

Used to Be Afraid of What I Now Love

Red, black, and yellow. Those are the colors of the snake that was moving against my skin. I never thought I would be saying this, but trust me, it took me a good five minutes building the courage to hold that snake.

My manager was training me how to take the Sinaloan Milksnake out of its enclosure to put it in a carrier. He carefully opened the door of the enclosure, and gently brought out the three foot long snake. I flinched and backed up as the snake was taking long glides. The snake was surprisingly calm while I was not. He then explained to me the proper way to hold it, along with some facts about the snake itself. After the talk, I felt a little better until I envisioned a snake bite I saw on television.

“Would this snake bite me?” I nervously asked.

“No, he’s not a biter. The animals here are used to getting handled so it’s very unlikely”, he clarified, “Are you ready to hold him?”

No! That’s what my mind thought out of fear. However, I realized that I actually wanted to hold this snake because how cool would it be to be able to hold a snake! I was upset with myself because even though I had a fear of snakes, I have always wanted to hold one, but I’m just letting everything I see on T.V. get to me.

“I think I am!”

He slowly put the snake into my open hands. *Squeeze*, I shut my eyes hard as I felt a smooth and cool touch in my hands, expecting a bite that never came. I hesitantly opened one eye, then both. I stretched my arms out away from my body and the snake was making hesitant movements because of how stiff I was.

“Relax your arms, you’re okay, you’re doing good,” my manager reassured me.

As he gave me these tips, I relaxed and so did the snake. After a couple minutes past by, I was wondering why I was afraid in the first place. I suddenly fell in love with this snake and I let it explore my arms joyfully. I even put the snake a couple inches away from my face to observe it more. Now, whenever I go back to work, I will always try to find the opportunity to hold the Sinaloan Milksnake and want to venture out and learn to hold other snakes too. Realization hit me that these entertaining shows on T.V. was what helped build my irrational fear.

The media engraves overly dramatic ideas into our heads because they know that's apart of entertainment. We tend to like watching things that are surprising and not the ordinary things we see all the time. For example, Discovery channel. Yes, it is educational because it gives us a lot of information about the different types of animals, however, they know our weakness. They know we like drama. So why just have a silent clip of a snake catching its prey when you can amp it up, adding sound effects, different angle positions and slo-mo. All of these effects make it seem as if snakes and even other animals are very scary, which lead to my fear of snakes. This could have possibly affected a lot of other people like how it did to me.

I understand that it is a possibility that snakes can do the painful things that are shown on television, but it's not as dramatic. Snakes do not want to hurt everything, they just do it for self defense as a survival instinct if something is bothering them first. What if there was nothing on the media? Would people still be as afraid of the animals like how they are now?

Maybe an animal that someone is fearful of can turn into one of their favorite animals like how mines did. It would impossible for them to find out because if they are afraid, they would avoid the situation. That is a sad thing because the person would not be able to find out what they might end up loving. So, instead of listening to everything on the media and letting it overthrow your thought process, go out and try the things you are afraid of. Although, in a good situation of course. For example, trying to grab a random snake that you see in a lake is not

necessarily clever, but if it's presented at a museum, go for it! Don't let the media aid you in setting limits for yourself.