

The Anatomy Of Fire

Chapter 1: **Forward**

Journeys

Sparking A New Spirit Of Enterprise

Chaplet 1.1

By Tom Brown

- *If you can speak what you will never hear,
if you can write what you will never read,
you have done rare things.*

— **Philosopher and Social Commentator**
Henry David Thoreau
(1817 - 1862)



Every family, when it travels afar together, travels differently. My parents were, by their own confession, poor at anything approaching a journey for pleasure. At home, we were happy people. But no matter what destination we set at the start, I recall that we always returned earlier than planned, usually with one or more family members steaming. There is nothing in my childhood memory banks about vacationing with my family, travelling to curious and exciting new horizons, and coming back satisfyingly recharged, invigorated both by new sights and new insights.

So it is with trembling respect for how difficult journeys can be that I propose to start a unique one with you. For what else is a new book but a journey? Every author takes half a trip when he writes a book; it takes a responsive reader to complete the trip. And, as with my parents' travels, much can go wrong in any literary journey. Beyond the normal

book adventure, the as-yet-undefined genre now called an "e-book" seems to hold its own unique complexities and complications. The normal book, at least, doesn't have to fret about different browsers, computer screen sizes, and modem speeds.

Which is a healthy part of the reason I considered it absurd to place either an author's preface or a mentor's "Foreword" in this spot. My sense is that such "front matter" is traditionally appended after a book has been written, so that either the author or friend can look at the completed manuscript as an organic whole and then write with gusto about what the reader can expect to encounter. The charter of an e-book (and the spirit of the Internet) preclude such tidiness at journey's start; the Foreword will have to wait till the end.

The gusto to be found in an e-book journey is that both the reader *and the author* can only guess what's to come. For an e-book, to be true to the unique medium that spawned it, cannot be a book that has been fully written and edited in advance (in which case the word "bound" does seem appropriate, doesn't it?) and then parceled into just the right quantity of kilobytes so that nothing and no one sags during the online journey.

In distinct contrast to the traditional tome, an e-book wears its "e" in at least three ways:

It evolves.

The e-book author must have a thesis, ample research notes, an outline to serve as a basic compass (as I do); but the specialness of an e-book is that it is online, so that writer and reader are (almost) seeing the same words at the same time. Authors normally rethink and rewrite something created the night before — and then change sentences and paragraphs the next day. This is the normal origin of the book species. E-books are not necessarily better than normal books, but they should evolve because readers have reviewed the same material that the writer is mulling and have offered feedback as well.

It electrifies.

This language suggests that an e-book is something that will so grip readers via content and language that their attention is captured for the duration. As with all authors, I hope that will occur in this case. But what's most electrifying about an e-book is that the text-in-draft is sent electronically — and, as such, it can be immediately enhanced by levels of animation that the pure-print book can only suggest.

It embraces.

Although “Web-TV” is a concept now being tested, providing the ability for many people to “surf” and explore the Net *en groupe*, I sense that e-books will succeed or fail as a literary form to the

extent that they create a one-to-one bond between a computer and a user in ways only hinted at so far. Anyone who doesn't sense the immediacy and the urgency that is the very heart of modern computing is probably someone who will find e-books unnecessary, and likely unwanted. But for those of us (and this is very *a la* Marshall McLuhan) who have grown up inculcated (and affirming!) that every medium holds a message beyond the content it carries — well, for those people an e-book will not be plain-Jane publishing done online. It will be more like a publishing “event,” with each e-book chaplet reaching out to touch someone, be touched, and find readers wanting to reach back.

So we come to the start of this e-book, *The Anatomy Of Fire*. As the term has been loosely used on the Internet so far, this is by no means the first “e-book” (although it appears to be the first in the fields of management and leadership). I sense that the rest of my life will be dedicated to making sure that it is by no means the last e-book either.

To get to this starting point, you did not have to comb through shelves of competing titles. You did not have to lift anything, nor sift through 300 pages searching for a friendly page or two to help you want to read on, nor endure the entreaties of blaring blurbs from people you don't really know telling you how much *this* book will change *your* life. And, other than any online charges and the token sum it might cost to download

and print this chaplet, you did not have to pay a steep price for the content.

But to move beyond this starting point, you must be willing to put forward something much more significant than money. First, you will have to evince a keen interest in the most elemental force that has moved mankind along for thousands of years: the force of ideas, especially ideas that have propelled the modern marketplace as an index of modern civilization.

Second, you will have to be curious about the tone and temper of leadership as far as we can see into this new century. Lastly, you will have to be willing to travel with me on a journey that, to my knowledge, no one in communications and publishing has tried before.

In the mid-'60s, an outstanding professor, Sylvia Holladay, gave this green freshman an assignment to read a contemporary essayist's thoughts on the childhood moments he experienced that shaped the rest of his life. "On Running Away" by John Keats (*Edge of Awareness*: Dell, 1966, 1967) gripped me, hard, with Keats' tale of hopping a New Jersey freight train along with a high-school chum, Ralph, and heading west into an unknown world. Keats talked about taking journeys; he talked about trains and hobos and skid rows — how he reacted to things he had never seen before nor had ever given any thought to.

And although Sylvia Holladay probably doesn't know it, her assigned journey to travel with John Keats for only a few thousand words is one I have never

...Join me in this journey of ideas, in this progression of thoughts.

forgotten and have re-taken every three or four years, whenever I find life starting to become desiccated because it is far too neat, much too defined.

"It will be seen that Ralph and I failed to make our dream come true; that our first young research for the stuff of life proved only that we were not at home in either the suburban or the proletarian worlds," wrote Keats. And I remember furiously underlining his words in red. "Nor were we at home in the academic world. In fact, we would never be at home in any patterned world. No one ever is."

His essay ends with a personal apocalypse extracted after his cross-country journey that became an itinerary of odd jobs and what-seemed-to-the-two-boys like "odd" people, because their ideas and life patterns were so different from his own. "It seems to me," Keats concludes, "that

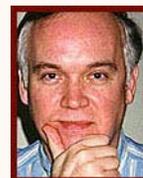
an adventure must be defined as an undertaking whose end it is impossible to know.

“That is why I applaud the youthful dramatist, the would-be adventurer, who breaks the pattern, who with mounting excitement writes the farewell note and slips out the window at dead of night to set off afoot for the railroad yards to board a freight bound for California.”

This e-book isn't necessarily headed for California, nor perhaps even due west. But Keats' sentiments convey the spirit of the e-book I plan to write in collaboration with everyone who seeks to join me in this journey of ideas, in this progression of thoughts.

Let us, together, start to create a new kind of book, one whose “end it is impossible to know,” one that moves the relationship between writers and readers forward. Anything less would not be a journey worth the taking.

To learn more about the author...



www.thomaslewisbrown.com/bio.pdf

The Anatomy Of Fire

Chapter 1: **Forward**

Yellowstone

Sparking A New Spirit Of Enterprise

Chaplet 1.2

By Tom Brown

- *Monday, September 19, 1870... We had within a distance of fifty miles seen what we believed to be the greatest wonders on the continent.*

— **Yellowstone's First Superintendent**
N. P. Langford
(1832 - 1911)



As parents become elders, so children become parents. And in that subtle change of communal command, other changes happen. While some family traditions are revered, preserved, handed down, other traditions are tossed: so that new family traditions might be tested for their own generational stamina.

In the case of my parents, the travel that was always so problematic and difficult became a sought-after way of life for me. So it follows that my wife, daughter, and I choose to “vacate” home as often as we can. We travel with alacrity. We journey with zeal.

And our travels have been blessed with fun and fulfillment. We always return as better individuals and as a better family team. Which is why every year, several times, our suitcases bulge in anticipation of the next expedition.

Often we pick vacation destinations based simply on a negative reply to the question, “Have we been there?” But one destination lures us time and again with a robust grip. We never tire, we never bore, we can never resist the attraction that is Yellowstone.

Part of the reason for this is that Yellowstone is, of course, a National Park within the United States system of federal lands set aside for the public. I can’t say with any precision what else the Congress of 1872 did, but it passed the Yellowstone Park Act. Since Rita, Nora, and I are “park” people, we applaud the contribution of that Congress. But the U.S. has since been blessed with many National Parks, and we have liberally sampled them.



Yellowstone Cauldron

© Tom Brown

Yellowstone is different; it has somehow become ours; it has somehow *adopted* us. Located principally in Wyoming, Yellowstone is the great, broad-smiling grandfather of National Parks. Its 3,472 square miles make it larger in size than Rhode Island and Delaware combined. Five percent of it is covered by water, with more than 10,000 thermal features and 250 active, steaming, sizzling, sometimes-spouting geysers. There are more than 1,200 miles of hiking trails. This land is so enormous, even Park rangers speak of five separate and

distinct topographical areas within Yellowstone, each with its own character and charm:

From the shimmering blue mirror surface that makes Yellowstone Lake (the largest mountain lake in North America) a radiant stunner...

...to the rough-hewn majesty of the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone where the air is so clean it seems, in a way, sweet...

...to the quirky playfulness of the many geysers, captained by Old Faithful which shoots upward 130-feet almost hourly...

...to the molten thump-thump-thump of the lava-like mud that bubbles from the earth at Fountain Paint Pot...

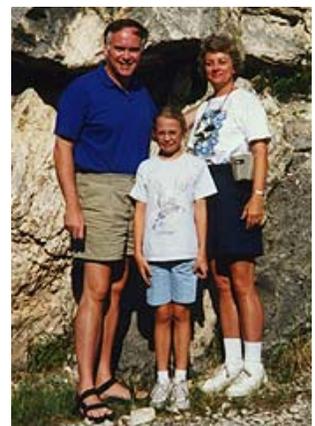
...to the wide grass prairies in Hayden Valley, where bison still stamp about with unabashed frolic and, at times, walk casually in front of moving cars full of gawking visitors...

...to the enormous, multi-ton boulder that announces Inspiration Point (a boulder once moved by glaciers from mountains located 15 miles away)...

...to the roaring symphony that is the Lower Falls, where millions of gallons of water tirelessly plunge 308 feet downward (twice the height of Niagara Falls!)...

...to the bountiful array of animals: moose, osprey, elk, mule deer, pikas, marmots, ducks, sandhill cranes, swallows, trout, trumpeter swans, pronghorn antelope, bald eagles (at best, a partial list of what's there)!

This is surely land merely loaned to the United States. If any plat deserves the stamp, this land must have "God" typed first on the original deed. Yellowstone cannot be fully seen in any one trip, perhaps in any one lifetime. Early explorers spoke of Yellowstone as "the most marvelous spot of all of the northern half of the continent." When an



*The Browns a half century ago did not enjoy journeys like...
...the Browns of 1996, inside Yellowstone National Park...*

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1869 expedition encountered Great Fountain Geyser, they “could not contain our enthusiasm; and with one accord we all took off our hats and yelled with all our might.” Travel writer Marge Peterson (*Home & Away*, May/June 1991) quotes Thomas Wolfe as saying, “It is a fabulous country, the only fabulous country; it is the only place where miracles not only happen, but where they happen all the time.”

Whether you go to Yellowstone to see panoramic views of myriad geographic types, or whether you go there to be among the unending variety of wildlife — whether you go there with a vanful of friends or relatives or trek its lands solitary and alone — there are reasons abundant for those overwhelmed by quality hurdles, team dynamics, stock indices, and never-sufficient bottom lines to abandon the “unnatural” worlds of business and commerce that man has built and manages, and lean for as long as you can on the cragged shoulders of Yellowstone.

I intend this as more than a Chamber of Commerce pitch “in reverse,” more than even a *carte blanche* offering of solace for the working weary. For it was only when I journeyed to Yellowstone the first time, just a few years back, that I began to see the management and leadership of corporations and organizations against not only broader vistas but in a wholly new way.

I read their books, watched their videos, and interviewed or debated dozens of experts face-to-face. And yet

Before Yellowstone, I had managed and been managed. I had met and worked with any number of executives, only a few of whom rang true as leaders.

In staff meetings and corporate conventions, I supped with “The Management” and imbibed corporate speeches right along with the beverages. Moreover, for the better part of two decades, I had consumed an endless buffet of management thinking. Author after author, guru upon guru, “breakthrough thought” heaped on top of “breakthrough thought”: no one could have spent more time and energy testing the wisdom and applicability of the accumulated knowledge of those who professed to know management and leadership and who offered to teach me. I read their books, watched their videos, and interviewed or debated dozens of experts face-to-face. And yet...

To the eyes of this citizen of the corporate world for 20 years, so very little looked or felt different, despite the years of

executive imperatives and professorial revelations. Workers by and large bemoaned their chores. Managers by and large bemoaned their lack of power and privilege. Executives bemoaned their simultaneous discomfort in neither having the organizational support they felt was merited — nor knowing where they wanted to take the rest of the organization, if only it would follow.

My father spoke of the world of business much as *his* father spoke of it. I speak now of a wealthier organizational world, but I cannot say that it is richer. I look around and find no lack of resources: books, whiteboards, airplane tickets, offsite resorts, white papers, and pricey gurus as guests — all of these are abundant in almost every company I visit or read about. But, for me, after 240 months worth of management agendas and leadership fads, they could not yield what I most sought.

By the time I planned my first trip to Yellowstone, I could not find (and I could not understand why!) that brand of leadership which percolated in every heart the sense of being complete, of making a living into a life, of helping-building-growing something *so great* that even one's children's children would dream of becoming a part of the movement someday. I could not find the organization that simultaneously yielded quality of work balanced by a quality worklife and a quality of management that made leadership all-encompassing, self-evident,

and self-perpetuating — because it advanced the cause of *common wealth*.

Much as I had often been perplexed that a world awash in the *technological* capability of today (*we enjoy state of the art instruments — some even computerized; compact discs capable of true 1:1 music reproduction; portable players so accessible that anyone can play great music anywhere; ultra high-fidelity speakers to test immediately the computers capturing on disk what we are humming into a microphone right now*) seems at the same time so musically poor. We would seem to have the resource to educate and train an *army* of Beethovens and Mozarts; yet we have failed to produce even *one* possible successor to these masters of tempo, tone, and theme. Why?

With all the management and leadership “wisdom” ensconced inside organizations, with business knowledge

I have looked at every organizational level and have seen people at labor; I have seen the labor, absolutely, but where has been the love?

and advice shrink-wrapped and available everywhere, with stock markets zooming to unheard-of levels, why were all the workplaces I visited populated with people who didn't seem to care about much of anything except escaping the clutches of their own self-chosen careers?

I have looked at every organizational level and have seen people at labor; I have seen the labor, absolutely, but where has been the love?

So, a few years ago, our family prepared to leave for Yellowstone. For me, this vacation was to be an escape. Back then, I felt a lot like Walt Whitman in the 1860s, who wrote one of the most compelling poems I've ever encountered. He spoke of going to a lecture hall to hear the best scientists of the 1800s speak of the wonders of the stars.

But Whitman, upon considering the best thinking on astronomy then available, felt that something was missing. He suspected that the real wonders of the stars could not be explained by even the best lecturers of the age.

The "proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me," he says in his poem. The "charts and diagrams" were shown to him, so he could "add, divide and measure them." Whitman listened, but he sat motionless, unconvinced; despite all that he saw, the universe plainly visible in the heavens was still elusively beyond his understanding and personal grasp.

How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by
myself,
In the mystical moist night air, and from time to
time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

— Walt Whitman,
"When I Heard The Learn'd Astronomer"
(1865) from *Complete Poetry and Selected
Prose* (Houghton-Mifflin, 1959)

I clutched this poem in my mind as I left home for the very first time to journey to Yellowstone, to leave the world of "MBO's" and "vision statements" and "first-pass yields." After 20 years of too many corporations "on the cutting edge" yet somehow immune to basic change, I boarded for Yellowstone wanting respite, relaxation, restoration. I wanted to look at something completely different from org charts and spreadsheets; I wanted to absorb Yellowstone's natural world, at least for a brief while, amid Whitman's "perfect silence."

"The 21st Century cannot possibly be managed and led the way we are doing it now," I repeated in my mind.

"Must workers and managers be eternally at odds?"

"Must leaders always be disconnected and abstruse?"

"Are *work* and *life* doomed to be antonyms?" This is what I thought, and re-thought, a dozen times over and again.

Perhaps, I thought further, Yellowstone will clear my mind so I can return and consider afresh what ‘The Next Century’ should mean to the wise student of managerial leadership.



Yellowstone Lookout

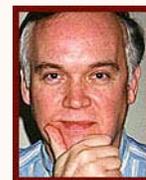
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It felt good to be starting this new westward journey with my family. Just over 40 years old, I had spent most of my life inside the organizational world; and it felt good to be running away.

But Yellowstone made a poor refuge; for Yellowstone, in some ways, challenged me more than any corporate case study or management textbook. The lesson it teaches is simple and striking, not the least bit obscure. But for much of my visit, I missed the message entirely. Among clear springs or obsidian rocks, I watched park rangers beam while they explained with clarity and precision the physics of this national park in such a way that tourists like us gasped as we tried to comprehend. During my first days in the park, I thought that thousands of trees simply added up to a forest.

As I tried to manage my way through Yellowstone at first, I only considered it a place. It is more. Yellowstone is both a place — and an idea.

To learn more about the author...



www.thomaslewisbrown.com/bio.pdf

The Anatomy Of Fire

Chapter 1: **Forward**

Beginnings

Sparking A New Spirit Of Enterprise

Chaplet 1.3

By Tom Brown

- *A wife. A husband. A son. A baby holds your hands, and then suddenly there's this huge man lifting you off the ground, and then he's gone. Where's that son? You know?*

— Playwrights and Actors
Wallace Shawn and Andre Gregory
from *My Dinner With Andre*



Go to the IMAX® Theater in the town of West Yellowstone, Montana, and you'll find that its 30-foot high screen and thunderous soundsystem *almost* capture the essence of the majestic park barely a mile away. Almost.

“Yellowstone is both a place — and an idea.” That’s how the movie opens. The words first hit me as promotional poetry: memorable but probably hollow. A park is, after all, just a place. I needed more time in the park before the brilliance of that IMAX opening flared true.

Looking back, my first attempts to partake of Yellowstone were hindered by speed-driven myopia. In a rented car, I cruised miles of paved parkways; I collected “sights” with a fury. A motorized camera made my myopia that much more efficient.

A pool of water gleaming opalescent in the sun. *Click*. A cascading fountain of calcified water and rock towering in front of me. *Click*. Geysers shooting jets of water dozens of feet high. *Click*. A moose jawing in a field of grass. *Click*. An entire valley made from rock formations muscular and grand. *Click*. The muted sound of a loon across Lake Yellowstone. Listen; *click*; listen; *click*.



Click

© Tom Brown

My first visits to Yellowstone were failed attempts by a driven man to consume the park, not to grow close to it, to try to understand it, to love it. There were scrapbooks to fill, and miles to go before I slip in the prints. Norris Junction, Madison Junction, Old Faithful, West Thumb, Grant Village, Bridge Bay, Canyon, Tower Junction, Mammoth Hot Springs: *been there, clicked that*. Around me at every quick stop were dozens of other hypertourists — jostling, pushing, clicking.

For those who have “done” Yellowstone like this, and never beyond this, the park they recall (even today!) is merely a place. It is a geographic area with a determinable animal population; a set number of trees, hills, valleys, and streams; a catalog of geysers; some lodging and refreshment stands; a handful of Ranger stations; measured miles of roads. These folks have traveled to Yellowstone, but they did not journey there. Every true journey involves a place and an idea.

What was the idea that I missed at first in Yellowstone? Partly, I missed the affec-



Ranger Bill Wise

© Tom Brown

tion and loyalty visible in every Ranger's face. With salaries hovering close to those of a teacher or a cleric, these men and women have dedicated themselves to something that's plainly more than population figures, nature catalogs, and mapped miles.

These men and women may not own the Park, but they are devotedly its trustees, its guardians.

Partly, I missed The Yellowstone Association, which anyone can join, and the dedication of the Association volunteers who sell booklets and videos and dispense park tips and insights almost as deftly as the Rangers.

Partly, I missed the youth who flock to the park working menial summer jobs at base pay, scooping ice cream or sweeping floors. Their badges identify them by name as well as by home. Indiana, Massachusetts, Oregon — France, Japan — the globe was well represented by these delegates who live in the park for but a few golden months.

But the *idea* of Yellowstone transcends any individual or group, no matter how dedicated. For Yellowstone's magnetism

has been known to many. Archaeologic research indicates that the first visitors to the park were probably hunters; crude spear points found near Mammoth Hot Springs have been dated 5,000 to 8,000 years back. One historian, Curtis Bucholtz, also says that a branch of the Northern Shoshoni Indian tribe perhaps first made a home of Yellowstone, sometime during the last two centuries (*National Parkways Photographic and Comprehensive Guide to Yellowstone National Park, 1976*). Plainly, this land has been prized over generations.

However, the aura of Yellowstone as a place has only recently been enhanced by the idea of Yellowstone. What sets it apart as an experience to be uniquely prized today is the same as it was in the 1870s: for all of us who spend our lives in the other kinds of places, houses and apartments and offices and plants built by industrious men and women, Yellowstone remains a precious reminder of where it all began.



Crystal Steam

© Tom Brown

Those who ultimately grasp the raw idea of Yellowstone come to love the park because it connects us once again to a time before treated lumber and pre-stressed concrete beams; before sheets of steel and titanium space satellites; before coaches and cabs — before wheels; before skyscrapers and geodesic domes; before laptops and cellular phones. Yellowstone, as a concept, symbolizes the essence of man’s beginnings on Earth.

As mankind has shaped, stretched, boiled, catalyzed, reformulated, reconstituted, and synthesized the natural elements of this planet into all the things and places we consume, we forget too much and too often that there was a time when *absolutely nothing* but nature existed. There was a time when nature prevailed. Nature, once, tolerated us. Pick a city, any major city: what might it have been like to stand on the bedrock of that city when that ground wasn’t anything but earth, water, rock, tree, grass? What might it have been to exist before the phrase “man-made” meant anything?

Do you know E. M. Forster’s short story, “The Other Side Of The Hedge”? It’s one of my favorites, and the essential point of the piece is that “progress” is not possible without concern for other people. Moreover, the story suggests that to lose one’s sense of beginnings is to lose the ability to measure progress.

Forster tells of a man who leaves the path of technological advancement, slips through to the “other side” of a hedge, and meets people there who treasure life and define “progress” in entirely different terms. At one point, the man visiting “the other side of the hedge” sees a gate and inquires about it. “It is through this gate that humanity went out countless ages ago, when it was first seized with the desire to walk,” he is told (E. M. Forster, *Collected Short Stories*: Penguin, 1954-84).

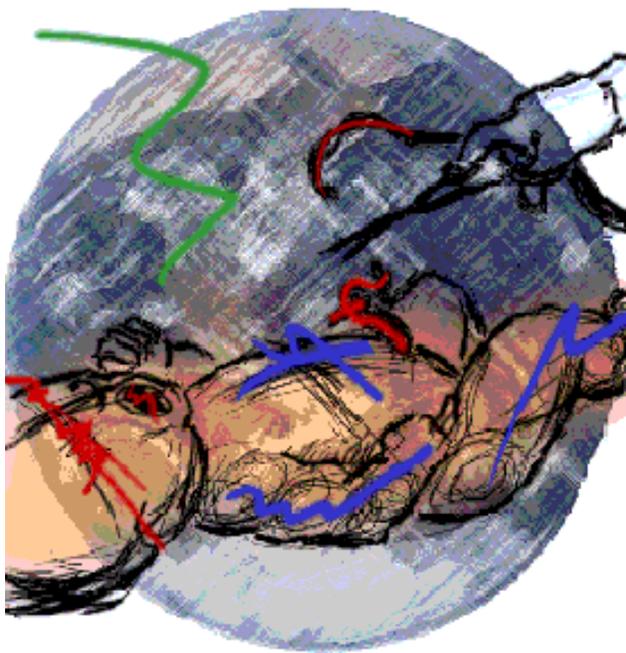
That line came to me on a subsequent trip to Yellowstone as I stood with my family just before sunset one evening. We were at Point Sublime, on the south rim of Yellowstone’s Grand Canyon. A hot summer day was quickly changing into a brisk mountain evening.

Amidst bracing cold air, the walls of the canyon radiated a warm orange-red glow. We were virtually alone on the overlook. The only sound came from the roar of the Canyon falls, a roar distant and subdued. Yellowstone stood gravely quiet, and we responded as if we were in a vigil.

**To my ears, though,
the hawk exhorted me
to, “Look, you fool!
— just look!”**

Then, overhead, the harsh screeching warble of a red-tailed hawk pierced the air as the bird gyrated and soared, probably near his aerie. An ornithologist might explain the bird's squeal quite scientifically; he might have connected the birdcall to territorial claims, food quests, or some such. To my ears, though, the hawk exhorted me to, "Look, you fool! — just look!"

Slowly, the idea of Yellowstone grew and grew in my mind; later that night, exhausted from hiking in the park, I saw Yellowstone through new mental binoculars. Yellowstone is an irreplaceable preserve for what the world looked like before the human race became worldly, before it became "seized with the desire to walk," the desire to shape and mold Earth to the contours of man's mind.



The Journey Begins

© H.L. Mac Thornton

To journey to Yellowstone is to return to our beginnings. "Yellowstone recalls North America," says one tour book, "as it was before industrial man arrived and profoundly transformed the continent." Of course, the casual shutterbug won't see it this way, nor will the traveler who only knows the park as a checklist of sights. The insensate tourist drives carelessly through the park, as I first did, and looks through it without ever coming to see it for what it is.

Such myopia is not new. Even when Ferdinand Vandiveer Hayden, whose pioneer explorations of Yellowstone began in 1871, passionately campaigned the U.S. Congress to designate the park as a national treasure, he was doing so *against* prevailing public sentiment. After all, in the exploding industrial climate of the 1870s, to take 3,578 square miles and *not* mine it, chop it, drain it, fill it, cultivate it — well, this was seen by most Americans as a huge commercial mistake!

Hayden at one point referred to the act of making Yellowstone a national park as a "munificent donation." But could this country afford such a huge donation? There was much debate. In the U.S. House of Representatives, the committee which finally endorsed the bill to set aside and protect Yellowstone reported that it feared that the essence of the park would be irreparably lost without such Congressional action. The House committee feared myopic people who craved the opportunity to "enter in and

take possession of” the park’s “remarkable curiosities,” making “merchandise of these beautiful specimens, to fence in these rare wonders.”

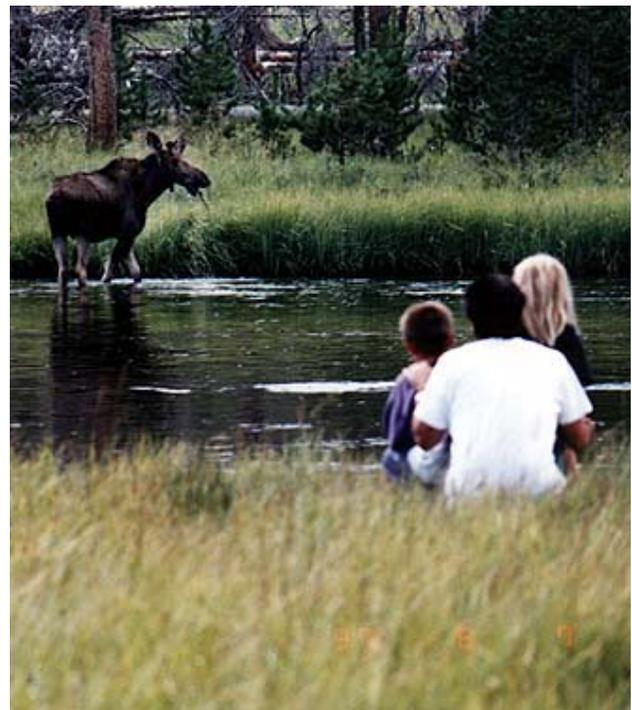
But, of course, the “rare wonders” of Yellowstone *are* now preserved. Our symbolic pre-industrial beginnings represented here *are* now protected. The idea that this land is a priceless natural diadem for our continent, perhaps our entire planet, *is* now rooted deep enough to be secure. I first saw Yellowstone as just another place to click pictures; later I grew to cherish it as a magnificent idea. What a journey!

The screech of the hawk, my moment of epiphany, occurred during a period of my life when I was growing impatient, to the point of feeling ill, with the seeming lack of progress in the fields of organizational thinking and business leadership, fields I had studied in depth and for years. I “woke up” in Yellowstone at a time when I felt that I was merely “passing through life,” when most everyone around me seemed content merely to manage places and acquire things — but as a collection of people, as a society, we did not seem to be on a road leading to anything approaching a universal and deeply-felt sense of personal growth and human progress.

“You can observe a lot just by watching,” says Yogi Berra. All of those I observed who were leading, managing, and working inside organizations seemed to

be masters of a *place* to work; but they, and I, looked to me much like the tourists speeding through Yellowstone, looking left and right, and not seeing the embedded idea that vitalizes every rugged acre. The collective worklife of everyone I watched was emphatically full of work but tragically empty of life. And no management book, no leadership guide — even the many remarkably good ones by some very insightful thinkers and scholars — seemed capable of yanking off the insensate blanket smothering us all.

Behold Yellowstone for all that it is, and the park emanates an excitement that can only come from realizing that each of us has been given the key to a door that opens up a time when all that we now know as civilization was *yet-to-be*. “It is



Behold Yellowstone!

© Tom Brown

through this gate that humanity went out countless ages ago, when it was first seized with the desire to walk.” Roll through any entrance to Yellowstone and you have come back through a symbolic gate originally used by humanity when it “went out countless ages ago, when it was first seized with the desire to walk” — to invent, build, create, grow. That is the magical idea to be discovered every time someone new journeys to Yellowstone.

The magic of mankind is also special, but different. We have had the collective wisdom at the right time to preserve a treasure like Yellowstone. But what truly marks us historically has been our ability to transform so much of this globe into new possibilities, converting fantastically innovative ideas into tangible new realities. The millions of things and places which mark our development of the planet first started as dreams and concepts conceived in the mind of some man or woman.

Behold the human race for the best that it is, and men and women also emanate an

excitement: it’s the spark of *human enterprise*, bringing to society new and colossal capabilities unknown to anyone before. What enlivens and enriches human existence has always been the yearning to take on the status quo; to recognize the present for what it is, then improve it. To share thoughts, then join hands, to shape a better future for all — that is uniquely *our* magic, *our* idea.

But at the time of my journey to Yellowstone, organizations I knew, and the people working in them, did not seem to radiate any magic, any excitement. Could it be, I pondered after my last trip to Yellowstone (and many times since), that we have all somehow lapsed into being “working tourists,” speedily driving through our lives as we might a park whose specialness we do not grasp?

Could it be that we have allowed our workplaces to degenerate into nothing more than revenue-generating, salary-begetting machines?

Could it be that society and civilization have been demeaned by the maximization

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of profits unbalanced by the
maximization of people's lives?

Could it be that we no longer see in the
wonder of every newborn child the
innate potential to grow, to explore, to
learn — to create something wonderful
through his or her own enterprise?

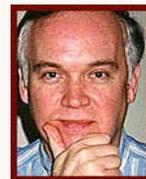
Could it be that we have forgotten that a
fulfilling worklife involves more than a
place to labor — *it must embody an idea
to love?*

Could it be that we have forgotten that
“leadership” is about progress, about
moving *forward?*

Where are our leaders?

Do you know?

To learn more about the author...



www.thomaslewisbrown.com/bio.pdf

about the artist, H.L. Mac Thornton...

www.mgeneral.com/4-ebook/97-other/040197li.htm