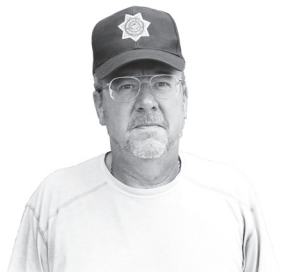


DOGS HAVE A SIXTH SENSE



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

Everyone has a little person, like a mini-me, that sits on your shoulder and barks advice into your ear. This little annoyance tells you things like, don't have that second donut or you better gas up the truck before heading out fishing.

I always thought it was my wife of many years, but this voice comes from your inner self and learning to listen to it can save your life. Everyone has an inherent gift of their gut instinct. By learning to recognize various warning signs and precursors to danger, it becomes possible to avoid potential danger and harm.

We all had that one guy we met, who just raised the hackles on your neck. You know something is just dark around this person. Still, you choose to get involved with this person, business or social, ignoring that little voice from your gut.

Six months later, this guy steals money from the company checking account and splits town. You remember that little gut feeling you had and ignored? Learning to lis-

ten to that warning could have prevented you ever becoming involved with this thief and thereby, avoiding all the trouble.

Gavin De Becker wrote a book in 1997 called *The Gift of Fear*. This book should be required reading for all members of law enforcement, security, personal protection, and any outdoor person who wants to sharpen their survival instincts and harness the useful warnings from your gut.

I have written in the past about using that "gut instinct" while on the trail outdoors. When your gut tells you things like, don't take that short-cut, stick to the trail, or the weather looks sketchy, better head in early, it is probably a good idea to listen and react accordingly. In my experience, my gut reaction has never been wrong.

People who are dog lovers, will all tell you about a dog who loves everybody. Everybody that is, except that "one guy." That guy was greeted with growls, snarls, or just plain avoided by the dog. Again, months later you find out the guy has a part-time job holding up 7-11 stores. Should have listened to the dog.

Dogs have different ways of reacting to potential danger, or something they sense. When around a good person, a dog may run up to the person, wag their tail, jump up and lick the person's face, and generally seems to be excited.

When the same dog is around the bad guy, he may back away, have its tail tucked and ears

pinned down. The dog may whine and be afraid to go anywhere near this person. In severe cases, the dog may show teeth, growl, and sometimes snap. The timid dog will usually run away and hide.

Gavin De Becker, in his book, states that the dog does not possess the intelligence or ability to determine a "good" person from a "bad" person. He believes the dog is simply sensing fear from the person he knows best in the world, you, and reacting accordingly.

Recently, several studies have shown that dogs take note of people who are unkind in any way to their owner and will hold a grudge against them. One study was published in *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews*. This study revealed that dogs wouldn't take a treat from someone who refused to help their owner with tasks.

The researchers either helped the dog owner, stood by passively or flat out refused to help altogether. Then, all the researchers offered the dogs a treat. The dogs were much more likely to take a treat from the helpful and passive researchers but ignored the ones who refused to help. The researcher who refused to help showed no ill will towards the dog whatsoever.

Another recent study has shown that dogs can smell chemical changes in people's pheromones that indicate they have bad intentions, therefore

signaling the dog that they are a bad guy.

A person's brain chemistry changes when they are angry, and dogs can smell that change, which signals them to see this person as a threat. Other emotional changes are detected by dogs, such as grief and sadness.

These studies really don't contradict what De Becker has claimed about dogs only sensing their owners fear, but they build on it. Dogs have an intuitive characteristic that we are only beginning to realize.

One exception to these experiments with dogs and their behavior appears to be actual psychopaths. A true psychopath does not experience or display many emotions. Any changes in their brain chemistry are rare and not sensed by dogs. Might explain why real psychos, like Ted Bundy, go undetected for so long, and people do not see the craziness until it is too late.

If we can learn to listen to our own gut instincts, it will serve us well in everything we do. Add to that, learning to tap into our dogs' instincts, and trusting them, we may become better served to prevent getting into dangerous situations in the first place.

Imaging your dog giving off warning signs because it senses a wild animal ahead that may be rabid or have distemper. A person you encounter on the trail, who you see as "just another hiker" may trigger your dog's sense of



These two guys are the screening committee at our house. Any troublemakers best be forewarned, as they are tough to fool. (Courtesy photo)

bad vibes, and you would be well served to pay attention to the dog and perhaps avoid this hiker altogether.

Around our house, we have Jack Russel Terriers, who are well known for their intelligence and strong instinct. When there is a strange noise, or a unknown person around, they head into combat mode, warning me of the imminent danger. Usually, it is just the mailman, but the dogs mean well.

With this new knowledge about dogs being a good judge of character, or the lack thereof, any newcomers to our house will have to be screened by my Jacks. Unless they

are a psychopath, my dogs will weed him out.

Mark Rackay is a columnist for the *Montrose Daily Press*, *Delta County Independent*, and several other newspapers, as well as a feature writer for *The Nautical Mile*, and several other saltwater fishing magazines. He is an avid hunter and world class saltwater angler, who travels around the world in search of adventure and serves as a Director and Public Information Officer for the *Montrose County Sheriff's Posse*. Personal email is elkhunter77@icloud.com For information about the *Posse* call 970-765-7033 (leave a message) or email info@mcspi.org

San Miguel commissioners consider road reroute or closure for sage-grouse habitat

By SOPHIE STUBER
TELLURIDE DAILY PLANET

The San Miguel Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) held a work session on Feb. 12, which included the quarterly update from BLM Tres Rios Field Manager Derek Padilla. The updates included plans for San Miguel County Road U29, which goes through potential Gunnison sage-grouse breeding ground, updates on current mining permits and San Miguel County's draft mining regulations.

The county is considering either seasonal closure or a reroute of County Road U29 on BLM land. The current road travels over Gunnison sage-grouse breeding ground, known as a lek, where male sage-grouse instigate

dance and song displays to try to seduce a mate. There is not an existing bird population in the area, but it is a potential future habitat.

"Currently, there are no sage grouse in the area, although we do hope that they will come back with the efforts that are being undertaken," commissioner Anne Brown said.

During a BOCC meeting in January, Starr Jamison, San Miguel County natural resources and climate resilience director, proposed closing U29 seasonally instead of a reroute. Since it is a county road, San Miguel County could close the road during the mating season for Gunnison sage-grouse, which goes from March 1 to July 15.

See ROAD page B4



Big Gypsum Valley, the site of the Sunday Mine, which will start hauling material by March 1 to meet their contract with the mills. (Photo/Jeffrey Beall)



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