



# HIDE YOUR GOAT

First in a new series  
of eArticles from  
**Steve Gilliland, CSP, CPAE**

## Turning Negatives into Positives

This seven-part series is dedicated to everyone who has ever put up with a nosy neighbor, fickle friend, sneaky sibling, envious family member, scheming coworker, manipulative boss, conniving acquaintance, impolite employee, disrespectful adolescent, hypocritical Christian, dishonest subordinate and people who think the world revolves around them.

### INTRODUCTION

When someone says something or other "really gets my goat," they mean they are extremely irritated. A variety of things could contribute to that irritation, ranging from someone else's actions to a series of events. Despite the turn of phrase, however, actual goats are not usually involved. Like many colorful idioms in the English language, the origins of "get my goat" are murky. The first incidences of the phrase crop up around the early 1900s, a great era for colorful slang in America, reflecting the rapid expansion of settlement in the U.S. and the commingling of people from varied social, class and ethnic backgrounds. Some have suggested that "get my goat" may be related to "goad," as in "to prod" or "stick with a pointed end."

Regardless of its origin, "get my goat" resonates with all of us. Our daily lives intersect with a diverse group of people from different backgrounds, opinions and personalities. The fast-paced and stress-filled schedules we maintain open the gate and expose our goats to people and circumstances. As you read this series-entitled Hide Your Goat-I'll present ideas on how to herd your goat, lock your gate, identify people who hunt your goat, retrain your goat and provide nutritional (mental) advice on what to feed your goat.

Here's an example of someone getting my goat recently. It's a phone conversation I had with a potential client's receptionist:

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*Steve:* May I please talk with Angela?  
*Receptionist:* She's in a meeting.  
*Steve:* Yes, I know. She asked me to call her as soon as I could and give you my name. She said to tell whoever answered the phone to interrupt her in the meeting.  
*Receptionist:* Who are you?  
*Steve:* I am an author and speaker.  
*Receptionist:* Why do you need to talk with her?  
*Steve:* I'm not sure. She initiated the call and requested that I reach her as soon as possible. She said she would be in a meeting but requested that she be interrupted to talk with me.  
*Receptionist:* That's odd. I've never heard of you. Why would she need to talk with you?  
*Steve:* As I already stated, I am returning her call. I assume she has either read one of my books, has heard me speak or is inquiring about me speaking.  
*Receptionist:* How about I just put you through to her voicemail?  
*Steve:* Do you have an email address that I can forward you her email to me requesting that I call her and also stating that it was OK to interrupt her in a meeting?  
*Receptionist:* How will I know it was her original email and that you aren't just making it up to get to talk with her?  
*Steve:* Can I just leave a message with you and you can let her know I called?  
*Receptionist:* I would prefer you leave her a message on her voicemail.  
*Steve:* OK fine, please put me through to her voicemail.

The next noise I hear is the dial tone after being disconnected! By the time I got off the phone my goat was long gone!

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Some people have been put on this earth to push our buttons, thereby seizing control over us, but they can't get your goat if you don't tell them where it's tied up. And just where do you hide your goat? It all depends on what gets your particular goat - or, shall I say, pushes your buttons the wrong way.

Every day, you decide how you will respond to people and circumstances. You either have enough self-esteem to accept what life throws at you, or you feel the need to retaliate.

The mastery of life is the mastery of self. We all have our hot buttons that, when pushed, can cause us to emotionally detonate. However, people can only ruin your day (get your goat) if you give them permission. Allow yourself to acknowledge that emotions are attached to setbacks. I'm not suggesting you punch a hole in the wall or scream at the dog. A healthier alternative would be talking to someone who will act as your sounding board.

When you allow destructive emotions to consume your energy and make you negative, your goat is fully exposed and vulnerable. When you look backward, trying to right wrongs done to you, you become resentful, angry, hateful and bitter. You cede power to the uncaring perpetrator instead of moving your mind and energies forward.

Hit the Delete button on the resentment, jealousies and self-centeredness that consume you the moment someone tries to get your goat-and just let it go. This will free your mind to be receptive to any potentially more powerful messages and life-changing lessons that could emerge from the experience-and protect your goat from the elements.



*Up Next...*

### How to Herd Your Goats

*Part two of this series will reveal the framework to herding your goats and why it is so important to first identify what gets your goat. Until then, close the gate and don't let anyone in or out.*

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***"Following your presentation and the standing ovation, we heard comments like 'wonderful,' 'super,' 'tremendous,' 'outstanding' and, of course, 'why weren't there more people here to hear this!' You finished a program that many said was the best in our 14 years of doing 'A Day With MDRT.' Yes, I hope our paths cross again."***

**Stephen L. Hammer, CLU, ChFC, Program Chair, National Association of Insurance & Financial Advisors Minnesota, Hammer & Associates**

## Steve's Oct. 2012 Schedule

### OCTOBER 2012

1	Saratoga Springs, NY
4	Wisconsin Dells, WI
8	Long Beach, CA
10	Greensboro, NC
13	Greensboro, NC
15	Fort Worth, TX
16	Verona, WI
17	Columbus, OH
19	Memphis, TN
20	Nashville, TN
22	River Falls, WI
23	Ellsworth, WI
24	Louisville, KY
25	Baltimore, MD
25	Washington, DC
26	Woodbury, MN



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