

Stop Recording the Moment and Start Living It

By George Cunningham

One of those magical moments recently happened to me, and I almost missed it because I wanted to take a picture. My wife Carmela and I were driving through Yellowstone National Park on the last day of October, just days before the park was to close for the winter. It was late afternoon, cold in the high altitude with patches of early snow on the ground, and a sky above that was a deep and wondrous blue.

We came over a rise and there he was by the side of the highway – a full-grown wolf. I slammed on the brakes and he trotted across the road, as though we were nothing more than a passing nuisance. I scrambled, reaching behind the seat for my camera, but Carmela stopped me.

“Don’t take a picture,” she said. “Just look.”

And so I did.

The wolf, trotted up a small hill, stopping at the tree line to look back at us, curious more than menacing. I could see his mind turning. What the hell are you doing in my woods? He stared at us for 10, maybe 15 seconds, and then disappeared into the forest.

I didn’t get a picture, but I experienced something that I would have missed if I would have been fumbling with my zoom lens and trying to adjust my focus and f-stop to document the encounter. What I got was a private moment, eye-to-eye with a wild creature that lives his life unfettered by the restrictions or relative moralities of civilization.

He is what he is – a wild wolf – and I got to share a moment with him. If I want a picture of a wolf, I can go to the Internet and download one, but it’s not going to have the magic of that moment.



Picture of wolf downloaded from the internet

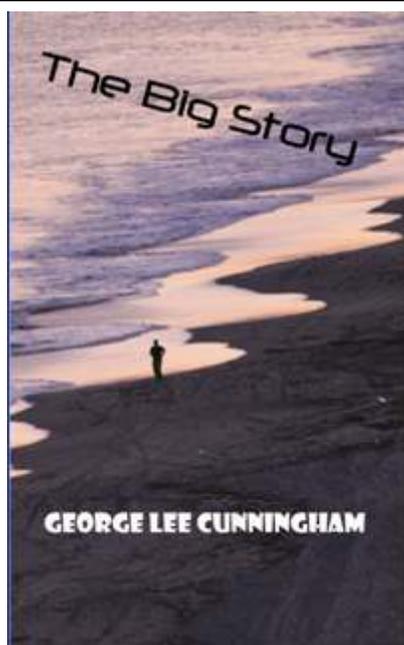
This is not at all a criticism of photography. I love photography, and I love taking pictures. Photography has a way of opening your eyes to the beauty that surrounds us all. When you start taking pictures of stuff, whether it's a bee on a flower or a sailboat on the ocean, it makes you stop and see the things you would otherwise just pass by.

But there's a difference between photography helping to reveal the world around you and becoming an impediment to experiencing it. And it's important to distinguish one from the other.

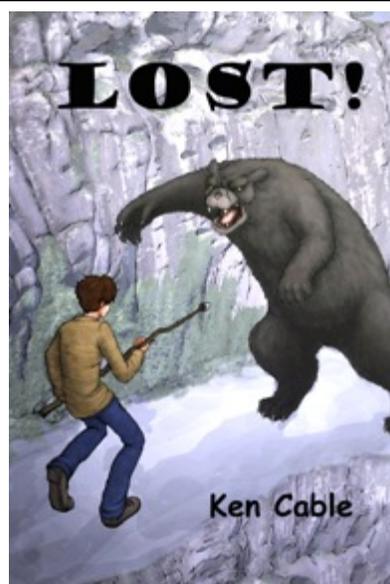
In other words, if you are at your daughter's wedding and the moment is filled with emotion and your choice is to take her picture or give her a hug, go for the hug.

The memory in your heart will be worth more than a picture on the wall.

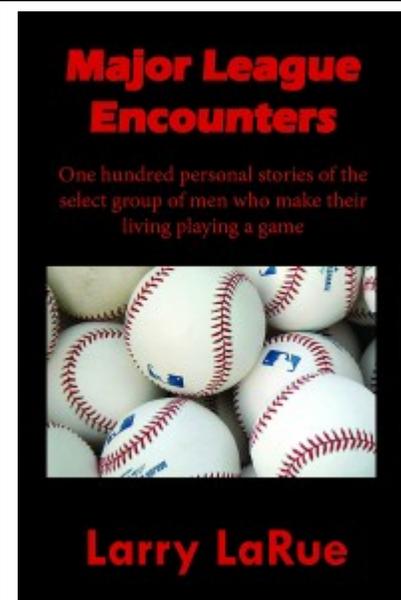
You can contact George Cunningham at george@readerpublishing.com be his friend on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/#!/george.cunningham.94695> and be his tweetheart at <http://twitter.com/#!/GeoCunham> His novel, *The Big Story*, can be ordered at www.readerpublishing.com. His new novel, *Kaboom*, will be available early next year.



A hard drinking reporter has to decide whether to keep chasing his big story or to make his bosses happy, rekindle the flame with his ex-wife, and be a responsible adult. Guess what he chooses. Mobsters, corrupt police, sissy editors, and the body of a nude girl on the beach. What more could you ask for?



Three boys – trapped in an early summer snow storm – struggle to survive in California's Sierra Nevada mountains. This story by author Ken Cable marks a return to the traditional youth story – with the focus on adventure rather than social or political issue. The book – set in 1970 – follows the boys as they learn to deal with cold, hunger and a rogue bear in order to stay alive.



Author Larry LaRue gives an inside look at the world of Major League Baseball as he relates 100 personal encounters with the men who make their living playing a game. LaRue, who spent more than 30 years writing about a sport that he loves, tells tales that are sometimes inspiring, sometimes heartbreaking, and often very funny. This book is both easy to read and hard to put down.