

# Things you can learn from watching squirrels

By Wayne Bailey

**AA** Milne from Winnie the Pooh said, "Some people talk to animals. Not many listen though. That's the problem." I took this quote to heart one early morning. I was sitting in my favourite chair watching the birds and squirrels eating from a feeder just outside my window. As I watched

the wildlife, they reminded me of how we humans interact.

## Getting along well with family

What I learned that day is sometimes we play well together and other times we don't. Seems the squirrels always competed for food with a brother, sister or parent. You would think they would all get along well until I



Wayne Bailey

started thinking of my own family. I asked the question, "Do I always get along with my family?" Being honest, not always.

### Getting along with non-family member

As I watched the wildlife eat, a squirrel is on top of the feeder eating a sunflower seed as a bird flies in, grabs a seed and off he flies again without much fuss from the squirrel. Why? Was the squirrel just being nice? Perhaps they didn't speak the same language? The point is the squirrel didn't mind the birds coming and going. Was it because we're nicer to other non-family members more than we are to our own family?

### The prize is at the top

A young squirrel came by later sniffing and eating seeds that fell to the ground. Leftovers. The prize at the top was fresh new peanuts still in the shell. They love peanuts. This young immature squirrel looked up several times, however, he never saw the prize and continued eating the leftovers. What were they telling us that day? If you keep your head down, you will never find the prize. Even if you look up, you have to know what you're looking for.

### Effort pays off

During winter weather, the feeder pole becomes icy and cold. A squirrel trying to reach the top had great difficulty due to the ice that formed on the pole. He would start to climb and slid back down. Although this was funny to watch, I felt sorry for the squirrel and cheered him on from inside the house. "You can do it", I kept saying aloud. He did this over and over until finally reaching the top. Another squirrel attempted to climb the same pole and gave up after just one attempt. Was the squirrel just too lazy to continue to try and climb the pole where the real food was stored or was he just willing to settle for scraps?

Jim Rohn said, "If you are not willing to risk the unusual, you will have to settle for the ordinary." The squirrel was unwilling to use the extra energy risk to climb the pole where only the top one percent of the population

dined. What I learned that day was victory and better views come to the ones that are in the top one percent. What are you doing today to be in that one percent population? Staying on the ground eating leftovers is not what the one percent do. Keep looking up, set your eyes on the prize and go for it.

### Timing is everything

A good friend of mine says, "Bad timing can make a great man look average. Great timing can make an average man look great." Perhaps the other squirrel was smarter and would wait just a few hours and let the sun heat the pole melting the ice, so it would be climbable again. In this scenario, timing would be everything.

### We're creatures of habits

G Stanley Hall said, "Man is largely a creature of habit and many of his activities are more or less automatic reflexes from the stimuli of his environment." Every now and then we have run out of food in the feeders while on extended holiday and the neighbourhood bear had come by and got into the feeders. When we run out of food, the wildlife still comes by daily to check on the food. They continue to do this for many days, hoping we have refilled the feeders. Humans will develop the same habits too. Some good and some bad. There was a story just told recently about a fire chief requiring all truck tires to be washed off before backing into the truck bays. Why? After

researching this, I found that when the fire department started back in the early 1900s, they used horses to pull the steamers. Since most of the streets lacked street pavement, they usually came back muddy, so they always washed the dirt and horse poop off the wheels before they were returned to service. This habit was carried over by six fire chiefs without knowing the reason why the tires were being washed.

Try changing your habits one day and see if you see something you've missed while just going through the motions.

### Empty feeders

Lao Tzu said, "Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage." When the wildlife finally realised the feeders were not being refilled, they found food at other feeders or in their natural environment. What I heard that day is when your spouse, daughter or son is looking for your love and it's not there, they go looking for it with someone else. We constantly need to be filling our love banks up and have it overflowing for those that are closest to us. If we have no love to give, it will be found somewhere else and we will be found very empty inside.

So the quote from Winne the Poo came alive in this writing. When you open your eyes, set your focus on the prize and you too can be in the top one percent. ▲

