

As nature intended

Article and illustration by Bill Naylor



The more disconnected we become from nature, the greater the delusion that nature is benevolent, populated by Walt Disney characters. Yet, if nature were a health professional it would be struck off. The main reason humans suffer from disease, and are finally rendered

permanently horizontal, is due to natural causes.

Prior to the discovery that infection was the chief cause of disease, life expectancy was short and diseases rife. We have Louis Pasteur to thank for making the milk round safe after he developed pasteurisation, the method whereby milk is heated to destroy harmful microbes, without lessening its nutritive content and extending its shelf life. But the 'nature knows best' movement has reverted to drinking untreated milk simply because it's natural. Like malaria and leprosy. People's attitude to wildlife has also changed. Wildlife's biggest fear was once being hunted. Now it's being cuddled by humans who give them human names and treat them as pets. This doesn't extend to bacteria, however, who outnumber other species a thousand to one. Mainly furry or wet, squeaky ones (dolphins). Wildlife is no longer treated with caution. Snake bites used to occur mainly in rural areas of countries where people wore flimsy footwear. But now there is an upsurge of people in western countries getting well and truly fanged. When snakes enter a basement or garage, mistaking it for a cave, well-meaning humans are

increasingly intervening in this reptile dysfunction, and in trying to apprehend the serpent and return it to the wild, they've discovered a venomous snake has only one agenda. A love bite that will put you in A&E, if you're lucky, and a lie down part in "Silent Witness" if you're not.

Bear attacks are also on rise globally. Like new age hippies, bears are hairy, eat berries and fruit, but they're also equipped with twice as many slicing and cutting implements as Freddie Krueger. If you're wearing a t-shirt emblazoned with the slogan "I'm a bear lover," the bear's only

interest in the t-shirt is the take away food it contains. Even the most vegetarian of bears, and one of the most popular animals, the Giant Panda, has the bear's notorious temper. Pandas may appear playful and fun, but in reality, they're anti-social and aggressive. When two pandas meet, they're similar to the Gallagher brothers, trading insults, while punching each other in the face, hence the reason all giant pandas have black eyes. A professional cyclist in the US was in the habit of cycling through national parks and stopping off at intervals to take selfies of

bears he encountered, and posted pics of himself and the furry buddies he'd bonded with on social media. He was convinced if you were kind and friendly and wore a Paddington t-shirt, bears would reciprocate in kind and view you with respect. Unfortunately, the last bear he encountered, the last encounter he had with anything earthly, demonstrated how bears view cyclists as simply as a delivery of meals on wheels.

