



Cranbrook Deer, Judgements, Perceptions and Pathways; David B. Savage June 2010

In this Negotiator's Notebook, we look at a very personal situation; look at our perception of what happened and where different people go with it.

In our lives and with our experience, we form opinions, judgements based on our perceptions. In evolution a fast read and react can be the difference between life and death. In our lives, this can also limit our ability to see, understand and move forward with the impact and purpose we would wish.

Not knowing, curiosity, empathy and a view to future possibilities may permit us to create greater outcomes in our negotiations, conflicts and activities.

My challenge in this notebook is for you to "notice" what comes up, move from reactivity and judgement to curiosity and the impact you wish to have. This alone will transform your negotiations, communications and life.

A) YouTube video

- 1) Warning; this turns from cute to violent quickly
- 2) Look at this video before you read on
- 3) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ADGn1GABF0Q>
- 4) What is your reaction?

B) What Happened

- 1) Star, the border collie in the video, is my partner's dog. Star is almost 15 years old, is pretty much blind, is very well trained and behaved and 3 years ago was hit by a truck which resulted in broken hips and jaw and the loss of an eye. Star is a threat to no one.
- 2) My partner took Star for a short walk the evening of June 9th. As they turned a residential corner, a Doe charged both of them. Lise knows wildlife and has had encounters with grizzlies in the wild. She did not expect this encounter on a calm evening a block from home.
- 3) Without any other protection for Star, she screamed and waved her arms all in an effort to get the deer to stop the violent attack.
- 4) After several minutes, Star got away from the attack. Lise found him 3 blocks away and brought him home. We called the vet., called the conservation officer worried about the danger for others, stayed with Star all night to settle him and watch for internal bleeding or broken ribs.

- 5) Paul, the conservation officer, told us he would go check it out in the morning and he was very concerned about the number of violent attacks between humans and dogs and second and third generation deer in our city.
- 6) We met with our mayor and friend Scott who expressed frustration that this growing danger was not being dealt with because of the polarization of opinion in our city and province. Scott offered to discuss this with those others in authority to look for a solution.
- 7) A week later, we are told about the YouTube video. The couple that took the video and posted it found that comments were ugly and hostile so they deleted the parts of the video that showed my partner and the folks that tried to help. They also blocked comments.
- 8) Is our entire world about to be on YouTube? Are we such voyeurs? What does this serve? In this case it also serves to bring the interface between wildlife and humans and sometimes violent consequences to the fore. And serves this notebook on perceptions.
- 9) My perception is that the doe was simply protecting its new born fawn from what it associated with a predator, Star was simply going for a short walk, Lise everything she could to stop the attack and then take very good care of Star.
- 10) Why would the couple taking the video choose to keep taping and only start yelling when their cat was being attacked?

C) Reaction

- 1) In the two weeks since the "cute to violent" event;
- 2) Star is OK. He is an incredible dog.
- 3) While the attack was violent and went on far longer than the edited video shows, we believe if the deer wanted to kill Star, she would have.
- 4) The original video has "gone viral" and has now been viewed over 1,000,000 times.
- 5) The couple that posted the video has been accused of being "YouTube Nazis" for not allowing comments.
- 6) Several have copied the video and reposted it for comment. The comments are in the hundreds ranging from;
 - a) Kill the F**king deer.
 - b) The bitch should have a leash on the dog.
 - c) Stop screaming, put the g*d damn camera down and help the dog.
 - d) This dog due to the way it's trained didn't have the instinct to run away when a larger animal chased him...However all cats are born agile and hence it responded quickly.
 - e) I'm not gonna shout like the bitch in this vid, I would have attacked the deer and if it didn't get away in time then it would have died.
 - f) We don't know what the deer was thinking because it's not human. It doesn't say, "I feel like kicking this dog's ass". It is in a scary, unknown terrain because humans continuously encroach on their habitats. It's afraid. It attacked. End of story.

g) This tops all videos on the funniest shit I've ever seen.

- 7) Barry Coulter writes in our local paper: "It is birthing season for Cranbrook's urban deer herd, and as is their wont, the wild deer are wandering here and there throughout town, wherever they want - undisturbed and unregulated. We will here not get into the politics of deer, but consider: A fawn, temporarily separated from its mother, is huddled in your backyard. Though you are out gardening, you haven't noticed the fawn in the other corner. Your three-year-old child wanders over to investigate. The mother returns ..."
- 8) Now news media from across North America are interested in the story.
- 9) The video without editing was shown on Inside Edition.
- 10) A woman in California wants to start a fund to pay for Star's vet bills.
- 11) Some have wondered out loud to us: How can we make money from this?
- 12) People in this area are expressing real concern for Star and Lise. Strangers are approaching to talk. Some are enjoying the celebrity of association with Star.
- 13) People who are not in the area and know nothing of the situation other than the 2 minute version on YouTube are fast to judge and are generally hostile (whether their target is the doe, Star, or the people whose voices are heard). Think about that affect.
- 14) We choose not to get into a public debate on right or wrong or the hostility expressed through YouTube. If pushed, Lise may speak about the conflict of wildlife and humans in cities and call for a proper debate that values nature, safety and respect.
- 15) Deer and humans are not a good combination whether it is your child, your dog, you garden or your trees.
- 16) PS another different perception, over a year ago while coaching a great client in New York, she told me she was blessed with seeing a deer on the road side that morning and took it as a good omen. My internal voice said: And I look outside and watch 7 deer eating our garden. I better find some way of keeping these deer out of our garden. When I approach them, yell and waive my arms, they now stand in challenge to me until I throw small stones at their butts. They then wander onto the street and ...

D) A "Difficult Conversation"

- 1) Use this horrific incident in the frame of the book "Difficult Conversations". For you, what was the;
 - a) What Happened Conversation
 - i. See above for any number of versions
 - b) Feelings Conversation
 - i. Range from love, horror, anger, blame, empathy, fear, ...
 - c) Identity Conversation
 - i. Why wasn't I there, why didn't I....?
 - d) Learning Conversation
 - i. This is where we can go to address this growing problem across the world on a topic that itself evokes judgements, believes, values, conflict,

division... to a place of respect, safety, protection of wildlife,
community, leadership...

E) What do you choose and where may that take you?

- 1) Kill the doe
- 2) Blame the woman
- 3) Feel badly for the dog
- 4) This is funny
- 5) Or.....?

F) Challenge

My challenge in this notebook is for you to “notice” what comes up, move from reactivity and judgement to curiosity and the impact you wish to have. This alone will transform your negotiations, communications, leadership and life.

And here is a better view of Star.

