

Wonder

by Dave Corrigan

“Wonder’ can’t be imagined, it has to be experienced.”

A really good friend said those words to me tonight.

Think about that for a moment.

The feeling that comes from watching the Sun rise over snow covered Mountains.

The feeling of standing in an open field on a clear night and experiencing more stars than your mind can count.

Waking up in the frigid pre dawn hours and blowing the campfire back to life, while the coyotes sing in the distance.

Or quietly paddling around a bend in the River on a summer morning, and seeing an Eagle in a tree fifteen feet away.

These things can’t be imagined. Not really. Oh, you can picture them in your mind all right, but unless you have actually experienced them, you can’t know, REALLY know, the wonder, the awe and the inspiration that such moments bring to a human being.

That’s the trouble with our world today. People live an insulated life. They get their experiences from computers and TV’s and books; not from the natural world around them. Even the ‘outdoor enthusiast’ has likely so insulated himself from the real wonders of the natural world, that he often doesn’t really understand.

If you’ve never been poor, you can’t really appreciate wealth. If you’ve never been cold and wet, you can’t really appreciate warm and dry. If you’ve never faced death, you can’t really appreciate life...

And if you’ve never known the up close and personal touch of the natural wonders of Maine, perhaps you can’t really understand what is at stake as we move forward with a plan to industrialize and destroy this beautiful state in the name of ‘green energy.’

I guess that’s the real reason why some, otherwise smart and reasonable people, just ‘don’t get it.’ They think they are doing what is right for the world, but only because their experiences are second hand. They’ve never EXPERIENCED the wonder....only imagined it. I don’t mean the crooked politicians and the profiteers who push wind development at all costs....but rather, the neighbor down the road who genuinely believes that wind is good for the planet.

Lack of real information, lack of understanding, lack of real WONDER at something that is so much more than yourself....these are the enemy of the natural world.

As I approach my 33rd birthday, I look up on the wall above my desk and contemplate one of the many papers hanging there. It is a list of goals—a list of goals that were to be accomplished by my 35th birthday.

They were written at a time when I was living in an old camp, with no electricity or running water. Some may think this was a hardship, but I look back now and thank God that I had that time— And as far as luxury goes, that camp was a solid step up from the canvas tent that I had spent the previous March through November in.

I won’t read you the entire list, but the last one stands out to me tonight:

#3. Sponsor regularly scheduled programs for both children and adults, to teach them about the wonders of the natural world and to encourage them to participate in traditional outdoor activities.

It has been some time since I wrote those words. I have always tried, through my business and my volunteer work, to help people to understand those natural wonders. That's one of the greatest rewards of being a Maine guide. I was lucky to have people in my life that helped me to experience those wonders, and I always wanted to do my part to pass that on.

For over a year now, while I've been tied up with 'wind,' I have not pursued this goal as strongly as I would have liked to. There are only just so many hours in a day.

But when I absorbed my friend's words tonight; 'Wonder' can't be imagined.....it has to be experienced,' I knew that she was right. If we want to preserve our way of life, and the natural world that we all depend on, we must make sure that more people EXPERIENCE that wonder. I know we can't all go full time in to running outdoor programs, but I'm asking everyone reading this to do their part—

Take a kid fishing, invite your neighbor along tomorrow morning when you go for that sunrise walk with the dog, volunteer to take the local Scout Troop camping, invite your city cousin up for a week in the country.....

Help these people to know, to experience, to FEEL the power and the wonder of the natural world that we in rural Maine call home.

Once that wonder has been planted in a person's heart and soul, we will never have to worry about them supporting the industrialization of Maine's mountains.

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