
Hill Country Deer Found Dead ... Believed to Have Laughed Itself to Death

Last year some friends invited me and my wife to a party to celebrate the start of deer season. I'm not a hunter, so I wasn't even aware the start of hunting season was enough reason to actually have a celebration. I was told it was a good excuse to get together and enjoy some adult beverages.

When I told the host of the party that I wasn't a hunter, he seemed surprised that a guy who was born and bred in Texas didn't hunt. I explained to him that my choice to not hunt has nothing to do with disapproval of hunting. It has more to do with the idea of getting out of a warm bed in the middle of the night to go out in the cold to search for something that hangs out in my front yard at 2:00 in the afternoon. He said that going hunting with his buddies really was a good excuse to get together and enjoy some adult beverages. I was beginning to see a pattern.

After we agreed to attend the party, the host informed us that we had to wear something camouflage. Since I'm not a hunter, I didn't have any camouflage clothing. Neither did my wife. Before I knew it, we were in the truck on the way to the nearest sporting goods store.

I was utterly amazed at how many camouflage items there were to choose from. If I didn't want to cover my face in grease paint, I would wear a ski mask. If I didn't want to wear a camouflage jacket, I could wear six layers of other items to keep me warm. I could have spent hours (and many dollars) purchasing enough stuff to hide from the smartest deer in the woods. It suddenly dawned on me that if I put on half of what I found, I would have better luck jumping out of the woods and having the deer drop to its knees in laughter.

I learned several lessons surrounding the camouflage hunting party, and would like to share just a few:

Respect what others do, even if it's not your thing

It would have been easy to have politely said no to the opportunity to attend a hunting party since I'm not a hunter, but I respect the choice of hunters. Their actions don't go against my core beliefs or morals, so I have no reason to not respect what they do. We live in a world divided by our differences of opinion. While our differences should be embraced and celebrated, too often they're used for an excuse to not respect the other side. If you have a position on something, stand your ground. But at the same time, allow yourself to learn by respecting the other side. As long as it doesn't go against your values or convictions about what is right and wrong, expand your knowledge by respecting the interests of others.

Say yes to new opportunities solely for the fellowship

I'm amazed sometimes how often I hear people turn down invitations to do something because they don't like doing it. I'm talking about something as simple as dinner. Not long

ago my wife and I coordinated a group of friends to go to dinner at our favorite Italian food restaurant. I was traveling at the time, and on one of my calls to my wife I inquired about who was coming to the dinner. She informed me that one particular person would not be going because he didn't like Italian food! The sole purpose of the dinner was to get together to socialize, not to eat! My best friend loves sushi. I can't stand sushi. But you can rest assured that if he calls and says he really wants to eat sushi, I will be chocking down a bowl of rice or something that looks like it might have gotten somewhere close to the grill. The point isn't to get together to eat, but to get together to enjoy each other's company. If I had turned down our friend's invitation to the hunting party, we would have missed out on some great fellowship.

Be willing to look ridiculous

As a professional speaker, trainer and consultant, my success is largely tied to my ability to be seen as a professional. Like many of you, I do everything I can to look the part. Certainly donning a camouflage ski mask in the middle of a sporting goods store and having my wife take a picture doesn't help me maintain a professional image. While there may have been a time in my life when I wouldn't have considered looking that ridiculous in public (much less putting the picture in a newsletter distributed world-wide), I've learned that sometimes you have to be willing to look a little ridiculous to keep it all in perspective.

From time to time people will ask if I make up these stories. I always tell them that if they knew me very well, they would know my life is just strange enough that I don't need to make them up. But quite frankly, we all have these simple occurrences in our lives that we can learn from if we simply look for the lessons. For instance, after being drug out of the store by two security guards thinking I was robbing the place, I learned that wearing a ski mask in a sporting goods store isn't such a great idea! Here's to the next lesson!

God bless!

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