trash containers, their behaviors deserve respect and distance. Bears are not large people with lots of fur. They are wild animals... Bottom line: Teddy can bite.

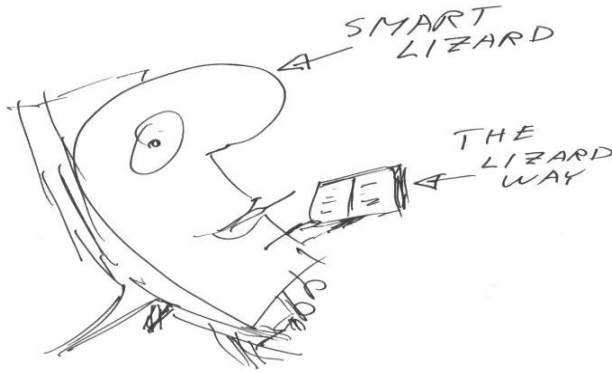
## Chapter Twenty-four, "I'll be right there"

I'll be right there is a normal, harmless statement, and it generally means that someone will arrive shortly. Before we deal with the alternative meaning of the phrase, it is important not to note that concepts of time and space differ between individuals. While the "there" in question is rarely a point of confusion, the "right" part points up the issue at hand. "Right there" could be minutes, hours, or days depending on the distance or the speed traveler. But the bigger issue is one of how we use or abuse time.

I have been told, "I'll be right there," by an individual fifty miles away, and in his mind there was no conflict or confusion. And three hours later, it was even clearer that I was the one who was confused. There had been no pressing need to hurry or even try to save a few minutes in route. My "right there" traveler moved in his own bubble of time and the rest of the world was obviously out of calibration.

We all have friends and family whose use of our time drives us nuts... We hurry up and wait for them. And the disrespect of our time is spreading like a disease. Airlines expect us to arrive early so we can wait in long lines. And doctors have become the absolute worse. "Waiting rooms" seem to be appropriately named since we are generally kept waiting five times longer than the actual visit. Clearly we have an epidemic of time wasters. With all the talk of computers and scheduling and stuff, what's the deal?

Here is the deal... Mismatched worlds. Some people have a different understanding of time than in your world. And it may be part of your problem is your unrealistic expectations. While schedules are important, strict adherence to them may not be as important as we have assigned. If you know a person is a "time-waster," build your schedule of events accordingly, and even bring a good book (like this one), so your time is well spent.



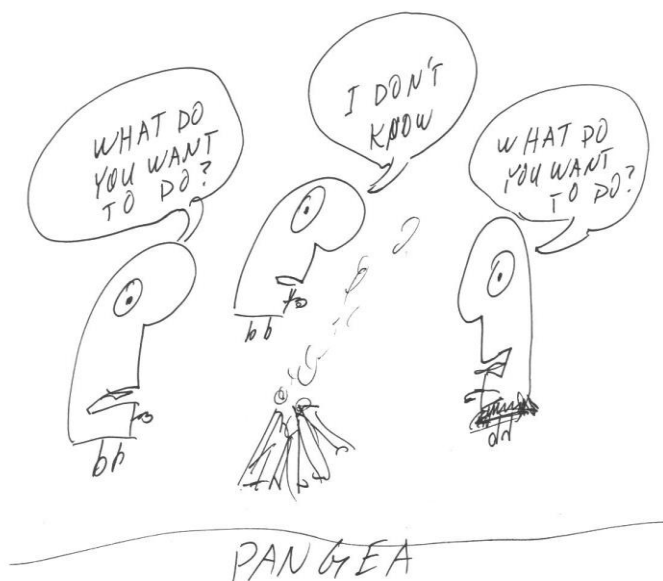
If you find yourself wasting time... don't. Learn to use "your time" well, while the time-waster, wastes theirs. And while you're not wasting time, occupying every waking second with useful and important things, consider the Lizard alternative... the path less traveled.

What's is the deal with "wasted" time anyway? Is it really wasted? Doc Lizard and the Mrs. hold the Hawaiian record for most miles on a rental car in a one week period. The rental guy thought the odometer had gone crazy, but in fact, it was the drivers. Vacation for the Lizard couple consisted of driving to every coconut grove, rock outcropping, ocean view, and eatery on the ten by thirty mile island. Rest was not an option while there were sights to be seen.

Needless to say, a vacation was needed from the vacation. Perhaps the Lizard couple could take a page from the Lizard manual and reduce speed and "waste" a few hours resting, sitting, and maybe reading a good book... like this one.

## Chapter Twenty-five, "The too easy life"

You've seen the headlines "Tribe members in Outer Pangaea live to be one hundred years old eating only nuts, bark, and berries." And the next grand diet craze is on. Its nuts for breakfast, a tree for lunch, and good helping of berries for a chaser. The rich and savvy start carrying designer handbags full of bark and nuts, with a special compartment for the berries... all trying to add a few extra years on earth.



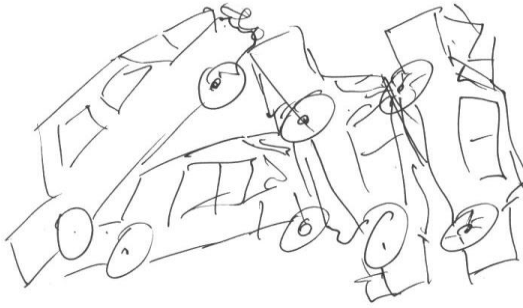
NEWSFLASH! Those poor souls on Pangaea only had nuts, bark, and berries to eat and would have traded it all for a good steak. And the only ones left alive after generations of really tough lives were the "really tough ones." Given the Pangean medical motto, "Get well or die," and the generations of the weak not making it to the gene pool, you can end up with a pretty tough tribe (tattoos, signs, colors... the whole thing), and a lot of kick-butt old people.

Fast forward to the twenty-first century... The invention of the electric fork so you won't put hot food in your mouth. Or, fourteen labels and warnings on a ladder reminding you that you can fall off the thing, especially if you stand on the top step with nothing to hold on to. Or, the sign on the favorite Lizard hot spring that warns that boiling water and steam can hurt, or even kill you. And clearly the sign does not work since a favorite Lizard pastime is to soak in the hot spring and watch people come down the trail, stop, and put their hand in one of the steam vents to see if it really is hot. Endless afternoons have been spent watching this "testing" of the hot, with the same predictable results.



Clearly life in the twenty-first century has become too easy, and some of us have become too lazy to think. Risky behaviors are ruled as illegal and we must be protected from ourselves. Our government is in the babysitting business. But I would suggest an alternative... rather than protect us from our own stupidity, why not encourage it?

Picture it... All the mean, hot head, aggressive drivers allowed to drive any way they like, one day of the month. We could call it "Fun Thursday." The last Thursday of the month would be designated a "drive anyway you like" day, with no law enforcement to slow down the fun. The results would be quite predictable. Smashing, crashing, machine gunning fun that only the weak of mind would enjoy. The following Friday would be designated "Clean Up Day" and tow truck owners would become the new rich.



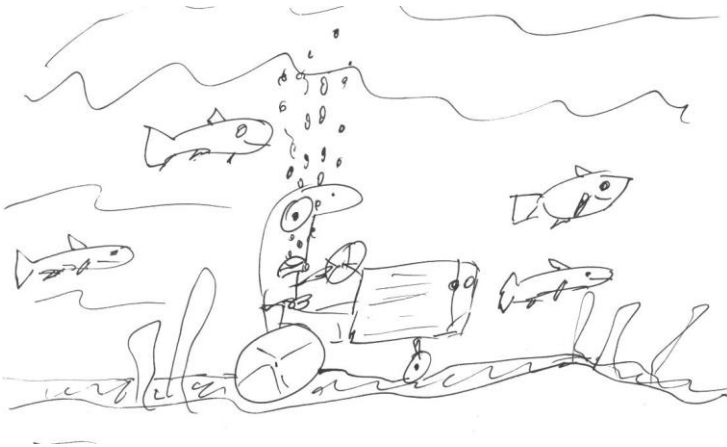
Of course "last Thursdays" would be avoided by anyone with a brain, and would encourage family togetherness, and perhaps even a resurgence of the backyard bunkers of the sixties. Within a span of only a few months all the bad drivers of the world would be gone, or encased in layers of plaster, and the meek would inherit the road.

Of course, plans like "Fun Thursdays" will never come into being... we have become too civilized, and such plans will remain the stuff of dreams. Our elected officials will continue to protect us from ourselves, as we splash about in the shallow end of the gene pool...

"Jimmy! Don't run with those scissors in your mouth!"

## Chapter Twenty-six, "Not that bad"

"I'm having a bad day... first thing, the coffee maker overflowed all over the counter, and then the dog didn't make it to the back yard, and..." The list of catastrophic events goes on. If you hear your own voice or others echoing similar words then you need to stop, drop, and listen... It's not that bad.



Most of what we describe as "bad," in the global scheme of things, does not show up on the radar. When strangers plant land mines in your front yard... that's bad. If your home or fields are

under twenty feet of water... that's bad. When your doctor tells you that you have a golf ball size growth in your head... that's bad.

The minor life experiences we often call "bad" are minor bumps on the road of life. These minor events have only the negative value in our lives that we assign to them. If we really want to push the limits of "badness," let's get out the Lizard yardstick of the good life... We live in a country that consumes more energy resources than any other country on earth, we eat more than any other people on earth, and we drive the biggest cars on earth. If bigger is better, then we are the biggest, bestest, richest. And if given a choice, a major portion of the world would trade places with us without asking any details.

Needless to say, I am not talking about the poor, the forgotten, and the uneducated of this country. They have it "bad" and should be really p\*\$\$#@ off with the rest of us... and rightfully so.

So next time you start to whine about the dog hair on your couch, or the mail arriving late during the holidays, consider the alternatives, and just be happy that you have a couch, or regular mail service. Many of us have it pretty good and should just shut up with the "bad stuff" talk. Our time would be better spent trying to get rid of all the good pounds around our middle from all the good food we eat.

## Chapter Twenty-seven, "It rains on the rich"

A popular saying is that "It rains on the rich and the poor." One possible interpretation of the saying is that bad things happen to both the rich and the poor. The implication is that "poor folk" shouldn't consider themselves singled out for bad stuff since rich folk have bad times too.

But if you read the last chapter, "bad" comes in a variety of colors and shapes. Rain for rich folk in a nice tight, centrally heated home, may not be as bad as to a one room shack in the Mississippi delta with no flood insurance. Events do not equally impact the well to do and not so well off.

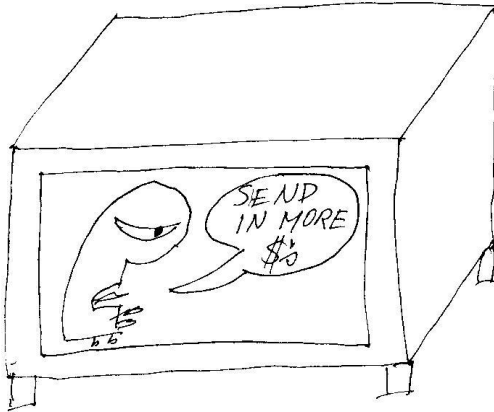
There are those saints among us that "give it all up" to live and work among the poor. But I think that's why we call them "saints." They are few, and although we respect them, and even honor them with holidays after they are gone, we have no intentions of becoming one. From a Lizard perspective, if you give away all your stuff and

become poor, then we will have to take care of you, and you will be part of the problem. Might I suggest an alternative way... the Lizard Way?

If you feel bad that you have too much stuff, in a world where many don't have anything, you can do something about it. Or, just continue to burn up grey matter thinking about it. The thing you can do is simple: learn to give. Not just ten bucks to some kid who shows up on your doorstep... he is probably ripping you off anyway. Do stuff that matters! Give blood down at the local blood bank. The itchy bitsy needle is not going to kill you and you may save lives.

Volunteer your time, and if you have kids, teach them to volunteer for community projects.

Get involved in doing good stuff.



And now for my personal opinion of the bottom feeding, scum sucking jerks who get on TV, and cry real tears, and tell you to send them money so they can be on TV some more. If you are stupid enough to fall for their line, please send the money to me instead. Mark "I am stupid" on the outside of the envelope so it can receive priority handling. I promise to give half the money to a "real" charity, and spend the rest on a really fun time.

If you feel bad that you are not contributing to a world in need, it is probably because you are sitting on your dead butt, and just feeling bad. Do



something... anything that has some socially redeeming benefit. You will feel better about yourself and you will make a difference.

Note to self: If you have a spot on your driver's license to indicate you want to be an organ donor (after you are dead)... check it. Trust me, you won't need the parts where you are going (up or down), and you won't feel a thing. It may be the last chance you get to do a wonderful thing on this earth.



And for any idiots that think organ donation is a bad thing and want to voice their options to me... Put all your comments on a hundred dollar bill (on the outer margin) and mail your remarks to me. Make sure you write "I am ignorant" on the outside of the envelope, so it gets special handling.

## **Chapter Twenty-eight, "Good ideas have no owners, just followers... Bad ideas have owners, and victims"**

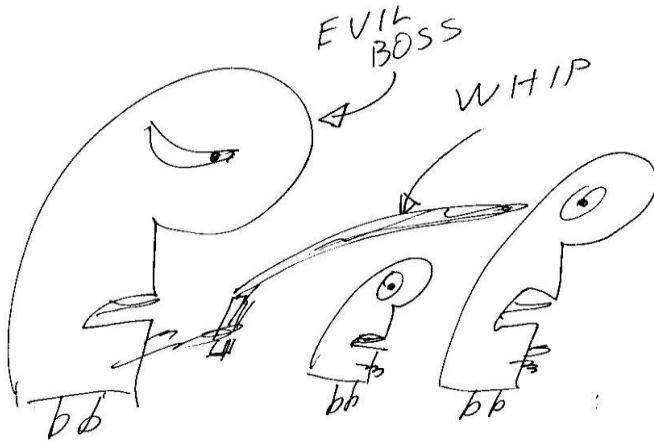
Good ideas are the stuff of team work and projects that come in ahead of schedule and under budget. Good ideas seem to get better with the additions of other good ideas, and typically the "good idea getting better" thing just happens. Often the first good idea is lost in the mix of more and even better ideas. The point is that good ideas are usually followed without a lot of fuss or "we say so" rules. Good ideas rarely need the shepherding of management, and that sort of makes sense.

Bad ideas, on the other hand, rarely get better over time and usually get even worse with the addition of yet dumber ideas. Most bad ideas are quickly dropped or discarded, unless they are... **MANAGEMENT DIRECTIVES**. Yes, bad ideas with ownership leave only victims in their debris field. Like an out of control barge full of scrap metal headed for highway bridge pilings, bad ideas from

on high leave behind a lot of unhappy motorists. Yet the carnage continues, despite the obvious.

Why? What unseen force is behind this madness? Is it the desire for power? Or the deliberate infliction of pain on the unwitting masses? Or poor early childhood potty training?

The Lizard vote is on the potty training thing... for real. Think about it... kids that never learned to perform the basic function without shame or intimidation. Rather than learning to enjoy one of the basic functions of life, they were made the subject of ridicule and learned to associate the potty function with something bad. Deprived of one life's basic joys, they fixated at that stage of development. The Lizard term for this type of individual is a "butt monkey"... giver of stress and really dumb ideas.



All of us have friends and family that would qualify for the distinction of "butt monkey," and we have learned to cut them a little more slack, or just avoid them more than other friends and family. Unfortunately, those same butt monkeys may be somebody's boss or co-worker... and now you see how the relationship of anal fixation, bosses, and bad ideas tie together.

Bad ideas are often "owned" by anally fixated individuals, that will "carry out the plan," no matter the outcome.

On a personal level, we have all learned to deal with bad ideas thrust upon us by these butt people, but where the wheels come off the wagon is when nations or large multi-national companies engage in this behavior. Then the victim list is long and the conflicts truly evil. The damage butt monkeys can do to a community, or region, or even on a global scale, cause us to re-calibrate our evil-o-meters to new lows. We shake our heads and wonder how such stupid ideas, or ignorant ways were allowed to impact so many.

And who is to blame? We are. We need to understand the kind of people who are driving the school bus. If the applicant for bus driver is an alcoholic, foul mouth, lecher, maybe we shouldn't give him the job? I would propose the following for any candidate for management, elected office, or anybody who is in charge of anything... Give them the Lizard test.

First, are they nice? Do they handle things in the simplest possible way? Are they Lizard material? Have they read the book?

If our grade for the candidates is "C-, needs to apply himself," maybe we need to note that in the record. If we allow butt monkeys to rule, we are the cause of our situation. We can vote at the ballot box and with our wallets. We can get involved and find out the "real stories" and plaster them all over the Internet.

Only too often the backroom deals and the hidden agenda of these butt people come to light after the damage has really been done... bankrupted cities, suffering victims, "spent all the money on \*&\$%."

If we have a brain in our heads and take no other lesson from this book, it is that bad ideas need to be exposed for what they are. We need to be eyes and hands for good, or we will get what we deserve.

It was a cold and thundering night. I was nice and warm in my bed, and actually enjoying this bit of light show and rain on the roof. Then I heard a small whimpering voice in the back

bedroom. That got me out of bed to see what the problem was...

"What's the matter sweetie," I asked my daughter. She was standing next to her bed, hands covering her neck and chest as if to protect herself from something unseen.

"I'm scared," she simply replied.

I held her in my arms and replied, "Don't you remember we talked about angels and how they watch over you and protect you?"

"Yes," she replied, "But I want someone with skin on."

Of course she was right. Invisible helpers and wonderful notions were fine, but she was more interested in being held and protected by "someone with skin on."



Without us the bad stuff will happen and we will have only ourselves to blame. We are the eyes, ears, and "skin" of good intentions and thoughts.

## **Chapter Twenty-nine, "Is it safe yet?"**

We have all seen the movie, or should... The bad evil ex-Nazi guy is busy drilling holes in our hero's teeth, and briefly stopping to ask the question, "Is it safe yet?"... More drilling, more questioning... The movie was an interesting one about Nazi diamonds and lots of running and chasing, and more running, but the question is a valid one for most of our concerns.

The "it" could be anything from Nazi diamonds to buying a large screen TV. As mentioned earlier in this book, there are people who will buy anything new, bright, and electronic. It doesn't have to "completely" work... just be the first one and sort of, kind of work... maybe. Such people (early adopters) are not too concerned with the concept of "safe," and can even skip this chapter.

For the rest of us who remember times when it was not safe, and we did it anyway, this chapter is for us. Whether it was an electrical shock, or the empty spot in the wallet, the lesson of waiting for "it" to be safe is right up there with hair pins in wall sockets.

To illustrate my point, a Lizard tale....

It was a morning like most others. The sun was coming up to the east of the north fork of the Snake River. Other campers had noticed the rise in illumination and were either moaning something about too much liquid refreshment the night before, or they were already up, coffee in hand, to greet another day of fishing.

Coffee was clearly a good start for both the head throbbing and the sunny group. A choir of growling stomachs, though, sang of the need for something more substantial... food, we need food, the stomach choruses continued.

Just a side point for those of you who have never camped with a bunch of guys... The thought

of food normally blocks out all other thoughts, to include any thoughts of danger, or personal hygiene, or even sex. The male drive for food dominates all other needs. So when Frank came back to camp from his "visit to the woods" (i.e., potty time), with a handful of interesting mushrooms, all eyes and stomachs were at attention.

"What ya got Frank?" I asked coyly, not wanting to spook him into running.

"Just some mushrooms I found in the woods," he answered, piling the mushrooms on the camp table, but still keeping his body between the mushrooms and me.

"There are a whole ton of them, just down the path, on the left," Frank had not finished "path" and the race was on. And there were tons of them. Big as your hand spread out, like alien brains. We filled up our shirts and arms with them and brought them back to the camp table. The table was now filled with the tasty looking treats. Dreams of eggs, a little bacon, and the mushrooms

fried up in a wonderful concoction danced in our coffee soaked brains.

But nobody was slicing or dicing these little beauties. What was the deal? And then from a deep dark Lizard place in my head a newspaper headline from the past popped up, "Family dies from eating mushrooms in park." Oh ya, the poison thing.

"Are they safe?" Lizard Jim asked.

"I don't know," Frank replied, "I thought you guys would know."



Shoulder shrugging all around was not a good sign, and Jim added, "I heard that bad mushrooms will kill you in minutes... They tear up your liver."

The liver dying part was too much for me... no way was I going to eat these little beauties. A spirit of despair hung over the camp. We all felt it. So close to full bellies and yet so far.

And then a miracle happened. One of the nice silver haired ladies camping in the site next to us came over.

"You boys sure have a lot of brain mushrooms. Can you share some with us?" she asked.

This was obviously the break we needed... Somebody with knowledge.

"Sure," we replied, "Take what you want... enjoy... enjoy."

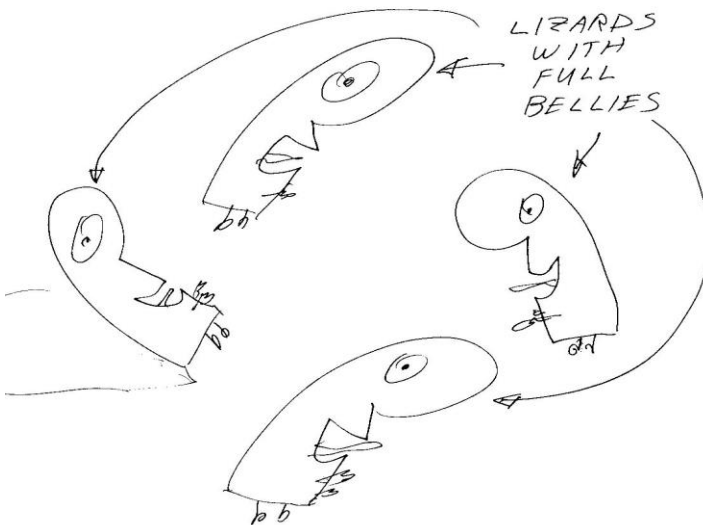
The nice silver haired lady took a few handfuls and went back to her campsite, and we watched. Not that we didn't trust her mushroom knowledge, but Jim's liver dying warning was too fresh in our heads.

And we watched her clean and cut up the mushrooms, and then put them into a hot black skillet, and add the eggs. The smell of the mixture drifted over to our campsite and not a Lizard muscle moved. And then the test... she and her friend were eating them. Five minutes later, no deaths. Fifteen minutes later, and still no screams of pain and dying. Forty-five minutes later, Jim

yelled, "They're safe!" And the slicing and dicing was on.

On that warm summer morning the Lizards had learned the value of patience, and to ask the question, "Is it safe?"

The lesson we need to take away is to gather information, watch and wait through the first wave of "testers", and if they don't die, then it may be safe for us. Life is all a matter of patience, and looking for the right time to make your move.



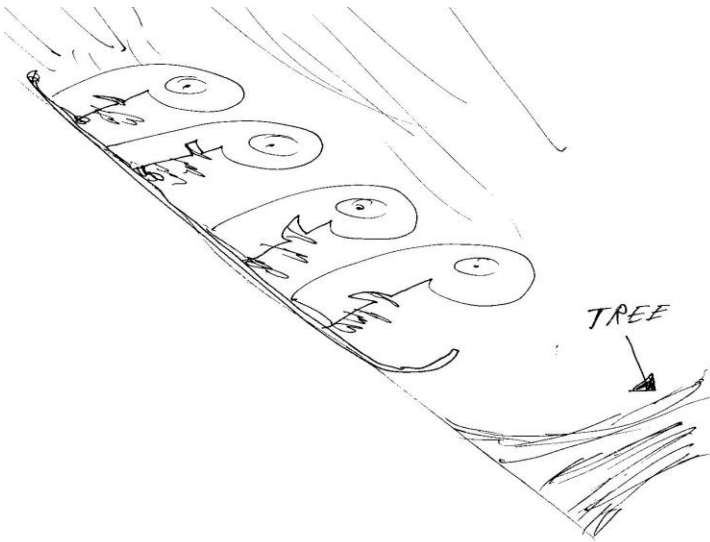




## Chapter Thirty, "Sled ride to heck"

"Go faster," was not helping as the sled needed little encouragement. This was turning out to be one of those "life's object lessons."

Maybe waiting in line would have been a better idea, but one hill seemed as good as any other, and nobody was on this hill.



The toboggan was now approaching warp two (Trekkie talk for beyond light speed) and going for some international record. The four of us hung

onto bits of rope, some busted handles, and each other, as the missile of destruction entered terminal phase. And then it all made sense... why nobody else was sledding on this particular hill... TREES! Not little saplings that you could run over and still live... Big pines with skull and cross-bones all over them. We were going to die.

Then a piece of genius flashed in my head, "Bail out," I yelled and rolled off the toboggan.

With the wind, and the screaming, and the flailing of arms, my order to abandon ship was ignored, and eight foot of toboggan became four feet of splintered wood. The three remaining riders were wrapped around the mighty pine in various poses of pain and suffering. But nobody died, and after a short ride to the local emergency room and a few pounds of metal pins and plaster, all was fine.

One lesson I did take away from that "unauthorized" toboggan run was that faster is not always better... a message most of us ignore. We have "the need for speed," and drive in the fast

lane, always want the fastest \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank). Like three year old kids yelling, "Faster, faster," we live our lives with the peddle to the floor. If the sled ride to heck taught me anything, it is that speed is OK, but some degree of control is needed... or its pins and plaster time.

Unfortunately this lesson of "speed can hurt you," is often lost in the workplace. The wonders of automation, computerization, and all the other instruments of business speed often collide with bad business ideas. When an idea is bad, doing it faster is rarely a solution. The notion of "let's lose money faster" is not MBA stuff.

And while we are kicking the tires of the losing money faster notion, it is clearly management's role to "try" to make us go faster... so they can sell more stuff, or make more junk, or just see us sweat. It's kind of like paying for an "all you can eat" buffet... you want to get your money's worth, no matter how much pain is involved. So it is in high tech and regular sweat shops... they "bought" you and want to get their money's worth. Making you go faster is just part of the equation.

But, less we forget, faster is not necessarily better. The main point (this is really for the management folks) is that you can only run so far before you drop dead (e.g., the first Greek marathon runner did just that). A continuous diet of speed will harm you.

Another point is that rarely can "quality" and "fast" be used in the same sentence, rather it is something like, "I can do it fast but it will look like #\$\$%@."

Speed is OK for the occasional "late for work" or "get to a sale before I miss it," but a permanent diet of speed will only get you to the end sooner... "end" as in "end of life." Viewing life at blinding speeds leaves little chance to enjoy the trip and figure stuff out. Sometime we need to take the slower route, enjoy the view, and just take it easy. Leave a few minutes early, and enjoy the ride.

## Epilogue, "Everyone has a story"

No matter how old or young, rich or poor, dumb or dumber. We all have at least one good story... The kind of story where you walk out of the movie with a smile, and maybe a sappy theme song. I have traveled enough to know that the taxi cab driver is not just a person to convey you to your hotel, he is a story teller. The construction worker who is building your room addition has a wife, and dreams, and at least one good story that involves a nail gun.

The problem is that not too many people get to hear these good stories. A few friends may laugh at work, or relatives may retell their version over a holiday diner, but rarely do good life lessons ever get written down and shared with a greater community... until now.

For Part II of the Lizard Way we are looking for good stories... real life lessons from real people. If you would like share your tale, go to:

<http://DrDaveSanDiego.com>

Click on the "Email me" link and share your story with us. Of course, you will be given credit (if you want to be named).

And I will leave you with one such story told to me by my friend Frank...

The story is actually about Frank's dad, who in his day was a working engineer... that means he lived in the day when they actually built stuff. Frank's dad was an outdoorsman before the time of instant meals, blow-up sleeping mats, and temperature controlled tents. A typical outing was sleeping on the ground, with a bed-roll and a rock for a pillow.

During one such outing to the desert, Frank's dad and his buddy sat around a small campfire (on rocks, of course), exchanging a third friend, "Jim" in a bottle. After an hour or so, and it being the desert, the talk turned to a lively discussion of snakes... The nasty rattling type. Frank's dad let it be known that he hated the

things, not just a little, but like run them over in the road hate. They gave him the creeps.

After a few more exchanges of "Jim," it was time to turn in. Bed-rolls were laid out and rock pillows positioned, but after all the snake talk Frank's dad decided to sleep with a loaded pistol next to his head, just in case one of those things got into his sleeping bag...

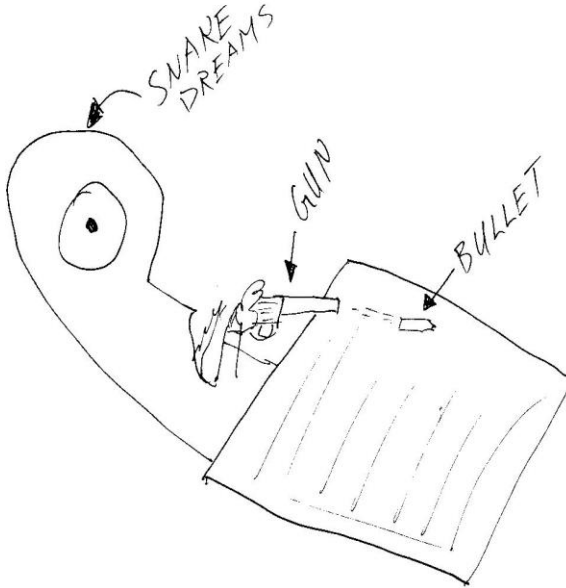
Now you're thinking what I am thinking, "What could go wrong?" A gun, plenty of Jim, and visions of snakes dancing in Frank's dad's head.

In the middle of the night the very predicable happened. Gun shots in camp!

"There a snake in my bag," Frank's dad yelled, firing into the bag.

I can only assume that the buddy no longer needed to relieve himself. Chaos ensued, but no snake to be found. After some questioning and drying off, the truth was found... no real snake...

snake was in dream. But the bullets were real enough.



One of the oldest Lizards learned a hard lesson that hot desert night, "Bad dreams can kill you."

Note to all: And before I get a hundred letters from snake lovers everywhere, I think the practice of running over anything in the road, even a snake, is deplorable and besides the fangs could get stuck in your tire and cause a flat. And you



could get the poison in a cut and die changing the  
tire... And...