

You can't pet a rattlesnake

Outline – Mike Baird

You can't pet a rattlesnake	1
What are the snakes we should avoid?	1
Why is it then that we end up petting spiritual rattlesnakes?	1
Decide before faced with temptation	2
Learning by "trying"	3
Gift of the Holy Ghost	4
Spiritual Snakebite Kit	4
Challenge	4
Testimony	4

You can't pet a rattlesnake

- Article: "Man nearly loses life after kissing a rattlesnake"
- Article: "Man nearly dies after putting snake in his mouth"

What are the snakes we should avoid?

- Movies, videos, music videos
- Pornography

Why is it then that we end up petting spiritual rattlesnakes?

- How many hear would pet a rattlesnake?
- Do you have to pet a rattlesnake to prove that your tough? or smart? or cool?
- Why do we then end up petting spiritual rattlesnakes?

Decide before faced with temptation

- When do you decide not to pet a rattlesnake?
- David E. Sorensen

"Recently my granddaughter Jennifer was invited to go with several of her school friends to a dinner and a movie. The girls all agreed on the movie they were going to see, and Jennifer was comfortable attending. However, the girl who left dinner to buy the movie tickets for the group returned with tickets to a different movie than was planned! She said, "It is a great show, and it's R-rated."

Jennifer, caught by surprise, couldn't believe the situation had changed so quickly. But fortunately she had made up her mind before she ever found herself in this position that she would not watch R-rated movies. She was able to stand firm and say to her friends, "I can't go see an R-rated movie. My parents would not approve." To which the girls replied, "Oh, come on! Your parents will never know!" Confronted with this, Jennifer went on to say, "Well, actually it doesn't matter whether my parents will know. I just don't go to R-rated movies!"

Her friends were upset and tried to get her to relent. They told her she "was ruining everything." When she would not give in, they threw the ticket and change in her face and deserted her for the R-rated movie. It wound up being a lonely night full of rejection from her friends. But it was a great moment for Jennifer and our family. She gained confidence, self-worth, and spiritual power." ("You Can't Pet a Rattlesnake," Ensign, May 2001, pg 41)

Learning by "trying"

- Do you have to pet a rattlesnake to know it could possibly be bad for your health?
- Do we have to try everything to know if it is good or not?
- Must we only learn through our own experiences?
 - "I only learn through my own experiences"
 - Dallin H Oaks

"We do not have to have a personal experience with the effects of a serious transgression to know that they are injurious to our souls and destructive of our eternal welfare.

Some years ago one of our sons asked me why it was not a good idea to try alcohol and tobacco to see what they were like. He knew about the Word of Wisdom, and he also knew the health effects of these substances, but he was questioning why he should not just try them out for himself. I replied that if he wanted to try something out he ought to go to a barnyard and eat a little manure. He recoiled in horror. "Ooh, that's gross," he reacted.

"I'm glad you think so," I said, "but why don't you just try it out so you will know for yourself? While you are proposing to try one thing that you know is not good for you, why don't you apply that principle to some others?" That illustration of the silliness of "trying it out for yourself" proved persuasive to one sixteen-year-old." ("Full Purpose of Heart", pg 128)

Gift of the Holy Ghost

- Story: "You knew what I was when you picked me up"

Spiritual Snakebite Kit

- Atonement is there for you
- Savior knows what it means to be tempted
 - Alma 7:11-12 (Alma the Younger)
"And he shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and *temptations of every kind*;"
 - Mosiah 3:7 (King Benjamin)
"*he shall suffer temptations*, and pain of body, hunger, thirst, and fatigue, even more than man can suffer "
 - D&C 20:22
"He suffered temptations but gave no heed unto them"
 - CS Lewis
"No man knows how bad he is till he has tried very hard to be good. A silly idea is current that good people do not know what temptation means. This is an obvious lie. Only those who try to resist temptation know how strong it is. After all, you find out the strength of the German army by fighting against it, not by giving in. You find out the strength of a wind by trying to walk against it, not by lying down. A man who gives in to temptation after five minutes simply does not know what it would have been like an hour later. ...We never find out the strength of the evil impulse inside us until we try to fight it; and Christ, because He was the only man who never yielded to temptation, is also the only man who knows to the full what temptation really means" ("Mere Christianity", pg 126)
- I am there for you

Challenge

- Challenge them not pet rattlesnakes
- Challenge them to listen to the Holy Ghost

Testimony

Man nearly loses his life after kissing rattlesnake

VANCOUVER -- When Matthew D. George decided to kiss his young rattlesnake, he made a near-fatal mistake.

"Snakes are attacked every day in the wild, and the first thing they see is a predator's eyes," said Richard Ritchey of Sandy, who has worked with reptiles for 25 years.

"They're going to bite."

And bite the rattlesnake did -- right on George's upper lip.

George was showing off to Roban the young rattlesnake he'd brought home three or four weeks ago from the Arizona desert when the kiss turned sour, the Clark County Sheriff's Office reported. He was conscious, but upset when the paramedic arrived about four minutes later. Only his upper lip was slightly swollen.

But the snake's venom moved so quickly through his face's extensive blood vessel system that, two minutes later, George began to slip in and out of consciousness, Wilson said. His lip swelled to about five times its usual size, and within minutes the swelling engulfed his cheeks and ears and forced his eyes shut, he said.

Wilson inserted a tube down George's throat to keep his airway clear. Eventually, George's neck swelled to his chin, he said.

He was in critical condition Sunday when LifeFlight brought him in. Richard Wilson, a paramedic with North Country Emergency Medical Service, called for the helicopter after he saw swelling from the venom spread so quickly up George's face and down his neck that he knew George's breathing was threatened.

Luckily, George lives about two minutes from North Country's main station in Yacolt, in northeastern Clark County.

"He sustained a life-threatening dose," Wilson said.

A rattlesnake "is meant to bite," she said. "That's how it makes its living."

Even if George had handled the young rattlesnake safely other times, each time can be a different story.

Man nearly dies after putting snake in his mouth

Wednesday, September 19, 2007

MICHAEL ROLLINS and NOELLE CROMBIE

The Oregonian Staff

In early August, snake collector Matt Wilkinson of Southeast Portland grabbed a 20-inch rattler off the highway near Maupin.

Three weeks afterward, in a show of daring for an ex-girlfriend, Wilkinson stuck the snake in his mouth.

A short time later, he was near death with a tongue swollen to the point it blocked his throat when emergency room and trauma surgeons at OHSU Hospital saved his life.

The 23-year-old became a celebrity of sorts Tuesday when broadcast and cable news all over the country learned about his story. On the phone, still out of sorts with sore muscles and nerves from the venom, he sounded circumspect.

"You can assume alcohol was involved," he said. Actually, not just beer. Something he chose to describe as a "mixture of stupid stuff."

Friends were over for a barbecue. A pit was being readied for a backyard bonfire. He himself had downed a six-pack. An ex-girlfriend asked him for a beer. He handed her one, not realizing said snake was also in his hand.

"She said 'Get that thing out of my face,' " Wilkinson said. "I told her it was a nice snake. 'Nothing can happen. Watch.' "

So he stuck the snake in his mouth.

"It got ahold of my tongue." Wilkinson knew he had been bitten. In pain and finding it hard to breathe, he quickly arranged to be driven to the hospital, his ex-girlfriend behind the wheel.

Why her? "She was the only one sober," Wilkinson said.

They made it about two blocks from his home near Southeast 82nd and Woodstock and Wilkinson knew they were in big trouble. They spotted a cop and stopped to ask for help. That's the last thing he remembers before waking up at OHSU Hospital.

At OHSU, trauma surgeon Dr. Richard Mullins was in the cafeteria when his beeper went off. The message was to get to the emergency room right away. Physicians there were unable to get a breathing tube down Wilkinson's throat.

What Mullins saw was an engorged tongue sticking out Wilkinson's mouth. Snake venom thins the blood and Wilkinson was also bleeding quite noticeably from the bite wounds.

"Ninety-nine percent of the time" emergency room physicians can handle such a case, Mullins said. Not this time, which is why he was paged.

He quickly cut a hole in Wilkinson's neck to insert the breathing tube. Physicians under consultation from Dr. Zane Horowitz of the OHSU Poison Control Center then started giving Wilkinson an anti-venom.

They moved Wilkinson to the intensive care unit, where he was kept heavily sedated until the swelling went down. "Then we let him wake up," Mullins said.

Wilkinson, who works in construction, has been unable to return to work. His muscles and nerves are out of whack from the venom, and possibly lack of oxygen. He's getting a CT scan Friday.

Friends at work that he's spoken with are pretty blunt.

"They were like, 'what the heck were you thinking?' " Wilkinson said. The answer?

"It's my own stupidity."

But You Promised!
As Told By Iron Eyes Cody

Rattlesnake

Many years ago Indian braves would go away in solitude to prepare for manhood. One hiked into a beautiful valley, green with trees and bright with flowers. There as he looked up at the surrounding mountains, he noticed a rugged peak capped with dazzling snow.

"I will test myself against that mountain," he thought. He put on his buffalo hide shirt, threw his blanket over his shoulders, and set off to climb the pinnacle. When he reached the top, he stood on the rim of the world. He could see forever, and his heart swelled with pride.

Then he heard a rustle at his feet. Looking down, he saw a snake. Before he could move, the snake spoke. "I am about to die," said the snake. "It is too cold up here and there is no food. Put me under your coat and take me down to the valley."

"No," said the youth. "I know your kind. You are a rattle snake. If I pick you up, you will bite me, and your bite will kill me."

"Not so," said the snake. "I will treat you differently. If you do this for me, I will not harm you."

The youth resisted awhile, but this was a very persuasive snake. At last the youth tucked the snake under his coat and carried it down to the valley. There he laid it down gently. Suddenly the snake coiled, rattled, leaped, and bit him on the leg.

"But you promised," cried the youth!

"You knew what I was when you picked me up," said the snake as it slithered away.