

But What About the Bears?

DON'T LET IRRATIONAL FEARS KEEP YOU FROM INCREDIBLE ADVENTURES

This time last year, I wrote a newsletter cover article entitled "For the First Time," which explored the influences that doing something you've never done before can have on your life. I decided that each year I would do something new and challenging — something that would push me out of my comfort zone. In 2019, I ran a half-marathon (my knees still hurt!). While I could consider surviving COVID-19 a new challenge in and of itself, I was able to manage a small yet meaningful "first" in 2020 as well. I climbed a mountain in the dark to watch the sun rise and it was *awesome!*

Let me remind you that I am a city boy, born and raised in East Boston. Because of that, I am not fearful of the urban environment at all. Walking in a so-called rough neighborhood at night never scared me. However, as I got older, I developed a love of the woods, mountains, and natural landscapes. I love to hike, climb mountains, ski, cycle, snowshoe, and anything else that gets me out in the wild near our home in New Hampshire. But (and this is a big "but"), I am afraid of bears. They are everywhere I like to roam, and I don't ever want to encounter one.

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"I never go into the woods in the dark — or at least, I didn't before Sept. 5, 2020."

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There hasn't been a fatal bear attack in New Hampshire since 1784, and bears normally don't want anything to do with hikers. However, these facts have not assuaged my irrational fear of bears. So, I usually do most of my big hikes in the winter both because of the beauty and the fact that bears aren't very active during the winter. And I never go into the woods in the dark — or at least, I didn't before Sept. 5, 2020.

I had always heard stories and seen pictures of other hikers summiting mountains in time to catch the sunrise. The pictures were gorgeous, and the stories of the pre-dawn hikes were inspiring. I was jealous and wanted that experience, but I was too afraid of those darn bears to hike in the dark. However, getting sick with COVID-19 in March changed my mind. It was scary as hell, but luckily my family and I came through okay. After that I figured, what are the chances of getting COVID-19 and being attacked by a bear in the same year? I assumed the odds were close to zero, so I decided to suck it up, put on a headlamp, and get my butt into the woods for a sunrise summit adventure.

On the morning of Sept. 5, my wife, two neighbors of ours, and I ventured out at 4:00 a.m. and began hiking Mount Kearsarge in New Hampshire to catch sunrise at 6:15 a.m. It was a beautiful morning, crisp and exhilarating. The dense forest blotted out the moonlight as we ascended the steep trail in pitch blackness. Our headlamps lit the path ahead for a few steps, but our peripheral field of vision was black as tar. I imagined every



rustle of leaves in the darkness to be some huge, angry, and hungry mother bear, even though it was probably just field mice. Okay, I might not have been that on edge, but hiking in the dark still spooked me a bit.

I am happy to report we made it to the top with no wildlife encounters, and I can honestly say I enjoyed every step. Watching the sunrise on a crisp, clear day in the mountains was spectacular. The photographs included in this article do not do justice to just how beautiful the world looks at elevation while the sun is coming up over the distant mountains. Without going over the top with superlatives, suffice it to say I was moved!

If there's an adventure you've put off because of fear, think hard about whether your fear is fact-based or irrational. Don't spend forever going back and forth in your mind. If you conclude your fear is not well founded, just do it! I am glad I did. Now, I want to do the same hike solo to fully face my fears. Hiking with others gave me some comfort that I'd like to remove on my next adventure into the darkness. Stay tuned!

-Len Spada

The Disturbing Implications of ‘The Social Dilemma’

AND WHAT WE CAN DO TO PREVENT THEM

We've all had those moments at work, at home, or in the middle of dinner with our family where we pick up our phone just to check our email or social media really quick, only to stay on far longer than we intended. Where does that time go, and how does our phone swallow up so much of it? Well, if you've seen the new film on Netflix called "The Social Dilemma," you'll know that the addictiveness of social media isn't a flaw in the programming — it's a feature.

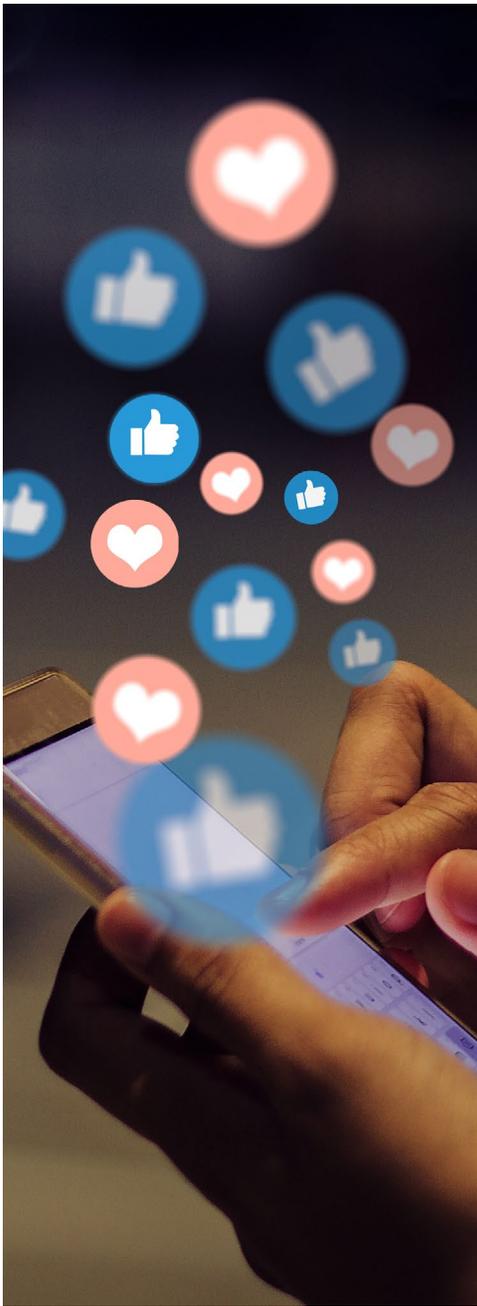
Through a series of interviews with former top executives at some of the world's largest tech companies, including Google, Facebook, and Twitter, we learn throughout the documentary how programmers are trained to understand the psychology of the human mind and create apps and media that are designed to keep our attention on the screen in order to sell it to advertisers. In fact, the artificial intelligence these programmers create often know our online patterns better than we know them ourselves!

Now, that alone is pretty disturbing. A computer shouldn't know so much about me that it can control my thoughts and behaviors.

But, in an era of misinformation and fake news, "The Social Dilemma" shows how social media's persuasiveness and addictive powers can do real harm. Anyone who knows the latest outrage in society can see that social media played a part in propagating it, no matter how true the information behind the outrage actually is.

So, with that in mind, how do we break our addiction to social media? Luckily, the documentary is not without some answers. Some of the interviewees talk about how they set limits with their kids on how often they can be on social media during the day. Others removed social media from their phone completely. As simple as these methods sound, they can go far in breaking the hold that social media has on your mind.

We might not be able to be completely free of social media in this day and age (unless you become a hermit and live in the woods with the bears), but knowing now that we have to fight for our own attention, we can make sure we don't become mindless, social media-addicted drones.



REVIEW OF THE MONTH

"In March, my husband and I were attacked by our neighbor's dog in our own backyard. We were unhappy with the first attorney representing us and decided to seek a second opinion. We found Spada Law Group and have been working with Attorney Len Spada. He has gone above and beyond in helping us navigate these difficult times. We cannot thank him enough for all of his time, patience, and advice with our case!!"

-Hillary V.



Tips for Fall Cycling in New England

Don't Leave the House Until You Take Care of These Items!

Even though the leaves that make us the envy of the country during autumn are fast disappearing as we move toward another harsh New England winter, November is still a great month to enjoy bike rides. Riding your bike in the fall can mean overcoming some unique challenges, but luckily, with these seven tips, that shouldn't require much effort.

- 1. Know sunrise and sunset times.** The days are getting shorter and shorter. The last thing you want is to get caught on a bike ride in the dark without any night riding equipment.
- 2. Keep an eye out for leafy hazards.** Autumn foliage in New England is beautiful, but when it's on the road, it can make for some pretty slippery conditions. Take in the natural beauty, but don't let it lead you through dangerous patches of fallen leaves.
- 3. Make yourself visible.** Riding on roads, especially in the twilight hours, can be especially dangerous if drivers can't see you. Always wear reflective clothing and make sure your bike has front and rear frame lights.
- 4. Keep out of the cold and wet.** Improper clothing can turn the best fall bike rides into uncomfortable slogs. Never ride anywhere without the

basics: arm and leg warmers, gloves, and a windproof jacket.

- 5. Check your tires.** The tires that got you through your summer rides might not be as durable and strong against the slippery, icy autumn roads as is necessary. If so, replace your tires with ones that grip the road, ensuring your next ride is a safe one.
- 6. Stay hydrated (even if you're not thirsty).** Cold weather constricts our blood vessels, which reduces our thirst levels, but that doesn't mean we need to hydrate less. Remember to drink water while you ride, even when it doesn't feel necessary.
- 7. Tune up your bike.** If you haven't in a while, check and clean your brakes, gears, and other moving parts. This will ensure a smoother, safer ride, where you can be sure that your brakes will work as intended.

If you find yourself in a bicycle crash in the Boston area, always make sure you understand your legal rights before you make any decisions. The Spada Law Group website has plenty of free resources that you can use to educate yourself. However, if you have any questions, give us a call or text us at 617.889.5000 for a FREE consultation.



Local Chef's Corner

Apple Pie Cupcakes: Where New Meets Tried and True

These cupcakes are a new twist on an old classic that any apple pie fan is sure to love. The original recipe is available on InspiredTaste.net.

INGREDIENTS

Cupcakes

- 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- 2 large baking apples, peeled, cored, and diced into 1/4-inch cubes
- 2 tbsp brown sugar
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/8 tsp salt
- Juice from half a lemon
- 1 can (8 count) refrigerated cinnamon roll dough

Topping

- 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup chopped nuts

DIRECTIONS

- 1. For filling:** Melt butter in pan over medium heat. Add diced apples and stir occasionally until softened. Stir in brown sugar, cinnamon, and salt. Cook until tender. Stir in lemon juice.
- 2. For topping:** Add flour, brown sugar, and walnuts in a bowl. Then, stir in the butter with fork until mixture is crumbly.
- 3. To finish:** Separate cinnamon rolls and flatten each one into cups in a muffin pan. Put a serving of filling and topping in each. Bake 10-15 minutes, then cool for 5 minutes before transferring to cooling rack. Serve with whipped cream, ice cream, or caramel sauce on top.

WORD SEARCH

C L T H S W N U L U Z D R B Y
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THE 11TH HOUR OF THE 11TH DAY OF THE 11TH MONTH

WHY VETERANS DAY AND THE NUMBER 11 GO HAND IN HAND

Veterans Day comes every Nov. 11. It's a national holiday that recognizes veterans who served in the United States Armed Forces and honors those both living and deceased. Historically, the day marks Armistice Day and the end of the Great War: World War I. But what is the significance of the number 11?

The armistice was signed at 5:45 a.m. in France, but it took effect at 11 a.m. that same morning – which happened to be Nov. 11, 1918. The armistice originally lasted 36 days but was extended month after month. This led to the signing of the Treaty of Versailles on June 28, 1919, when peace was officially declared.

Later that year, President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed that Nov. 11 would be known as Armistice Day to honor those who fought in the Great War. This lasted until 1954, when President Dwight Eisenhower

signed a proclamation turning Armistice Day into Veterans Day.

The change was made in order to recognize all veterans who had honorably served their country. By 1954, the U.S. had fought in more wars – specifically World War II and the Korean War – and hundreds of thousands more Americans had served.



Unsurprisingly, there was some political drama surrounding the day. In 1968, Congress made Veterans Day a federal holiday under the Uniform Holiday Bill. The idea was to increase the number of three-day weekends in the year. Veterans Day became a holiday that would fall on the fourth Monday of October, a far cry from Nov. 11.

However, in 1978, Veterans Day was restored to its original Nov. 11 date. But why?

The answer is simple. It's a number that sticks with you. When the clock strikes 11:11, you always take notice. By that same notion, we all remember the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. Because of this, we'll never forget the end of the Great War, nor will we forget those who served.