

The PACKARD PRESS

A collection of thoughts and stories to educate, entertain and inspire.



'CAMPING' GONE WRONG

How I Survived a Near-Death Experience

Sixteen summers ago, I took a camping trip that almost snuffed the life out of me.

It all started when my buddy, Art, asked if my wife and I would like to camp in Utah's Bryce Canyon National Park with him, his wife, and their baby. We agreed and bundled up our own little baby, 6-month-old Ella, for one of her first outdoor adventures.

I imagined the six of us enjoying a relaxing weekend doing fun things at the campsite. We'd build a campfire, admire the beautiful red rock spires, and make a few s'mores under a big blanket of twinkling Utah stars. I even brought card games. That night, I crawled into my sleeping bag expecting a long night's rest.

But Art had other plans. He shook my tent at the crack of dawn to wake me up.

"Rise and shine, Michael," he said. "It's time to go hiking! I brought all of the equipment we'll need."

Groggy and confused, I shook my sleep-addled head. "Hiking? Equipment? Aren't we staying here? What about breakfast?"

Apparently, Art and I had very different ideas of what it meant to go "camping." He hadn't just planned an easy day hike. He had ropes, harnesses, helmets, and carabiners — everything needed for a full day of canyoneering! We were going to meet up with one of Art's hiking buddies, who I'll call Jim.

Now, if you've never heard of canyoneering before, I can't blame you — neither had I. The National Park Service describes it as "an outdoor activity that combines route finding,

rappelling, problem-solving, swimming, and hiking" — and that's just about right.

Within the hour, I found myself harnessed to a doubled-up rope the width of a magic marker, walking backwards down a 30-foot cliff. It was the first of many such cliffs at the bottom of the canyon. Canyoneering is basically hiking down a nearly dry riverbed at the bottom of a canyon. When it rains, the river flows down the mountain like a giant staircase with 10-15 small waterfalls along the way. These waterfalls carved pools into the stone at their base, which stayed full of water, even when the riverbed was dry. At the bottom of each "step," Art, Jim, and I dropped down into a pool of water before hiking to the next drop off.

I won't lie — it was a little scary! I broke out into a nervous sweat at the beginning, and I was particularly worried about my hands. (The one piece of equipment Art hadn't thought to pack was an extra set of gloves for me.) Still, I did pretty well handling the rope bare-handed.

By the third or fourth drop, my fear had disappeared. Once I got the hang of it, I caught myself thinking, "Hey, this is actually pretty fun!" I admired the picturesque views from the slot canyon, enjoyed the cool water splashing across my legs, and imagined how impressed AmyLyn would be when she and Art's wife met us in the car at the bottom.

Then, halfway through the staircase, Art dropped a bomb.

"Oh, by the way," he said, "there's a large drop off at the end, over 100 feet. Our rope won't be long enough, so we'll have to undouble it and maybe tie a few together."

A few hours later I peered over the final drop and realized that it wasn't just a sheer cliff face like the others. It was concave, which meant I'd have to dangle from the rope without anywhere to put my feet. Worse, the undoubled rope was only about the width of a vacuum cleaner cord — too thin to provide much friction if I had to "apply the brakes" during my decent.

Jim went first. He touched down smoothly and stood at the bottom with the end of the rope coiled at his feet so that he could break the fall of the next person if needed. I took a

deep breath and dropped over the side. The way that the harness works isn't intuitive. The rope runs through it in a way that lets friction slow you down as you descend. But the "brakes" only work if there is tension in the rope from below. So, your "braking" hand is behind you, slowly letting the rope through.

Everything went okay for about 20 feet. At that moment, my tired, sweaty, ungloved "braking" hand started to slip on the rope. I squeezed as tight as I could, but it was no use. The rope zipped through my clenched fist faster and faster as I began to accelerate down. I grabbed tightly with both hands, but it felt like my fingers were being held to a hot stove. My hands couldn't withstand the burning anymore! I finally let go and screamed as I started to free fall.

Jim should have saved me. All he had to do was pull on the rope! But he wasn't paying attention until he heard me screaming. He looked up and saw me flailing through the air, legs kicking and arms waving. At the last second, he snatched up his end of the rope and yanked — BOOM! I smashed into him and knocked us both into the stream.

I can still remember how I felt lying face down in the cold water. After a few dazed minutes, my first thought was, "This water is cold. That means I'm not dead!" Icy wetness trickled into my mouth. Then I realized Art was screaming my name. "Michael! MICHAEL!"

Next to me, Jim was flat on his back and groaning like a downed animal. I wiggled my fingers and toes, then yelled back up to Art. Somehow, we were all okay! Jim and I felt like we had been tackled by a big linebacker and I had second-degree rope burns on my hands, but we were okay!

It has been 16 years since that near-death experience, and Art has never invited me "camping" again. And since then, I've limited my overnight adventures to more relaxed activities. (And I plan to keep it that way!) If you're going camping this summer with someone as adventurous as Art, consider packing extra gloves and thick rope — just in case.

-Michael Packard

BREAKING THE BUSY-BORED CYCLE

3 Strategies You Can Use Right Now

It's a common problem: People spend most of their days feeling too busy, only to feel bored during their free time. So how can you break the habit of scrolling through your phone and watching TV and make the most of the little time you have for yourself? Let's talk about ways to break the cycle of boredom and busyness thus creating a more fulfilling life.

1. Plan ahead.

Schedule your days and weeks for an even workload to ensure your day doesn't have huge gaps or work overflow. For example, if you have a large project, you can divide it into smaller tasks to keep yourself busy, yet not overwhelmed, throughout the week. You can also plan fun activities each day. This will help fight boredom and give you something to look forward to when you're at work or while completing daily tasks.

2. Prioritize tasks.

If you have trouble managing projects to the point where you feel you don't have enough time, begin prioritizing specific tasks. It's essential to complete the highest priority tasks so you won't be up late in the day trying to finish something important. If you plan ahead, you can number your tasks from most important to least. This will help ensure high-priority tasks are completed on schedule.

3. Be curious.

One way to mute boredom and implement more creativity is by setting daily learning goals. These goals can be anything you want! Setting small goals and accomplishments will keep you curious, motivated, and focused. They also give you something to look forward to each day. Ask yourself what you want to learn today. Do you want to learn about a new culture? A language? If there is something you've always wanted to know, now is the time to put your thinking cap on!

Boredom and busyness derive from the same source — there is a lack of quality in how you focus your attention. Luckily, the same strategies apply to both boredom and busyness. These tips will help you create a balanced mindset and allow you to push through your day without feeling overwhelmed or uninspired.



WE BEAT A STUBBORN INSURANCE COMPANY

And Secured Joe a Settlement!

Last winter, Joe Merlo braved the roads of San Antonio during Winter Storm Uri. He worried about the driving conditions, but the weather turned out to be the least of his problems. In the middle of his trip, another car appeared through the snow and slammed into his vehicle. Joe felt his tailbone snap.



Incredibly, the broken tailbone wasn't the worst outcome of the wreck. True fear hit

when Joe discovered that the other driver didn't have insurance. Fortunately, his mother knew who could help: our team at Packard Law. Brent Packard quickly took Joe's case.

"The insurance company tried to not take any blame for anything regarding the accident," Joe recalls. "They insisted there was nothing they could do, even though all of my medical expenses started to pile up. But Brent and his team didn't back down. They continued to push forward and work with the insurance companies to let them know, 'Hey, this is not right.'"

Joe's injuries were extensive. He needed to take time off from his job as a loan officer and put his hiking hobby on hold. Each day became a long slog of specialist visits and therapy.

"I just had to stay positive knowing I had the right people working for me, and they were doing everything they could to get things done as quickly as possible — and also the right way," Joe says. His positivity paid off! We finalized Joe's case outside of court and made sure he got a fair settlement.

"I went over the final numbers, and at the end of the day, what I took home as my payout was more than what I paid the lawyer. That was surprising and gave me even greater peace of mind and comfort in knowing I selected the right team to handle my case!" Joe says.



Joe appreciated our team's honesty and communication so much that when his niece and brother got injured in separate wrecks, he quickly sent them our way for help.

"I trust [Packard]," Joe explained. "They offer an amazing service through and through."

Joe, if you're reading this, thank you for the kind words! It has been our pleasure to help you and your family. If anyone else you know needs a good lawyer, we'll be here.

HOW TO LET GO OF YOUR ANGER AND RESENTMENT

Michael's Tip for Finding Forgiveness

A while back, we represented a client who was badly injured in a car wreck. She mostly recovered from her injuries, but her lingering back pain would forever limit her physical activities. Especially the one thing she really enjoyed — Latin dancing.

A life changing experience like this can bring on intense anger and crushing grief for the victim. Other emotional weight can include resentment, hatred, and even a craving for retribution. These emotional wounds can fester and create more havoc.

Here's the truth: If you were hurt in a car crash, the hardest part of your recovery might not be purely physical. For you to fully heal, you will need to find forgiveness in your heart — for the person who caused your pain. Letting go of these feelings is tough, but not impossible. We highly encourage you to try it.

"I'm not a priest or a pastor, but I am a counselor at law, and my counsel is to let go of those burdens," Michael Packard advises. Michael himself has used the four-step approach to forgive others for years.

Step 1: Recognize that you are likely demonizing the person who hurt you. We tend to do this in order to justify our own negative feelings towards another person.

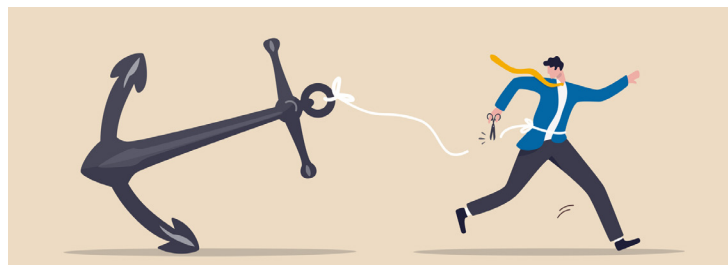
Step 2: Reflect on a time when someone (anyone!) extended you kindness, love, or mercy — especially when you didn't deserve it. This will help get you in the right mindset.

Step 3: Think about the person who wronged you, and ask yourself these questions: "What trials, pains or burdens is this person going through?" "Is there anything I have done, intentionally or not, that has made this person's life more difficult or painful?" And "What is something I can do for this person that will make their life better, even in a small way?" It can be as small as saying a prayer, offering a helping hand, or even sharing a smile.

Step 4: Do that thing!

"This will help you move closer to forgiveness, and in the meantime, you'll start seeing the person as a human being, and not a demon or a monster," Michael says.

You can use these steps to let go of your anger after a car wreck or to forgive others, even family members or friends who have hurt you. The options for empathy are endless! Try it out: Every time you do, your heart will get lighter.



TAKE A BREAK



Adventure	Heat	Relaxation
Dogs	Marshmallow	Sandwich
Friendship	Motorcycle	Swimming
Gladiolus	Muggy	Vacation

TASTY BRUSCHETTA CHICKEN



Inspired by Delish.com

Ingredients

- 4 boneless and skinless chicken breasts, pounded to even thickness
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp lemon juice, divided
- 1/4 tsp pepper
- 1 tsp Italian seasoning
- 3 tomatoes, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp fresh basil, chopped
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 4 slices mozzarella cheese
- Parmesan cheese, grated

Directions

1. Add chicken to a large resealable bag.
2. In a small bowl, combine olive oil, 1 tbsp lemon juice, pepper, and Italian seasoning. Pour over chicken and seal. Refrigerate for 30 minutes.
3. Turn a grill to medium-high heat and add the chicken. Discard the marinade. Grill chicken 5–7 minutes per side or until fully cooked.
4. Combine the remaining lemon juice, tomatoes, garlic, and basil. Add salt and pepper, to taste.
5. Before taking the chicken off the grill, top each breast with a slice of mozzarella cheese. Cover and cook 2–3 minutes, then serve topped with the tomato mixture and grated Parmesan cheese.

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HELPING BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER

One Lawn at a Time

Today, there is a divide between younger and older generations, but one man is trying to bridge that gap by encouraging boys and girls to give back to their community.

In 2016, Rodney A. Smith Jr. saw an elderly man struggling to mow his lawn and decided to finish the job for him. It inspired him to start a movement for children aged 7-17 to give back to their communities by taking on the 50-yard challenge. Kids contribute by mowing lawns for single parents, veterans, seniors, and people who have disabilities. Once they reach their goal, kids will receive T-shirts, a brand-new mower, a weed eater, and a leaf blower. Smith Jr. will also come out to your community and help you with your lawn care services.

At first, the 50-yard challenge took place locally in Alabama. But in the last few years, kids across the U.S. have begun participating. "Right now, we have over 2,400 kids nationwide taking part in our challenge. We also have kids in eight other countries taking part as well," Smith Jr. says.

This challenge teaches children the value of giving back to their communities, but it also encourages them to learn skills in lawn service — which not a lot of young adults know how to do. It also helps them interact with others who they wouldn't typically talk with. "[Unity and interaction] is important in this day and age. A lot of elderly people are stuck at home, and they don't get to have a lot of



human interaction. So when kids come by, they can talk, get to know each other, and build relationships. They can learn things from each other," Smith Jr. says.

Are you and your kids up for the 50-yard challenge? Send a picture of your child holding a sign that says, "I Accept The 50 Yard Challenge" to WeAreRaisingMen.com/**The-50-Yard-Challenge** to join. If you're looking for someone to tend to your yard, you can use the form on WeAreRaisingMen.com/**Find-A-Mower** to search for kids who are mowing lawns in your area.