



Free excerpt from “Adventures In Being” by Dean Weber

BOOK ONE

**ADVENTURES IN BEING:
HIKING THROUGH THE WOODS
& OTHER TALES**

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DEAN WEBER

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**To my karate student and friend – Barry –
there wouldn't have been these hikes without you**

“You are the weather vane and the wind.”

(A saying, or quotation from India – Source Unknown)

HIKING THROUGH THE WOODS

They say that every journey great or small, begins with a step – the first step. When people hike in the great outdoors, in the woods, where there is a great abundance of life all about, there is a tendency for the philosophical nature of those people to emerge. This is especially true where those people are living harried lives, and they come to the woods to hike, seeking a sort of refuge – both physical and mental. And, often, during the course of these hikes, ideas are exchanged, sometimes as a sort of therapy, a free association, and interesting visions are thereby created.

Hiking in the woods is never a stagnant reality – the environment changes dramatically from season to season, and the change also helps to engender fresh thoughts and dreams about the world in which we live.

The hike itself carries along the hikers, and they also change as the years go by. Hopefully, the hikers mature, and their personal visions change and perhaps, grow. Along the way, many interesting stories are created, and during the course of the years, some of them have been for posterity – for the possible enjoyment of all future hikers – be they in the woods, or, the world at large. Please consider joining us as we hike through the woods, and, through all aspects of reality.

HIKE 1

BUBBLE WORLD

Every good hike starts with a good stick—at least, that’s the way to hike in its most comfortable and enjoyable form. There’s nothing quite as satisfying as the feel of a good, solid hiking stick in one’s hands. Selecting such a stick is, in itself, a topic that could easily span hundreds of pages of detailed writing, including concepts such as the proper length, composition, texture, and firmness of the stick. Suffice it to say that it is an interesting topic, but for our beginning hike, I suggest that you pick up any good looking hard stick of suitable length, and begin the hike. At least, that is what I and my fellow hiker do and have done for well over

twenty years.

You have selected a suitable hiking stick, one that will aid you in walking through the woods, and in no way encumber you. Remember, the selection of an improper stick could very well HINDER your hiking ability and thereby your enjoyment. If the stick is too heavy, or it is too flexible, why then you may find your hike to be difficult indeed. Luckily, there is nothing better than a good stick, and so, select it carefully. You may very well find, as I have, that you use the same stick for many, many years.

What about companions? Should you hike alone, or with a buddy or two? I have been hiking for over twenty years with one particular friend, and this has been helpful in many ways. For one thing, having someone else along aids in comparing notes about the environment – its changes, and just plain helping in SEEING what’s going on. I mean, it’s hard to notice everything by yourself– so another pair of eyes and ears can’t hurt. Also, it can be a lot of fun just to have someone else along to bullshit with and, also, it might actually be a safety thing too – if you trip and get hurt – you have a friend to help you. One could easily write a book or two about the difference(s) between hiking alone and with a friend. I have always hiked with a friend, and it is those hikes about which I write herein.

You may want to consider bringing along provisions – but, here, our hikes are and were relatively short – no more than four miles, so we only brought along minimal amounts of water.

One of the great things about hiking is that it can help in keeping you in good physical condition. This is especially true where you hike, up and down sizeable hills, and along various types of terrain. In addition, you get the definite benefit of being in a lot of fresh air – especially when you hike through the woods.

So, we start hiking through the woods, my friend and I, each with

our very well worn walking sticks. The hike is almost always on a Friday – what better way to end the week? And, because it is the end of the week, we always bring refreshments with us, in the form of a pint (at least) of Johnny Walker Red, or, perhaps, Chivas. And, we also bring along a “joint” or two of some very nice potent marijuana. This is not an essential part of the hike – you can easily hike without any of these things. But, in the effort to be totally honest and forthright, I can say that these things, especially the latter, can aid in one’s visualizing reality, which includes all of the seen, and, the unseen aspects of our universe.

Usually, we hike for a good one half mile before either imbibing any Scotch, or, smoking any of the weed that we brought along. The first half mile is usually a good un-winding from the hectic week just passed. As we hike, we always take note of the environment, and that is a very multifaceted creature – the leaves, the moss, the mushrooms, all of these things are ever changing, and present themselves anew depending on the season. Nothing is ever the same in the woods.

The terrain itself is ever shifting and changing. After a few days, or even a day of rain, the forest floor becomes quite wet and muddy in most places. Hiking thereby, becomes a bit more difficult than in dry weather. Anyway, as mentioned, the first half mile of the hike is good for immediate un-winding. My friend and I take notice along the way of the numerous types of mushrooms and toadstools that present themselves. These fungi seem to be present year round, but especially in the spring and fall. They are quite interesting being of a multitude of shapes, sizes and colors. Who knows what medicinal values are stored therein? And, after about the first half-mile we normally would take a break, and start the festivities, with a nice healthy shot of scotch, and, often-times, a few good tokes of a nice joint. While doing these things, we rest, in a standing position, and just shoot the breeze a bit, talking usually about the week

just passed, politics, sports and the like.

It was the year 2003, and late fall had just arrived, sometime in late November of that year. My friend, whom I call “Egg” and I are just finishing the first half mile of the hike, with its accompanying provisions as mentioned. We are feeling very good, with the weather adding its own particular energizing effect. That is, it’s fairly brisk out, about the low forties in temperature, and it’s about 3:00 o’clock in the afternoon. We usually commence hiking at about 2:45. After resting and enjoying kibitzing a bit, we proceed to amble slowly on the well worn hiking trail that runs through this beautiful county park, situated in Suffolk County, Long Island. I shall leave the park nameless for fear that undue attention might be drawn to it, and it thereby be ruined. But, rest assured that the park does exist – it is quite real. Just the day before it had rained a good deal, and the floor of the forest and the hiking trail were fairly wet, but not unduly muddy. Our hiking sticks came in quite handy as a good means in preventing either of us from slipping and falling. A couple of hundred yards after drawing on our provisions and making use of same, we were beginning to feel very good indeed, and we were both drawing in large amounts of much needed fresh forest air – air unlike any other. The amount of oxygen in the middle of a forest must be quite high, as trees of course take in carbon dioxide and give off oxygen – without them, we would all be dead. Yes, in the middle of the forest, you feel very, very alive.

Anyway, Egg and I are walking on the somewhat wet trail, with our weekly hike well underway. Of course you can hike as much as you want, but my friend and I made it a habit over the course of some twenty years to hike once per week, on a Friday. We walk, not too briskly, but rather purposely at a moderate pace, because we want to observe as much as we can – going too fast could kill that idea. We always stop and pause to

notice, and, point out to each other a newly blossoming plant, or, a newly observed stand of mushrooms. It’s very good to have several pairs of eyes, because one person can easily miss things. Of course, the slightly altered state that our “provisions” put us in helps to “see” things that we might otherwise miss, or simply not care to observe. Sometimes otherwise mundane things become interesting when you enter a slightly “altered state.” Please recall that it is by no means necessary to enter such a state to enjoy a hike – but it does make it interesting.

Being late November, the light from the sun is already beginning to become ameliorated, but the rays are still gorgeously filtering through the few remaining leaves that adorn the trees of the forest. There are many tall oaks, tons of ash trees, maples, and a lot of low lying plants such as rhododendron and andromeda. And of course, myriads of fungi. We are hiking slowly, laughing a lot, as we are wont to do on these beautiful hiking Fridays, and suddenly, Egg and I perceive something quite interesting looming about twenty feet in front of us. “Looming” is somewhat of a misnomer, because the thing that we saw was very, very small – but, because of its uniqueness, it caught our attention – actually, it caught my attention first, and I then yelled out, “Hey Egg, look at this!” My friend, who was only a few short paces ahead of me, turned about to look at what I had found. At first, he couldn’t see it – after all, you don’t often see something suspended in mid-air – at least not a natural phenomenon. And yet, there it was. Right in front of us, hanging on an unbelievably fine thread of water, dangling from a tree, was a very, very, very small bubble of water. The bubble was no more than one-one hundred of an inch in diameter, and it was crystal clear. The thread of water was about ten feet long, and was attached, at its upper extremity, to a branch of the tree. The other end of the water thread was attached to the bubble, which was dangling at my eye level, or about five feet ten inches

off the forest floor.

My friend and I had been hiking for a period spanning, as I mentioned earlier, about twenty years, and this suspended bubble was definitely something new – a totally unique sight. There was, it seemed, just the right balancing of forces to make the bubble’s existence even possible. Gravity, the ever present pull on all of us, was threatening to snap the watery thread that kept the bubble suspended. But somehow, the thread had just the right integrity, or as Buckminster Fuller might have said, “tensegrity,” to remain suspended. And, fortunately for the bubble, and its contained world, the wind was not blowing, and apparently no other hiker had seen nor disturbed the bubble-world. The fragility of the bubble and its contents was quite apparent to both Egg and myself. Actually, in a way, it wasn’t really a bubble at all, but rather a suspended drop of water with a very, very minute, tiny part at the very center that contained a non-watery substance that had to be air - hence it was a bubble – just mostly filled with water. But a bubble it was, just the same.

Egg and I both stared at the bubble in rapt amazement. It was amazingly clear, and the water inside, only a few trillion molecules worth, were swirling around, like an ocean, with its own tides and currents. The rays of the sun also imparted their own little effect – the bubble caused the rays to shimmer through, and little sparkles of light could be seen entering and emanating from the bubble. Whatever occupants the bubble might house were getting their fill of the life giving force that all of us receive from old sol. The star’s effect is felt by all things, the very large, and, it seemed, the very, very small.

We observed the bubble-world. And a world it was. Without a doubt. The bubble was a world – it contained, I am sure, creatures, microbes such as most of us learned about in high school – amoeba, paramecium, and the like. Perhaps a hydra or two. Anyway, certainly this

was no barren world. I mean, what would be the point of having a bubble suspended in such an incredibly unlikely manner, and have no occupants within? There would be no meaning for that because a lifeless bubble would have no reason to be so suspended. But with occupants, with lives to protect, well then the bubble had a purpose – to house and shield the life within from the vagaries and dangers of the outside world. And not just the bubble was important – but the thread of water that was attached to the tree branch from which the bubble dangled – that was very important too. For if THAT snapped, then the bubble would come crashing down, and hit the forest floor. And while we know that bubbles can be quite strong relative to their size, surely a fall from five feet ten inches would be fatal to the integrity (or tensegrity) of the bubble’s structure. The result would be the breaching of the bubbler’s walls – a collapse so to speak, and the bubble, and it’s world of beings within, would be terminated. The water within would, upon impact with the forest floor, burst out and fall aimlessly on the floor. The creatures and beings within would immediately be thrust into a newly chaotic world – where they could, and most definitely would fall prey to a whole host of enemy creatures, and, perhaps worse, the alien environment itself. A world of soil, leaves, rocks, and also, a cold world temperature wise, in that the watery world of the bubble provided for a fairly ambient temperature range, varying even at night, no more than five degrees. This bubble had meaning – to preserve and defend its occupants, and to do that, the bubble had to fight for its existence, lest those occupants surely be destroyed.

And the occupants, too, had “responsibilities.” Those incredibly tiny probably one-celled creatures, had to make sure, in their own tiny willed way, that they did nothing to hurt or infringe upon the wall of the bubble. In a very real sense, they had had to refrain from bursting their own bubble. Because, their bubble, as we have seen, was their world. Their

bubble, floating in the forest air, was a very, very precarious thing indeed. And, sadly, even with the most fastidiousness of care, even with the most scrupulous use of safety techniques to avoid bursting their bubble, it's very safe to say that the life span of the bubble-world was quite short, at least from this human's perspective. Egg and I roughly calculated, taking into effect the pull of gravity, the likelihood of wind gusts and the like, that this bubble world was likely NOT to exist at all in a few hours. Egg and I pontificated upon this rather sad thought, and for a brief second, we both got a little morose thinking about the impending doom that was to befall this bubble world. At least, I know that I got morose. Egg probably had his own set of unspoken thoughts. I mean, when a whole world – a universe of sorts is known to be coming to an end, well most rational people find that kind of sad, don't they?

The one thing that Egg and I knew for sure was that WE were not going to be the cause of that bubble-world's collapse. WE respected all of the things of the forest – all of its inhabitants, all of its worlds - in fact, we respected and respect all of it. We always made and make every attempt to leave things as we find them - and that is exactly what we did with the bubble-world. We left it dangling in mid air. We slowly moved on, a bit sadder than before we had stumbled upon that microscopic universe. But we knew that there was nothing that we could do to save that world. As with most great events in nature, such as supernovae and the like, we had to let nature take its course – we could not alter fate – no one can. And so, we left the bubble-world, and its inhabitants, to face their own future.