

What You Thought You Knew!
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by Nick Bower

Sometimes I seem, as I'm sure you do, to get into a rut in the way I think or go about doing something. The old adage, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it," kind of attitude. I guess now that I look back, I was fortunate to be taught to think outside the box – to push the limits, so to speak. Always ask yourself, "Is there a better way?" Do I need to adjust on something? Can I do it faster with the same results?

Where am I going with this you ask? I recall some years back, well okay, several years back, picking up a book written by Stanley Hawbaker on fox trapping. Wow! The Holy Grail, so to speak. Here it was, in plain language, with pictures no less. It went on to explain just exactly how to make a set that would catch a fox. So, now we are fox trappers. We used the methods in the book and they worked for us, so hmm, why in the world would I want to change anything. That would be stupid on my part to deviate from the methods that had actually worked, right?

Some of the things I know have been learned the hard way, by spending countless hours in the field observing the target animals, making some really dumb mistakes and then standing there and scratching my head in disbelief. I have said many times that I've learned a lot more from misses at a set rather than at a catch. You have to learn to see what you're looking at. During a conversation at a convention this past summer, the talk was about what we know – or think we know. I made the statement that I always thought of myself as a trapper, but lately I've changed my way of thinking and now I find myself being more of an animal psychologist. I say to myself, now why in the world did that critter do what it did? And I do my best to analyze the situation.

I'm not pitching anything here, but I must say the new videos that have come out of late, the "Teachers of the Night," are what I would consider ground breaking and exciting. Oh, and I might add they can humble you quickly. These videos show the animal in its true environment, exactly how they react to a given situation. And trust me, they are a real eye opener. It's funny to me in a way. I often ask myself, are the animals really that much different than we are? It's up to us to interpret the animals' behavior and devise a method to work to our advantage.

I'll end this brief article with this. Always think things through, use your head, and listen to the animals; they will tell you what to do. And never be afraid to think outside the box.### Nick Bower, PO Box 181, New Athens, Ohio 43981.