



## **Adding Value to Others**

As another year draws to a conclusion, it's time to admit that I occasionally "surf" on YouTube. However, my surfing is restricted to one theme. As I am the one writing this article, I will take the courageous stance to admit to all within my reach that I am guilty of watching funny animal videos.

No matter how rushed I might be to meet a deadline, I occasionally take time to stop and watch these entertaining videos. Just this morning, I saw a funny one of a Great Pyrenees Guardian Dog with Alpine Goats who were using him as a jungle gym. The 130-pound dog was pretty tolerant of the newborn goats, which could not have weighed more than 15 pounds each.

What is it about these videos that causes us to stop, relax and watch? I think I

have a few answers that might help all of us to navigate life's curves and make us a little stronger.

## **Acceptance**

The other day, I watched a neat video of an orphaned baby squirrel cuddling with not one, but two Bernese Mountain dogs. The squirrel was in the middle of these two "monsters" as they were licking its baby squirrel fur. Though the video was cute in and of itself, I wondered why it made me feel so good to watch it. Then it hit me.

The dogs saw a helpless baby, and they needed to protect and nurture it. I am sure they realized it was a different species. I am sure they wondered at how it moved so differently, ate little nuts and grains instead of dog food, and how it could climb and balance on ledges and shelves. They accepted the baby on face value. There were no value judgments. We are living in an age where there seems to be a lot of judgment and unkindness. The video made me appreciate that it doesn't have to be that way. We really can be friends if we put aside our differences and celebrate our goodness.

## **Happiness**

Sheepdogs are pretty darn intelligent. Anyone who has ever known one will attest to that. The other day my wife shared with me a video of a sheepdog pulling a sled up a slippery, snow-covered hill. The sheepdog worked at it. When he got to the top, he sat in the sled and rode it back down, barking all the way. Why did he do this? He was happy! The dog repeated the ride several times -- the first trip wasn't a fluke (or any other kind of animal). The dog was ecstatic at the moment. And I thought, why do so many of us make life so hard? Why are we unable to enjoy the simple things in life? Why don't we teach those who matter so much to us that laughter is the best medicine?

## **Gratitude**

What touches me deeply are the videos of animals who have been abused and

how they bonded with those who nursed them back to health. However, it is not always that simple an interaction. Some time ago I saw a video of a bear cub that had been swept away in a river, much to the dismay of its mother. A fisherman rescued the cub, and the mother came by to thank him! We all can protect a life. It needn't be dramatic, and it can be as simple as tutoring a child, helping an elderly or infirm person or volunteering in a nursing home or hospital. Be gracious, and you will be replenished with gratitude.

## Love

I think the reason I only surf and watch animal videos is that I like to experience love at its most basic purity. I had viewed videos of rescued condors and owls “hugging” their human rescuers, of gorillas, lions and tigers released into the wild remembering the humans who cared for them when they were orphaned babies. All of these unusual connections are hard to make sense of, except within the context of love.

I suppose I will keep watching animal videos into the New Year if, for no other reason, they will remind me that you add value to your life by adding value to others.

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*“The takeaways from that presentation impacted my world both personally and*

*professionally. We very much appreciate you doing something 'a little different' with our group and making a difference in their lives, with the goal of them paying it forward."*

**Jodie Sinclair, COO, Vice President, MIST**

*"Our convention attendees gave you high marks. They have come to expect good value for the time and money they spend to attend the convention, and your presentation certainly supported that. You helped make what I think was already a good program lineup a great program lineup."*

**Gary Langston, IMTA**

*"Simply put, the 90 minutes in which you spoke were not only captivating but absolutely hilarious! In between your interactions with the crowd, I do not believe that you could hear a sound throughout the room. Every single person was not only engaged, but all eyes were locked on you. We cannot thank you enough for making our event one of the most memorable of all time for our attendees. We would love to recommend you to any organization looking for a dynamic, powerful speaker that will not only warm their hearts and inspire their minds but also fill the room with laughter!"*

**Judy Rang, Pennsylvania SHRM State Council Director**

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## LOOKING AHEAD...

### Steve's January 2019 Schedule

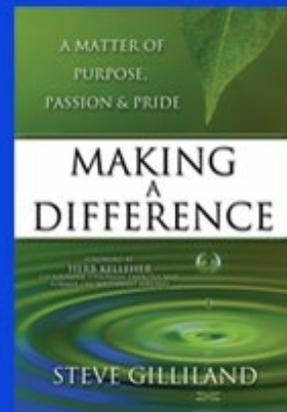
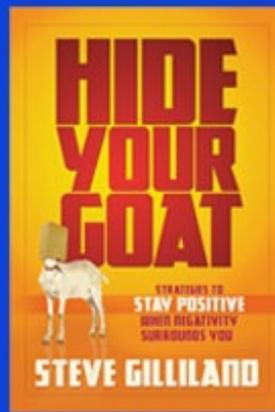
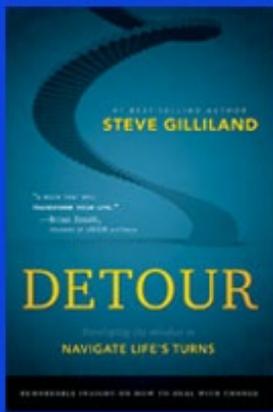
9 - Columbus, OH  
11 - Mt. Pleasant, MI  
11 - Midland, MI  
14 - Greenville, SC  
16 - Greensboro, NC  
19 - Rancho Palos Verdes, CA  
24 - Lubbock, TX  
26 - Yelm, WA  
29 - Owatonna, MN  
30 - Battle Creek, MI

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