

TRUE TRACKS



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Motivation Is The Key To Success

By Kristy McConnell

Instructor

As an instructor at the Tracker School I have had the opportunity to study and observe how different people learn and progress with the skills they are passionate about. From observing Tom, myself, and others I have reached the conclusion that one of the most important skills anyone can master is the ability to self-motivate.

Countless times I have witnessed students leave a class overflowing with passion to practice skills and then discover a year or two later that they went home and barely worked on skills at all. Many look at this situation and say obviously the problem is not enough passion. But I feel that is not always the case. I believe that many students do have the passion but lack something else, the ability to self-motivate. We have grown up in a world where we always have parent, teacher, book, computer, something or somebody telling us what to do and how to do it. Without that something or someone telling us what to do, our brain simply does not know where to start. So even though we have the desire to accomplish something we just don't know how to do it.

It sounds a little silly I know, but I have noticed that even if you handed someone a piece of paper, or emailed someone each day with an assignment as simple as journaling what you learned today, people will do it. But without that email or piece of paper nothing would have ever happened. Of course many of us look at Tom and think if I had a Grandfather like he did things would be different because Tom always had Grandfather to guide him. And yes if we all had a Grandfather I am sure it would be different, but what I feel grandfather taught Tom was the ability to learn, to find his passion and then teach himself with out relying on Grandfather for all the information. This is why when grandfather left, Tom did not stop learning. So how as stu-

dents can we teach ourselves to overcome this unconscious need to always have someone or something telling us what to do? Here are a couple suggestions of things that worked for me.

Whenever I am feeling stuck I ask myself if Grandfather (or any wise elder) was here right now what would he/she say to me, what would he/she suggest I do next? When I first started doing this I was shocked at how well it worked. You can also create a journal for yourself. It can be like the one Ruth Ann recommends in this issue (see story this page), or something completely different. It can be as simple as journaling about the weather on Monday, Tuesday plants, Wednesday tracks, Thursday concentric rings/awareness, etc. Or set goals for yourself each week, but make sure you write them down, and then at

the end of the week check in with your progress.

Another exercise is for you to focus your awareness over the course of a month on yourself. Journal each night about the choices you made that day and your motives behind each choice, what you were aware of and what you missed, and why did you miss it? When I tried this I learned volumes about myself and it helped me be more intentional about the choices I made.

Of course the foundation to self-motivation is to always stay connected to your passion, and never let the joy be taken out of the experience so it feels like a chore. Hopefully, if you ever have a hard time being self-motivated, one of these suggestions will help. The most important thing is that you always have fun, and create something that works for you.

Compound Interest

By Ruth Ann Colby Martin

Head Instructor

To live a life in which each day choices must be made from the myriad of things we love to do, is to live a blessed life. How many live lives of boredom and TV possession?

Many students depart Tracker classes overwhelmed with the idea of integrating into their lives more exercises. What I have found important to remember is that, as Grandfather reminded Tom, you do not eat the deer in one sitting, but one bite at a time. Einstein said that the greatest force is compound interest and I have found these words to be profound in my own balance of skills and time. It is not imperative to our growth that we each quit our jobs/relationships/lives and devote ourselves to skills. What is crucial is that we find a few minutes each day to indulge in

a bite. What we often fail to recognize is how profound the growth is compounded exponentially over time.

Everyday, without fail, Tom and Rick could count on four lessons from Grandfather: a lesson in awareness (often a blindfolded exercise), tracking, sit area, and a physical workout. In conjunction with their schoolwork, chores and family obligations, undoubtedly these lessons were not hours long, rather bite size chunks, a mere coin deposit daily which, with interest, has compounded to the account we have all had the privilege to draw from in classes.

Twenty minutes. Give up one bad TV show a day and instead choose an exercise to do. Refocus yourself during your daily commute and use the time to practice road awareness or tracking. We recommend

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Synchronicities – When One Thing Leads To Another

By Billy McConnell,
Instructor

Sometimes chance meetings aren't just by chance. When you are out and about in daily life and inner vision directs you to talk to somebody it may lead to a friend for life.

I was in Asheville, N.C. visiting an old friend. I had never been there before and he wanted to take me downtown to show me the city.

As we were trying to find a spot to park in the busy city I saw a woman and her dog standing on the sidewalk. Immediately inner vision hit me, telling me that I needed to speak her. By the time we found a place to park and went back to where we saw her she was gone. Feeling a little dismayed we went about our evening.

Several hours later we were in a little park in the center of town listening to some street musicians when inner vision told me to turn around. Sitting at an outdoor café across the street was the woman and her dog. I slowly made my way over to the café where I was greeted by her dog. We started to talk at first about her dog and then just some idle chitchat about the city and such.

After a little while she asked me to join her. As I approached the table I noticed that she was writing in her journal. I asked, "Do you mind if I ask what you are journaling about?" She replied, "Well, I'm writing about how I'm trying to save money to go to this place called the Tracker School in New Jersey to learn primitive skills.

I've been trying to get there for a long time. I want to integrate those skills into the 4th grade class I am a teacher for." My jaw just about dropped.

Anyway, to make a long story short she took her Standard class the same week I returned to be an instructor. These days she teaches 4th grade inner city youth and shows them a lot of things they never knew were possible.

I think back now and realize that if I had chosen to ignore inner vision that night, not only would I have lost a friend but all the lives of the little ones that would have gone untouched by the vision.



Time for Search and Rescue

By Kevin Reeve
Director

I have come to believe that the Search and Rescue class is the most important class we teach at the Tracker School. The SAR class we ran in November of 2003 was a great opportunity to learn life saving skills.

'Compound'

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spending 20 minutes each, everyday, in your sit area, on awareness, tracking and physical exercise. Total time spent: 1 hour, 20 minutes. Devote a notebook to these exercises as both a journaling tool and a friendly reminder. One page per day, each half-page devoted to one lesson. I leave the notebook open wherever I spend my day, so I cannot conveniently forget what is really important each day.

I ask myself every morning, who do I want to be? What do I need to do today to take another step in becoming this person? I devote my four daily lessons to ones that will further my development. For what else is there, really? Another bad armchair date with the Bachelor?

SAR skills are really at the heart of why tracking is important. I have often called tracking the most fundamental skill of primitive people. It is at the heart of all hunter-gatherer societies. Why? Because their lives depended on their ability to hunt and track. In our society today, tracking is a lost art precisely because our lives no longer depend on it. But that is why SAR tracking is so vital. Because lives still do hang in the balance.

Tom's new book, Case Files of the Tracker, tells several stories of how the Tracker's skills can make the difference between life and death. When I start on a trail, I pick up a thread. That thread of tracks is connected to a human being at the other end. If I am not a good enough Tracker, someone may die. If I cannot see the tracks, or interpret them, or follow them fast enough, the human being at the end of that thread may not be alive by the time I get to them. That tends to be a pretty good source of motivation.

Time is the enemy of a lost person. Time before the person reaches hypothermia, time before they are harmed by wild predators, time before they panic and do something foolish. The only way to defeat that enemy is

through the ability, through the skill, of the Tracker. Only if I am a good enough Tracker can I get there in time.

The next logical question has to be "How Good?" How good a Tracker do I have to be? How fast? How accurate? Rhetorical questions I am afraid. Every situation requires different abilities. I constantly see the limitations of my skills. I see them in every Tracking class, whenever I watch Tom track, when students ask me questions beyond my ability, and when I am in the field on a tracking case. These limitations can be crippling or they can be motivational.

In a situation where life hangs in the balance, I hope I am up to the task. I know I will never quit or give up, but is that enough? Again, that is just rhetoric, unless I do dirt time, unless I pay the same price Tom has paid to become a great tracker. So it all boils down to that simple question: am I willing to pay the price to become worthy of the title of Tracker? That is the question we all must answer some time.



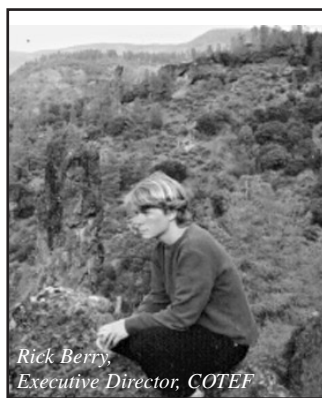
Rick Berry Named Executive Director of COTEF

Rick Berry has been named Executive Director of Tom Brown's non-profit organization, Children of the Earth Foundation (COTEF).

The Children of the Earth Foundation offers the Coyote Tracks Program, a summertime program for young men and women, as well as community outreach programs for schools and organizations throughout the year.

Berry is a longtime associate of Brown's Tracker School and the Children of the Earth Foundation. A longtime student, he has taken many Tracker School courses, is a former caretaker (living primitively in an Earth Hut heated with an open fire) at the school's Pine Barrens site, and has been a COTEF instructor for the past four years.

The native of California is a graduate of Humboldt State University where he earned a BS in Integrated Native American Studies. Berry has been involved with the Tracker School since he was a teenager, which has helped to cement his passion for teaching children about the outdoors.



Rick Berry,
Executive Director, COTEF

"I am really looking forward to this challenging adventure," said Berry. "I want to help children enjoy the natural world in away that they've never experienced it before."

The Coyote Tracks Program, for youngsters 7-12 (with adults) and 13-17, are taught much the same way that the

school's adult standard class is taught. Students learn how to observe nature, how to track animals through stalking and natural camouflage, and how to survive in the wilderness without the benefit of modern conveniences. Students learn how to make shelter, how to find water, to make fire, to find food, and to make tools.

"We do this through a combination of activities that have hidden teachings so that the students walk away with skills and an awareness of the world around them without feeling as if they attended class all day," said Berry. "We make it fun for them. By the time the kids finish the program, they see the wilderness in a new and exciting way. They will come away with a much greater awareness of the wilderness."

COTEF Plans Programs For 2004

Children of the Earth Foundation (COTEF) is pleased once again to be offering summer programs for 2004 and various weekend workshops throughout the year.

We have a few new courses for our summertime Coyote Tracks program. A tracking course for families and for teens and also a two week version of survival quest. We are also lengthening our programs to a full week of instruction, running Sunday to Saturday, and the schedule is set so that participants can take consecutive weeks of classes.

Please note that we are also seeking volunteers and interns for the coming year. Interns should have attended Tracker School classes and/or be graduates of the Coyote Tracks program.

For more information about COTEF visit www.cotef.com or contact our new Executive Director, Rick Berry, via email, raberry_2000@yahoo.com.



The Story Of The Stone

**By Eddie Starnater
Instructor**

The people were a sorry lot. Having neither fang nor claw their existence was that of a scavenger and prey. Relegated they were to consuming that which was left by more efficient predators, confined to those areas where shelter was naturally occurring, and more than occasionally becoming prey themselves.

The Creator took pity upon them, wanting them to become more. The Creator appeared to the people saying, "Behold this gift." And the Creator produced a piece of stone which read, "These are bones of Earth Mother. They hold the knowledge of all that

has been and all that will be. It is a gift of choice and responsibility." And, with the spoken word, another stone fell from above, striking the stone the Creator had shown them, which was cloven in two.

As the Creator had shown them, the people learned to shape and sharpen the stone. With the ability they learned to alter their environment, make other tools, make fire, shelter and they became masters of their world. By and by some people chose to live close to the Earth. Others chose a path that seemed of comfort, safety, and security. They learned to make war. Steel replaced stone, greed replaced need.

Ten thousand generations later the gift was all but forgotten. All but a few of the people had chosen a different path. The Earth suffered. The Creator was disappointed in the path the people had chosen. The path of the Caretaker, the Healer, the Teacher grew faint. A few hear the voice of the Earth and search for that obscure trail. In a barn in New Jersey they hear a great teacher explain, "Behold this gift of the Creator. It is a great gift of choice and responsibility."

What is your path? Where does it lead (past and future)? Why are you here? What is your choice?

Tracker School 2004 Schedule

NEW JERSEY

Advanced Awareness
July 11-17

Advanced Standard
June 13-19
September 19-25

Advanced Tracking
June 20-26
September 26 -
October 2

Healing
February 1-7

Philosophy 1
October 17-23

Philosophy 2
October 24-30

Philosophy 3
November 7-13

Philosophy 4
November 14-20

Philosophy 5
December 5-11

Philosophy 6
December 12-18

Scout
July 18-24

Standard

February 29-	April 4-10	August 8-14
March 6	May 9-15	August 15-21
March 7-13	May 16-22	September 12-18
March 28-April 3	May 23-29	

Tom Sets 'Intensive Class' Schedule

Tom Brown's "Intensive Classes" in 2004 offer a much more challenging array of opportunities.

"Because of my tight schedule last year I was only able to run 7 of my private classes and subsequently had to turn dozens of people away," said Brown. "Instead of running the class for just one day I have expanded the time so that the class will cover three days. The second, and the most major change, is that these private 'Intensive Classes' will have a theme. These classes evolved out of necessity and

the urging of students for a private series of classes."

The new "Intensive Classes" are unlike the original "Tom's Class," which only took 5 students for a single day; instead, these expanded classes will take 8 to 10 students. These expanded numbers will allow me to form Scout Teams, Tracking Teams, and Philosophy Groups, in each of my classes.

The full 2004 Intensive Class schedule, student eligibility, and further information can be found on the Tracker School website, www.trackerschool.com.

www.TrackerSchool.com

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