

UNDER AFRICAN Skies

Our Stories from the African Wilderness



So Much More Than Just a Safari

Part 2 Guest Column by Rick Fitzgerald, Tasimba Guest, March 2016

This is the second part of [Rick's guest column](#) published last month in our "Under African Skies" series.

Learning to be a follower

On a walking safari, following closely behind your Pro Guide, stopping when he does, kneeling when he says so, doing exactly as he tells you, is probably a different experience for many people, particularly leaders who may not have been followers for a very long time. Putting your trust completely in the hands of people you have just met a few days prior, is an important lesson in a strange environment in which someone else has the expertise to be the leader. I quickly became aware that humility is your friend and arrogance is your enemy in these settings – as it is in any situation.

The guides briefed us each time we went out into the bush and always ended the briefing with the words: "Remember, whatever you do...*don't run!*". After hearing this wisdom repeated several times by Lewis, our [Pro Guide](#), I asked him why he always concluded his remarks with his "Don't run" phrase. He calmly said to me "In Africa, only food runs". **Trust the experts, listen carefully to good advice, be prepared to give yourself up to those who know more or are better equipped than you**, are all lessons that I was reminded of.

Take nothing for granted

Every day in the African wilderness, is a different experience. It is so much less predictable than we are accustomed to. The title you may have, the club you belong to, the car you drive have no relevance here. **Time in the bush is time well spent as it helps bring a much higher level of consciousness to the environments we are in, as well as mindfulness, wisdom and self-awareness that we should pay more attention to and seek to understand.** Every moment we spend here we're reminded that nothing is taken for granted.



Always being watched

Riding in the back of the 4x4 we spoke about some of the lessons we might take away that would help us as executives in our organizations back home. One interesting conversation I recall clearly was what Hugh called the “Ultimate 360”. We might not be able to see the animals in the trees or tall grass, but rest assured they are constantly watching us. Watching the older animals demonstrate for the younger ones to be wary of us, to keep a cautious distance, and to follow their examples was so evident.

Whether we are aware of it or not, we as leaders are being watched, constantly. Employees, clients, partners, indeed all those around us, are watching our every move, copying us, adopting our good habits - and our bad ones too. The benefit of having high self-awareness of how others see us, mimic our behaviours, repeat what we say, take on our belief systems, and indeed follow us as leaders, is important for leaders to understand and own.

I recall the paraphrase of the speech that Mr. Gandhi gave to the first Indian Parliament after declaring independence from Great Britain....”***Be mindful of our thoughts, for our thoughts become our words.....Be mindful of our words for our words become our acts....Be mindful of our acts for our acts become our habits.....Be mindful of our habits for they become our values....Be mindful of our values for they become our destiny***”.



My greatest takeaways

I think one of the greatest takeaways that I had from my Tasimba experience, and from the generosity of spirit on the part of everyone associated, was ***the gift of gratitude***. It seems odd that I might have had to travel to Africa to more fully grasp the many things in my life that I should be grateful for but that seemed to be the case. Hopefully I will have learned to ***take fewer things for granted, assume less, to be humbler and less arrogant, listen more carefully, make time for myself, better understand my surroundings and everything in them, be aware of the leader’s responsibility and, most of all, be grateful for all of that***...and more.

Each person’s Tasimba journey will be different from the next, but undeniably they will all have the most unforgettable experiences and common bonds that will last a lifetime. The Tasimba tagline on their logo says it all.

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Our next Tasimba safari experience: ***October 29th to November 5th.***

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