



# pz's perspective

## is there a warrior in you?

by: Pz

**O**n September 4<sup>th</sup>, Bindi and little brother Bob lost a dad. Terri lost a husband. Bob lost a son and his best mate. The Australia Zoo lost a leader. The continent of Australia lost an ambassador. The animal kingdom lost their staunch ally and the world lost one colorful wildlife icon.

We came to know him as the Crocodile Hunter for the extraordinary way he brought his beloved crocs and other seemingly untouchable critters into our homes, up close and personal. Over the years, as his rising star continued to rise, he sought after unbelievable and fascinating tactics to educate us like no one ever had, and, in doing so, found an enduring place in our hearts.

I don't need to recount the events that took his life, except to say it was certainly not what we would have expected which makes this unprovoked freak accident with a normally placid creature all the more tragic, and almost ridiculous. Here's a man who so often and so gladly put himself in the jaws of danger—literally—and was killed in an instant by the sudden jab of a stingray's barb. My hope is that the video that captured those last terrible moments on tape will remain private or be destroyed and never see the light of day.

The business he had chosen as his life's work was risky to say the least. It was his calling, his destiny, and he wouldn't have wanted it any other way. Of course he was an entertaining bloke, since he knew what it would take to get and keep our attention. Like a kid at Christmas, his wide-eyed

enthusiasm was contagious. He was excited. He wanted us to get on board with his excitement. He wanted us to appreciate what makes these animals tick and the role they play in the grander scheme. He wanted us to love the unlovable. He was all about conservation—pure and simple. Known to millions for that exuberance and the catch phrase “Crikey!” there was nothing about this larger-than-life character that was fake or contrived—he was no act. Anyone who knew him said the same of Steve, “He was the same in the morning when he stepped out of bed as he was at the end of the day. Camera or no camera, what you saw was what you got.” He was, in fact, the real deal. Upon hearing about the nature of the accident, a wildlife friend of Steve's commented, “It shouldn't have been hard for the stingray to catch Steve in the heart—it had such a big target.”

I've heard the few mean-spirited folks who have come out against him twisting his intentions, questioning his sincerity, and criticizing his career? Only misguided or misinformed curmudgeons would spout such negative and unjustified remarks. Sometimes judgmental or envious people can't help themselves and say foolish things. Then there's the PETA crowd who have come to believe they are the ultimate authority and have the last word on the treatment of animals. They have expressed happiness, yes happiness, about the fact that Steve is now gone and the animals won't have to suffer at his hand any longer. If I hadn't read those exact words and heard the corroborating interviews, I wouldn't have believed it myself, but,

unfortunately, it's true. So they think arrogant and insensitive comments like that further their cause? (Makes you want to run out and buy a juicy cheeseburger!) And don't let me hear another word about the long ago baby dangling incident and how Steve reportedly endangered his child while feeding a croc. The whole media frenzy created around that occurrence WAS a crock.

Steve was an expert and a pioneer in his field. He was a naturalist, an educator, and an entertainer. The love he had for the animals was only eclipsed by his devotion to his family. His profession was unlike any other. A day at the office with daddy DID include feeding and tending to the crocs, all in view of the public eye, all under the scrutiny of the camera, all in order to raise awareness of the plight of those animals most endangered. Terri and the kids didn't sit idly by on the sidelines, as they easily could have, but were totally immersed in his work and active participants in every aspect of his wild and wonderful adventure. Chip off the old block, eight year old Bindi, was already scheduled to star in her very own animal show for Discovery Kids. (Ironically, it was during final preparations to be used in Bindi's show that Steve was killed.)

Think of him what you may, but Steve Irwin was a man with a mission. With a single-mindedness of purpose that rivals anyone who ever did anything, Steve was a bona fide original.



His squeezed the oomph and gusto of ten lifetimes into his all-too-brief 44 years on the planet. This wildlife warrior whose every thought word and deed was dedicated to his goal: the goal of making the world a better place for man and beast to inhabit in harmony—died in the midst of doing what he loved.

There are many obvious and agonizing down sides to his sad and sudden death.

But there are lessons; we must look for the lessons. It's the only viable way to make sense of something so senseless. It's our opportunity to rescue even some small gain from such a huge loss. We must look at the man and his life and the purposeful way in which he approached his life. We must look at this warrior, this wildlife warrior, and marvel at his passion and his exuberance for living and all that he accomplished during his short stay. In Steve Irwin's case it was apparent. He wore his passion like a suit of armor (or rather a suit of khakis). It was unmistakable: shiny and gold and brilliant under the Australian skies. His personality, as well, was so big, attached to a heart even bigger and full

of love and hope for all creatures big and small. That is where the up side of this tragedy can be found. That is where we, too, can discover the warrior in us. We may not be a wildlife warrior like Steve, but we can be a warrior in our own right.

Your passion might not be so obvious. It might be just below the surface and require some digging to unearth, but it's sure worth the effort to look.

### **PZ'S POINTERS FOR DISCOVERING THE WARRIOR IN YOU:**

**Today is all you have**—There are plenty examples and reminders, at home and around the globe, of this concept. It exists all around you. When you live in the moment you get the most from that moment. Many of us are too busy hung up on past mistakes and ignored opportunities. Others are too consumed with the future—either stressing over events that may occur or living for events that may never occur. It's the present that gets shortchanged and lost in the meantime. The present is a hard place for some folks to be because it isn't always a very enjoyable or satisfying place. You can't hide from the present—it's right here, right now. When you get firmly planted in the present you can face and embrace your life as it exists in real time. You can look back at the past with gratitude. You can look forward to the future with optimism. It is only through the decisions we make and actions we take in the present that determine just what that past and future hold.

**Bad things happen to good people**—I'll admit I struggle with this reality, even though I have come to accept it as fact—reluctantly. Sometimes we are hurt by life—by injury or illness, by disappointment or rejection, by death. In other words, whether it's the tragedy of 9/11, the breakup of a marriage, or the untimely death of Steve Irwin, bad things happen to good people everywhere and on many different levels. We want to understand. We want to blame someone, anyone, even God. We want answers. We want reasons. We want to comprehend in our brains and come to terms with in our hearts why the honorable person gets hit and the deserving scoundrel goes unscathed. Sometimes, hard as we try, perhaps, in the end, it is what it is—one of the mysteries of life. There is just no reason to clearly explain, and we are left to pick up the

pieces where they are and move ahead. The good news is that we are all given the tools to live meaningfully in an unpredictable and unfair world. Strength and courage, along with acceptance, are in big demand at a time like this and those who effectively navigate their way through these dark hours will emerge on the other side of the heartache to bravely continue on with the ever changing journey.

**Walking through the fear**—I know, it's scary out there. That is, if you let it be. Life comes with risks, and no guarantees. Life also comes with possibilities and plenty of opportunities. Many of us are too afraid to take a chance when it is given to us because we are fearful of the outcome. We want to know it will be a sure bet or we don't want to toss the dice, put ourselves out there, or get in the game. We are afraid we might fail and we would rather not even try if it means we may not win. Steve Irwin dove into life with every fiber of his being. He took plenty of risks throughout his career—calculated risks. He appeared fearless, regardless of the peril he faced, but was always the first one to admit that he was able to handle his fears because he had a healthy respect for the animals before him and he was doing what he cherished most. A little fear can be a good thing and keeps you honest and on your toes. The key is to recognize, consent, and walk through the fear and not allow it to become a road block or impediment to the success you deserve.

**Build upon your many strengths**—We are all endowed with unique gifts and talents that only we possess. We are all good at and good for something. We all bring something to the table. That makes us all warriors of life. It's a matter of identifying those specific strengths and assets in your life and focus on developing and tapping into those skills. One strength

can lead to another, and before you know it you will have an arsenal of abilities that you can be proud to share. Think of what it takes to be a champion body builder. Think of the time and effort and training it takes to build muscle upon muscle, body part upon body part. Think of the drive it takes to build the perfect diet and the perfect routine to perform for the judges and the fans. Think of the sacrifices and commitment it takes to build the stamina necessary to accomplish such an endeavor. All of these strengths in mind, body, and spirit come together to make a winning formula. Now that's a warrior! These strengths can carry over and be applied to many other aspects of life. Look at Steve, look at Arnold, look at Tiger, look at Oprah, look around you for examples of those who have put their strengths to their maximum use. Do you even know what your strengths are? Are you putting your know-how to work for you? Are you sharing your talents and expertise with the world? When you show up at the table of life with something to contribute, then everybody benefits.

**Clearly state your purpose**—Life should come with a purpose manual but it doesn't. Figuring out your purpose for being here can be hard. It shouldn't be, but it is. It is easy to get lost in the madness and medioc-

rity of a confused and confounding world. It is easy to feel left out, overlooked, irrelevant or insignificant. Sometimes it's easier just to go with the flow, no matter how unhealthy and unhappy it may be. Sometimes it's easier to remain still or become stagnant walking in place and going nowhere fast. If you get nothing else from the life of Steve Irwin, get the fact that each one of us has the ability to matter and make a difference. Steve had a distinct purpose for being here and he lived every ounce of that purpose for all it was worth. He left an imprint that will be seen and an impact that will be felt for years to come. He touched our hearts. This incredible wildlife warrior will be truly missed. What about you? Can you clearly state your purpose? If asked, could you articulate it in plain and simple terms? If necessary, could you write it in plain and simple language? Part of the trick to success is keeping your eye on the prize. When you undoubtedly know your purpose you know exactly what that prize is. Then you will discover the warrior already there. Then, you can become the warrior you were born to be.

*Pz is a motivational writer specializing in the area of relationships and the human condition. Have a topic you would like to feature? Contact Pz with ideas, questions, or comments: pzppower@aol.com*

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