

SELECTIVE JUDGEMENT.
Mark L Coats

March 4 2021

Through the years I have found some of the “Old Sayings” have been recycled and become more relevant to current circumstances. “I predict future happiness for Americans, if they can prevent the government from wasting the labors of the people under the pretense of taking care of them.” *Thomas Jefferson*

I have come to realize that human behavior as well as the animal kingdom’s behaviors haven’t really progressed. Oh, things may modernize, and technology certainly advances, and the quest to do away with the old ways certainly resembles progress. But in fact, that behavior is a steadfast characteristic of humanity. It seems as the secrets of the past are unveiled and are represented as new discoveries, we just venture down a path that has already been well traveled.

The saying about learning history is so you can avoid previous mistakes, but it only reflects on short term American or European history, and those historical events that are briefly acknowledged. But, studying the circumstances that proceeded and created those major events takes an effort in study to understand. Often the simple daily tasks just fade into the lost memories of times past.

The loss of understanding of history is only the result of humanity’s quest for progressive innovations and leaving the “old ways” behind.

My Great Grandfather, fought in the American Civil War, my father told me the stories he was told by his Grandfather when he was a boy. My father also told me stories of what he saw in China before WWII and in the South Pacific during the war.

My Father often relayed to me that the war effected many people and each individual remembered their own personal experiences. His opinion of recorded history was it was simply opinions slanted by politics or social bias, rather than the personal experiences or the conflicts of the social dynamics that set the stage for war. I believe such a record of history to be ***selective judgment.***

This social shaping of recorded history is not new, although today it’s called cancel culture. They both refer to the same mechanics of re-writing history.

I make this qualification to history and human behavior to understand that human behavior really doesn’t change through the chapters of time. In understanding human behavior we can then look to the animal kingdom and realize they have none of humanity’s quests for progress. Their quest is simply survival and procreation.

We as humans apply our personal emotions of fear, desire, happiness or love to whatever animal we choose. But, in fact those are only our implied desires. The Animals only have their instincts and their species *behavioral characteristics*. If we interact with these animals and become an accepted occurrence within their environment, we as humans must apply our desires of acceptance upon the animals to qualify our own personal self esteem.

I realize that domestic species that become entwined into our daily lives and our affections for those relationships are real and an important part of each of our lives. My point is rather toward the animals of the wild kingdom and our interactions there. We may become an accepted, or tolerated presence within their world, but anything such as affection, is only a description that we ourselves put forward.

Although humans believe that forgetting the past is part of accepting the future, that itself, is just an emotional desire. The past is a fact, wishing it away or trying to forget it, or trying to change how it's reported, doesn't change anything that had happened in the past. But, an understanding of how history is recorded is also an important part in the question of what did we do prior to today to cope with specific issues such as predators. Although important to those who directly dealt with those predatory pressures, their efforts certainly didn't survive the historical recordings through time.

Historically, solutions may have taken a more direct approach, such as eliminating the problem. But, modern times has brought forward protections for these predators. Living within these laws and regulations is where we are today. Making a social and economic statement to ranchers that the predators are here to stay.

Understanding that a lion then, was the same in behavioral characteristics as a lion now, is understanding that change and progression is only a human qualification to humanity, not in anyway connected to the animal kingdom.

I often hear comments of research or qualified experts attesting to animal behavior, and then the qualifying of the qualified. That same progressive objective is to eliminate history and rediscover a trail that has already been ventured down. I'm definitely not one who opposes Academia, but rather opposes Academia's automatic disqualification of historical data to just hearsay and then an effort to replace it with their own study or data. Only to qualify a more politically correct view or satisfy a more sustainable donor, or an economical benefit to a system of higher learning, which they then charge and profit from.

Individualized Research is a valuable study, it's unfortunate that the studies don't unite to one another with a 'common sense' conclusion tying the multiple papers into a theory.

As a point I would ask how many studies must be done to understand gravity? Sir Issac Newton was hit on the head by an apple and he called it *gravity*. Yet when one University does a study on predators it's like a sale at a discount store, everyone just gets in line for their own variation of the same story.

Unfortunately a study requires measurable statistics, which is why we see so many studies on the effects of presence and how the predators effect the cattle and the predators economic impacts. If you deter predators from presence you don't have anything to measure. How do you measure a non- event?

As to deterrents, it's easy to measure or physically see or understand that this apparatus should scare an animal. So let's walk this domestic animal past this apparatus and see if he has a reaction. Yep, he looked at it and seemed wary of it. Unfortunately there's no way to measure fear, no gauge or measuring device, only our perceptions. That makes for pretty poor data research.

So I understand that the research must be to measurable impacts. But there is a measurable study that could be performed that would show how effective deterring presence is. But it would be a massive costly study of tracking with GPS and the results of such a study may impact someone's operation adversely. The effects would probably generate another problem, which might be the legal storm it would set into motion.

So let me again state that all research is valuable and we need more understanding of *fear* and *fears response*.

With that said, I understand that for some, my efforts are simply hearsay, that is true. But, throughout my life I have witnessed innovative ranchers and their *horsemanship* skills, *Stockmanship*, *environmental improvements* or their *talents with dogs* become the basis for industry standards and avenues of research that has followed. I certainly don't put myself in the likes of such mentors but, rather point out that fear and it's responses, as well as instinctual reactions or nature's own postures, all of those, are certainly not a new concept.

To the Environment there are few changes other than the humans managing to insert their specific projects or to encroach, enhance or manage it the way they perceive it should be. The Animal Kingdom throughout history has shown a unique way of adapting to the urbanization of our landscapes.

Predators require very little when it comes to basic needs, food and water. Suburban areas present many opportunities for predators and rural areas add their own assets into the mix. A predator's main



requirement is water and prey. Water has stood the test of time, whereas prey happens to be the occurrence of opportunity. Even if there is historical data which shows a predator's preference for a specific game species, I will say that predators are opportunist's, they will successfully adapt and capitalize on any situation that presents opportunity.

Some history and traditions remain, but the reasoning of why those traditions exist is lost to historical records. My first thought of such a tradition is of the Alps of Switzerland and Germany. The bell of cattle has been passed down through the generations. The shapes and tone of these bells are specific and are actually called Swiss bells. Although they served a purpose of locating the grazing stock, my experiences and investigations lead to the conclusion that they had a combination of purposes of which one was also being a predatory deterrent. A traditional solution that survived the test of time for no other reason than the bell itself.

When you research past deterrents you realize that deterrents present themselves into categories. There are deterrents that are intended to *frighten* or *scare* the intended, such as a scarecrow in a garden, a blasting pop-cannon, fladry or a radio playing loud music, Fox lights or motion detectors and a few more, I'm sure. These physical scare apparatuses certainly are effective short term, such as a trip through a haunted house for humans, but repeated encounters only sees the original fear fade with the repetition of the apparatus's performance. These apparatuses are only a tool for desensitizing and promoting habituation.

Then there are the *physical confrontations*, such as hazing or guardian animals, such as burro's, lama's, or dogs. These interactions are intended to intimidate or confront a predator's pressures. Sadly the predators being apex predators soon turn the table on guardian's and the guardians could soon be re-categorized as victims. If the encounter is not lethal, it certainly requires medical attention. As to the hazing, it only sets an understanding of how far you are willing or able to pursue the predator, setting a finite understanding to the effort of the pursuit and your limits.

Another limiting factor to hazing or guardians, is that both are better suited for small acreage than large ranges. The amount of guardian animals to effectively deter a large Range brings added costs, to feed and check on as well as veterinary costs as well as the cost of the guardians themselves. It also requires added labor to routinely check how things are going.

Then there is structure, such as fencing the predators out or night corralling the stock in. Both are effective if plausible, but the cost factor often restricts the use of such deterrents.

Increasing predator populations and efforts to protect and re-establish predators that have been removed from the landscape, has presented challenges to the livestock industry.

The public's misconception of the *Ranching community* being flush with cash is a true misconception. Most years, Ranching is about surviving economically and making the cash flow fit the challenges.

Managing costs, are the reason behind making the effort in deterring a predators presence in the first place. That *mother cow* as well as her *calf* have costs incurred throughout their lives. That calf's sale is how the rancher makes his return. A predatory loss is not only about the animals value but their incurred investment costs to date. A predatory loss only compounds the losses to future costs and returns. The mother's replacement will take a minimum of three years to replace. Not only incurring the development costs of the new mother but the losses attributed to the lost mothers productive years as well.

Then there is *behavioral science*. As I stated before, humans qualify their feelings and place those characteristics onto the animals. I believe that those human assertions, rather than an understanding of the *animals behavioral tendencies*, is a major problem in deterring predator versus livestock conflicts.

By understanding that all living creatures have an instinctual will to survive, which is the *self preservation* instinct, and by realizing what *fear* is, you can understand the basic fact of a deterrent. By understanding that relation of *fear* we can then use those *skills* to place or instill into our stock an effective deterrent.

When we examine each apex predatory species, we realize that each species has its own *predatory behavioral characteristics*. But each of the species of predators require an individual prey victim. That fact in and of itself establishes the reason why *herd animals* are just that, *herd animals*. The *herd group* itself is a defensive posture against being individualized and becoming a possible victim.

(Training with pseudo predators to enhance **THE DEFENSIVE POSTURE OF THE HERD GROUP**)

The *herd group* itself challenges the predators by not presenting an individual which the predators can exploit. Through years of reduced predator populations and Stockmanship efforts of individualizing for management practices, our stock has become accustomed to being separated from the herd group.

An effort to reinstall the *defensive herd posture* as a deterrent is a very specialized task. Such training is not well suited to be performed with other management chores. In our daily management routines we have a purpose and a goal to our efforts. Making an effort to have no movement is a self defeating thought for some. I realize to many it relates effort to non-productive results, kinda like a person who



spends a lot of time on the couch. But as with first responders who practice situations they may or may not ever encounter, such training has a purpose of preparing for the chance of ‘just in case’.

By making a concerted effort between the stock and *pseudo predators* we can re-establish such a response that includes *THE STANDING SOLUTION*. By interrupting the *chase sequence* we interrupt the predator prey relation and promote the *defensive posture of the herd group*. Which is an effective management solution in mitigating the risks for predatory pressures.

When we look at *behavioral tendencies* some things stand out for all of the predatory species. Predators could be described as elusive. That elusive nature is more of an *instinctual self preservation* than an attributed behavior. Again we see that instinct of *self preservation* shedding light on an opportunity to deter presence. This acknowledgment of such elusiveness should not be just a brief mention, but rather the beginning chapter in a book of understanding *fear*.

When we understand that *behavioral characteristics* and *instinctual responses* are different, we can understand why an applied deterrent will succeed. By engaging a response of *fear*, which all of the deterrents present in the beginning, engages *fear’s instinctual responses of fight or flight*. Whereas *behavioral* actions are a calm engaging action, such as stalking, which is an action rather than a reaction.

The key to success and remaining a successful deterrent, is if the predators can’t figure out what the deterrent is, or that the deterrent manages to keep the predators bewildered, challenging their *self preservation instinct* and engaging an *instinctual reaction*. By not repeating an action, the deterrent presents an unsolvable uneasiness that keeps the instinctual responses engaged.

By presenting a repeating function, that function only acts as a desensitizing device, not only not engaging an instinctual response after a short time of repetition, but promoting a level of comfort in understanding the actuality of the non-threat.

I believe when people listen to theory’s about predators versus stock, there is always a pre-conceived opinion whether its pro or anti predator. That opinion often sets the stage for a heated debate on what response to their presence should be taken, directing the conversation away from solutions and redirecting it to opposing the other sides opinions, leaving behind the thought of, ‘how do we succeed in discouraging these encounters,’ and just debating and contesting the other sides opinions.

As I had said, I believe that human behavior directs actions of social bias and opinions rather than relying on the historical data. Following the *old ways* is just not *progressive* enough for societal evaluation, even though those *old ways* and *natures* own solutions, such as the *herd group* were historically effective in preventing predators from preying on livestock. Social bias discounts the effectiveness of the success, in order to advance the *progressive agenda* to leave the past behind. Once again I believe this to be *selective judgement*.



We as humans rely on vision to engage our perceptions, although predators also have sight, a greater sensory tool is their nose. Just as domestic dogs are used to track *scent* that has been left behind, wildlife can smell a threat well before they can visually see it. By placing an unsolvable riddle with an *unrecognizable scent* and routinely changing the *scent* we engage an instinctual response and that response is *fight or flight* and since there is nothing to *fight*, they move on. Effectively deterring presence.

These materials for these *scent deterrents* are easily acquired and economically affordable. They are easily found in any retail store that handles cleaning or laundry supplies. Often as you walk down the aisles within these businesses you can smell these products through their packaging. These *scents* in their concentrated form are a new and unusual *scent* when presented in nature.

These *manmade scents* that are designed to mask over *scents* that offend us, present a powerful and



unfamiliar occurrence. This unfamiliarity is the *scents* effectiveness in deterring the predators. It presents an uncomfortable sense of an unknown, which is *fear*.

When *fear* is engaged, its response becomes a reaction much like ourselves flinching or ducking in order to protect ourselves. Maybe if we practice not flinching, it's possible not to flinch, but that practice is in itself desensitizing. The fact is the flinch is an uncontrollable response because of the instinctual reaction. That instinctual reaction of the flinch is the same reaction to the *fear* that we seek as a response from the predators. By placing an unknown, our intention is that the deterrent will engage a flinch or rather an instinctual response.

The key to the *scents* effectiveness, is keeping its placement pure and not able to be associated with a naturally occurring *scent*. By not applying the scent to living wood or treated posts you keep the *scents* presentation pure and unfamiliar.

By placing the *scent* high enough to avoid physical contact you greatly reduce the risk of a *Predator* becoming aware what the scent is. It is important that we keep and present the mystery to the *predators* as an unsolvable riddle.

By changing the *scent* and its location every week to 10 days, you never allow the *predators* to become accustomed too, or comfortable with the scent, within the area you are trying to deter presence in. That new changing dynamic engages a reaction rather than an action. Presenting an unknown which then engages an instinctual response.