

I understand that I am a retired old man now. I also understand and appreciate people younger than I staying so focused on physical fitness with their latest gadgets, must wear attire and power drinks. I was young once too and well remember that when it comes to relationships of a human nature, judging a book by it's cover absolutely counts.

With humans, our attraction to one another pretty much begins with a visual profiling. The rest of the animal kingdom all have the same book cover. You never hear momma Lion say, "Look at that stud over there ... I like the head of hair he's got going" .... Grrrrrrrr ... that's why God designed the other animals to just have a particular time of year for females to go into heat and let the studly fellas fight over who gets to be the dad. It's not a very romantic world for sure, and it is a big point of reference in any discussion of why humans are better than the rest of the animals on our planet. Animals mate once a year to carry on the species, while humans have sex every season, mostly for love and affection .... and lust .... not for babies necessarily, and it appears that it's the males who are in a constant state of heat.

The book cover matters to us, not to Lions, Tigers and Bears.

Which brings me to my topic today, which actually has nothing to do with animals, making babies or the big question: Why did God design the females to go into heat at a specific time of year in all the other animals while designing males to be in perpetual heat all the time with us? I'm guessing that people who think God doesn't have a sense of humor have not been very observant.

Obviously, my topic today deals with the human spirit.

I like to take walks. When I lived downtown, I just loved heading out on a nice day to explore all the wonderful sights and sounds of the city I love. When I moved out of the city, I found a great little park with lots of nature trails that go around a small lake and can accommodate those who wish to be challenged as well as those who wish to stroll.

I try to get out there at least once a week. They don't allow runners... they don't allow bikes ... they don't allow pets .... it's nature and the trails are for walking.

The more I go over to this lake, the more troubled I become. The 'easy' trail goes about a

mile and a half around the lake with plenty of photo opts for turtles, cranes, and deer as well as a quiet, still lake. There are no boats, no fishing ... in fact they have many signs to let you know that you are to stay on the trail and not wonder off to disrupt the echo system of nature.

You get the picture - this is a place to get away from the world and become one with the natural nature we so often lose touch with.

Yet every time I go, there are always many neighbors hitting these trails at a brisk pace with their earplugs dialed into their motivational music, wristbands they constantly check to verify proper heart rates, calories burned and whatnot and wearing the latest attire that proclaims them to be serious about their health.

As I stroll around the lake, I've lost count of how many turtles I've seen basking in the sunlight on a branch by the shore. My seriously healthy walkers have probably not seen one. I've stopped to listen to the cranes taking off or the call of a distant bird, while my neighbors have listened to their favorite recording star.

Again, I am not against people working out and taking their health serious. I fully admit that at my age, it wouldn't hurt me to take my health a little more serious as well.

But here's an idea: How about once a week leaving all that trendy gear at home, slap on some shorts and a tee shirt and STROLL around the lake and see how many turtles you can find. The rest of the week is yours to do as you will, but for just one day, how about working on your soul. Stress is the leading cause of heart disease and these trails are the perfect medicine for the stressful loads we carry every day in this crazy world we call life.

After all, your book can have a great cover, but its true value will always be the story created inside. One day of the week you can work on the story inside. It can - and should- be a great story.

Just A Thought