

Getting in Touch with My Wild Side

By Dennis Payton Knight

This morning, I put aside all notions of tame living, took a walk on the wild side, and had not only bananas, but bananas and strawberries on my cereal, the Tony-the-Tiger brand. Yes, me, so thoroughly domesticated that my entire relationship with nature is limited to what critters I can see from my screened-in porch or the air conditioned cocoon of my Ford.

And if that wasn't enough wild living, after breakfast I wandered outside and watched the wild drifting of autumn leaves, scattering hither and yon over our green, manicured landscape. I thought about the seasonal changes in the balance of nature, and thought like any good manager of his environment there must be a way to keep the leaves green and attached to their host trees, producing chlorophyll and oxygen the year 'round.

Autumn seems to be the time when nature needs more supervision. All of those wild breezes, wild oranges and wild reds seem quite undisciplined to me. I tried to estimate the lost oxygen production associated with the month of October, and decided it is a task more suited to those wild and woolly statisticians over at the Department of Commerce.

Now I'm just trying to get in touch with my own wild side. Someplace down deep in this conventional soul, nurtured in a big Irish family and a parochial school, I know it exists. Am I a crouching tiger? A shark on the prowl? A golden eagle harnessing the winds? A grizzly in Yellowstone Park? Maybe I have not the soul of a predator, but of a robin on the wing, a dolphin swimming the currents, a giraffe grazing high in the crown of a wild apricot tree.

Digging around on the internet, I came across some wild things to do in Colorado. I could go diving with sharks at the aquarium, wrestle gators in Alamosa, or bungee jump off the Royal Gorge bridge. There is also a giant canyon swing soaring some thirteen hundred feet above Glenwood Springs. Those things may seem exciting to you, but they manage only to give me the heebie-jeebies.

The article did suggest a drive to the top of Pikes Peak, but I've already done that several times without knowing it could earn me a merit badge for Wild. I will go do it again to get the credit.

I might discover my wild side while plying my craft as a writer. I could harness wild adventures like those of Herman Melville or Jack London. Or I could create my own version of Tarzan. I would have him climb as a boy out of the wreckage of a Cessna someplace high in the peaks and wilderness of Colorado. I will call him Rockazan. We have no apes in Colorado to befriend him, so he may have to be adopted by chipmunks. Or course he'll want to meet some local version of Jane, just in case you have a wild suggestion.