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Too many times in life we expect others to do what we have never done, follow us to where we have never been and without reason, believe in us even when our actions don't match our own beliefs. It becomes problematic when our actions, which create our outcomes, are determined by speculation, assumptions, misconceptions and numerous other thought patterns not based on the facts or reality of a given situation. As a child, our thinking is primarily influenced by our parents and the people we spend the most time around. Insecure adults have a tendency to create insecure children. Show me a mother who is a drama queen and I'll show you a child who grows up embracing the role of a victim.

While people and circumstances may get your goat, knowing **how** and **why** that happens will best help you to hide it. Later in this series we will examine more regarding the **who** - or, as I will refer to them, **The Goat Hunters**. But for the purpose of this article, let's figure out how to find and herd your goats by determining the how and why.

The problem with herding our goats is where do we look for them? For some of us, someone or something may have gotten our goat earlier in life and we have never found it. When our goats jump the fence and we can't find them, that affects us for the rest of our lives. Instead of having closure and resolving our feelings, we harbor resentment and become susceptible to having someone or something else find our goat. Our past is a powerful dictator of our future, and unless we determine why we feel the

way we do, we are destined to allow certain things to always get our goat.

As a young child, I watched my father favor my older brother. As a young adult, I witnessed his approval of my brother and felt his disappointment in me. I did everything possible to win his approval. While my brother's birthday cards were signed "Love, Dad," mine were signed with merely his first name. By the time my 40th birthday rolled around, I was still seeking the approval of my father, family and friends. Only when I found my goat and herded my feelings did I understand I didn't need the approval of others. I stopped wasting time and energy on things beyond my control. The hardest thing we do most days is to let go of our past, which has a few of our goats roaming around.

Have you ever watched a person you don't really know do something that bothers you so much it affects your attitude? Why is that? Why does their clothing, earrings, hair or fingernail color get your goat?

A few years ago, a young gentleman sat beside me on a flight from Amarillo, Texas to Dallas. I couldn't help but notice the vast array of tattoos covering his arms, neck and hands. What I noticed more than that, however, were the passengers across the aisle who looked absolutely appalled by his appearance.

After I introduced myself, he smiled, shook my hand and told me his name. When I told him I was from North Carolina he said, "Great state. I got my MBA at Duke University." We chatted throughout the flight, and when we landed, he said, "Thanks." "For what?" I asked. "You are probably the first person I have sat beside in the last three months that has even acknowledged me without thinking I was a thug," he said.

The good news for me here was that several years prior to this encounter I had found one of my goats and herded it: labeling is disabling, and the stereotypes and stigma attached to certain people is not only unfair to them, but an extremely unhealthy way for me to think.

I now believe that if I can change the way you think I will change your world forever. Good people listen, learn and edify people. Average people talk about themselves. Small people talk about others. You need only look at a person's Facebook page to see how he or she thinks. Good people post pictures and information that is positive and intended to allow REAL

friends and family to keep up with their IMPORTANT events and the growth of their children. Average people post information intended to inflate their egos and make themselves, their children and their lives appear to be something they are really not. Small people post negative things about others, solicit responses to situations that should be handled privately and post quotes to underhandedly make a point. They thrive on the responses that make them "feel" better as a person, which, unfortunately, doesn't make them a better person. If anything, they are viewed by the majority of good thinking people for who they really are: insecure, negative people filled with anger and unresolved issues.

Herding your goats is critical to hiding them. Yes, we will always be vulnerable to people and circumstances getting our goats; however, we can build a stronger fence around them once we find them. Being honest with ourselves and resolving issues in our own lives will give us the strength we need. The mastery of life is the mastery of self. Unfortunately, many people never master themselves, stranding their goats outside the fence where others can get at them.

Make a list of what and who gets your goat, then ask *how* and *why*? What is it about YOU that adds to the negativity of the situation? Once you determine your contributions, figure out what you need to do in order to change the way you think. My unresolved feelings about my father led me down a path of thinking that produced behaviors detrimental to certain situations. Instead of being who I really was, years ago I would do almost anything to be accepted. By seeking the approval of others, I would act in ways that were all about the people I was trying to impress. Once I finally looked in the mirror and saw what I liked, I stopped wanting to be the person I thought others wanted me to be. I herded my goat named Seeking the Approval of Others and fenced it in so no one could ever get it again.

The dilemma is that sometimes when you herd one of your goats, another one slips out-kind of



*Up Next...*

## **The Goat Hunters**

*Part three of this series will expose the people who live their lives immersed in negativity and aren't happy until they find your goat. You'll discover "why" they hunt, "who" they target and "how" you can protect yourself against them. Until then, keep herding!*

like the guys who butt in line ahead of me when we're boarding a flight. Oh, but wait, I think I can grab this goat, too, and put it back behind my fence. You see, that kind of aggressive behavior annoyed me until I realized I used to do the very same thing to make sure my carry-on luggage would fit in the overhead bin above my seat. I was fine once I took a chill pill and realized that even if my carry-on wasn't stored above me I'd still make it to my destination. Plus, the people who'd see those guys butt in front of me often hand my luggage forward to me as a way of saying, "We got your back!"

So before you can hide your goat, find it! Once you find it, figure out why and how you lost it, not who took it. The why and the how will allow you to begin Herding Your Goats!

# # #

***"What can I say? You brought down the house! Really? A standing ovation? We have booked many motivational speakers for the AIEC's Annual Meeting, but I must say that you were by far the best we've had. Your ability to make people laugh when they should and think when they should made the presentation a home run for both content and entertainment. I heard MANY compliments on the program, the bulk of which indicated that you were the highlight of the entire meeting. Now, the problem is how we top this next year."***

**Nancy Rhoads Nixon, Marketing Administrator  
Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives**

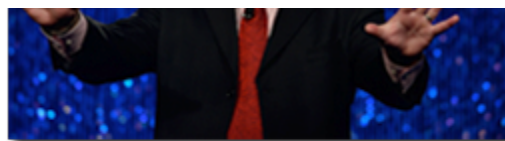
## Steve's Oct. 2012 Schedule

### 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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