



EMPERORS AND GODS

A Guide to New Zealand Small Adventure Business Ownership

Grant Beaven

Another adventure book by this Author,

Nixon's Guide Sheets:

Freedom Canoe the Whanganui River, editions 1 - 4

Emperors and Gods:

A Guide to New Zealand Small Adventure Business Ownership ©
Grant Beaven 2018

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Preface: short story 'The Rope Climber' © Grant Beaven 2018

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To my friends and colleagues

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PREFACE

THE ROPE CLIMBER

...the dream ends at last, in terror. Then, it's on to the next. Another familiar one. The Rope Climbing Dream. It begins; we are all on the Rope.

Knowing what the reply will be, I ask, 'What are we doing? What are the rules?' I ask because I like the answer...

'To move up, you have to help. You have to be helpful,' says a man who hangs half from the Rope and half from me.

You have to be helpful. Good. I'm helpful and this is a simple rule. A part of me believes I'm simple, too. So, I set to work. The Rope is thick, very long and has a thin film of dark grease from hands and bare feet which makes it slightly slick. It's tethered somewhere far above me, far enough that when I lean back to see past the other climbers, its top is not visible. Nearest the tethering-point the Rope swings hardly at all. Further down, it swings some and at the lower reaches, it is wild. There are knots of all kinds spaced unevenly along its length to assist us in clinging to it. Looped ones like Directional Figure-8s or fabulous Alpine Butterflies are the best because you can stand in the loops or hook a forearm. But these knots are more common higher up. Lower down, we have simple over-hand knots providing just a bump along the Rope's length.

There aren't enough knots for everyone and from time to time, someone will lose their grip and fall - this is why we have the rule; be helpful.

I like to help. It feels good to bring people up from below me - from the wildest part of the rope. The work is hard, but I'm strong and I share my strength freely. Others are less strong. I don't know how they hold on and I get a special thrill helping these ones climb. We are all one long, tangled group striving and working - the goal; upwards. At times, I have three from below clinging to me; a hanger from my shoulders, an arm-wrapper round my waist and a swinger from one of my legs. Often, a bare foot will press on my forehead from above as someone uses me as a step. There is fun in the discomfort and cheer in our fellowship of suffering. It's hard work without respite. But we keep on.

Hanging from the Rope is tiring. Painful aching in our muscles is inevitable but outside of my dreams I've been a Rock-climbing Instructor and I realise here is a way I can be even more helpful. I teach all who'll listen to consider their core as they rise, deliver their next move with hips and trunk, keep their balance, climb with graceful cadence and 'when paused between one move and the next, hang from your bones and let your muscles rest!' Am I wearing myself out? Perhaps, but I am happy.

This is the part of the dream when I meet *Her*. I know her name, but I won't tell it. I've known her for a long time, but she always arrives from below me on the Rope. We work together as a team, stealing glances at each-other while we lift those about us. I feel very bold and very calm with *Her* by me. Her grace is a match to my strength and now I am even happier! But, after a time, she says she wants to go higher up the Rope.

'Come with me,' she urges. And I know I will... after helping a few more people climb.

'I'll be right behind you, just as soon as...' But she has already gone. It doesn't matter. I'll follow her soon. And I return to a rhythm.

Or, not quite a rhythm. Wouldn't it be better if we more effectively work together? Everyone is so different; different shapes and different abilities... different degrees of helpfulness. There could not be a rhythm, but maybe... maybe I could devise a way, a system of shared movement. As I help people about me, I plan in my head a new strategy to our tough existence on the Rope. At last, my idea is complete, and it is elegant. It's simple, but it will be revolutionary. I name it the Grant Cooperative Climbing System and I recruit some people nearby on the Rope to help me put it into action. It works! Soon, with my system solidly in place, I will climb after *Her* and she and I will be together, somewhere higher up.

It's time to go but before I can give my goodbyes, one of my recruits 'Andy', says to me, 'This is a great system, Grant. I'm going to climb higher. I'll teach it to the people up there. That way, it'll filter downwards, and everyone's lives will be easier!' He beams at me, then he says, 'Come on guy's!' And he takes the other recruits.

I look below and see many more people making their way up. They will all need my help. So, I begin again. I find it more difficult now to engage new recruits. Some of my boldness is gone. But I settle back into the job of helping, although my Grant Cooperative Climbing System is less effective. I find this fact very embarrassing, so I begin to think of ways to simplify my system even further; make it less reliant on recruits, more likely not to fail and provide a better chance of success for everyone, not just for a few. It'll be then I'll make my way up to *Her*.

It's during this prolonged period of thinking and helping that I hear Andy's name again. From above me, someone says, 'Have you heard of the new Rope-climbing method? They use it higher up the Rope. 'The Andy Cooperative Climbing System', it's called. But it hasn't reached down here, yet.'

'Hey, that's *my* system!' I cry. 'It's the *Grant* Cooperative Climbing System, not the Andy Cooperative Climbing System!'

The people close turn on me, 'You didn't come up with it. Ideas come from higher up the Rope, not this part of the Rope. You're a liar!' And they jostle me, stomping from above, tugging from below and tearing at my clothes. Fearing I'm in danger of falling, I climb down beyond the worst of the kicks which eventually, people tire of. I go back to the job of helping those below me climb their way up but on this lower part, I need to hold on far more tightly, as I'm now on the wild part of the Rope where there are fewer helpful knots and with the passing of more people, there is more dark grease.

This is not to say I help less. I continue to help, of course, though I am subdued. After some time, the Andy Cooperative Climbing System makes it down the Rope even to me. And now that I'm using it once more, especially while on this wilder part of the Rope, I see its flaws clearly. At last, after a long time of people clambering up my body, lifting them with my free hand or letting them dangle from my legs for a rest, I have solved the problems within my climbing system. But, will anyone listen to it? Over time my work has made me ugly. I've been climbed over by uncounted people and my clothes are torn and filthy. And I'm at the bottom of the Rope. The wild part. Could anyone take me seriously as I swing about this way? I think of *Her*, again. If not for everyone else, I will be helpful for *Her*. But picturing her in my mind, I feel ashamed. I'm far below her, by now (have I not helped well enough?). I look at my hands and feet; grimy, dried-out, reddened and cracked from use. She will be disgusted by me. Before I regather my boldness, I need... I need moisturiser. And in the dream, I am rubbing hand-cream into my feet and hands. It makes a small difference to my ugliness but causes a drastic reduction in grip. I'm now holding on to the Rope with all my might, just to stay in place. It's now or never, I make my pitch...

'Shut-up, Grant!' The people growl. 'We only just got this new climbing system and now you want to change it?' The kicks and shoves and pulls renew. 'Why can't you just be helpful? You aren't following the rules. *You're no help!*'

In the terrifying seconds before I fall, I allow myself for the first time to wonder what might be down there. I think it's this thought, a thought of things off and away from the Rope which brings the dream to an end.

I flex stiff fingers and await the beginning to the next one...

DISCLAIMER

The nature of adventure activities is dynamic. They can be unpredictable and have uncertain outcomes. The reading of this book will not make you an expert instructor, guide or business owner. The Author accepts no responsibility for injury to or negative experience or death of persons, nor equipment loss or damage, nor litigation against your business, nor your business's lack of financial success or its failure.

My first reason for writing this book is to examine, process and come to terms with my own harmful employment experiences. And, to prove to myself that I have worked hard and that I've worked well, in spite of having nothing to show for it. I want to prove to myself that I exist. My second reason is to help businesses in the New Zealand adventure industry be better. It is not my intention to encourage or train employers in mischievous or illegal behaviour, but I *do* wish to express that in my experience, mischievous and illegal behaviour in the adventure industry is deeply embedded, sustained and normalized within the culture. I want readers to come to terms with this as *fact*, as I must. I wish no-one any harm, but I don't apologize to those who may find this book an uncomfortable read. I couldn't have written it if I was sorry for that.

INTRODUCTION

My name is Grant Beaven. Beyond this, I don't know who I am. I've considered that perhaps I'm alien. Alien concerns, alien values, alien hurts. I only know what work I've done, what has been done to me, and I've tried to learn from it all. I'm the sum of this equation, but its answer is beyond my calculation, yet. One thing I do know, is that I like to help. I like to be of service. It's to this end that I present this book. I hope you find it helpful and I hope you see that it presents more than a single path. There are more ways to be than one way. Perhaps, beyond anything, I hope you like me. After all, as ever, I am your servant.

If you're considering beginning an adventure company, striking-out on your own, you'll need to be brave and you'll need to be committed. There are two ways of viewing the path ahead for a good person like you; one path will draw you toward it from within yourself and one path will draw you toward it from without. The first is to be a *provider*. The second is to be an *extractor*. Do you want to serve people, or do you want to mine them?

Sometimes, the hardest thing is to continue being good, because as an employer in New Zealand you are special. Your status is exalted and unquestioned. Ordinary New Zealanders owe you everything because you lay it all on the line on a daily basis. There are as many

of you per capita in this country as there are anywhere else in the world, so we could say that this country is kept functioning by small business owners. And of course, your employees owe you everything, too. To them, you are an Emperor. This also is how it can be. But, why merely be an emperor when you can be a God? Remember, the soul of an emperor is not the soul of a person.

Please see that this book is presented in a style which could cause my intent to be easily mis-read. So, let me spell it out for you: For those readers who are of the Authorities the book holds a flashlight for you, so your hands may finally be free. For those readers who are emperors of the adventure industry already the book holds a mirror. For those readers who are customers of adventure businesses this book is a chance to see hitherto shadowed truths. For those readers who work in the adventure industry the book says the things you mayn't say. And, for those readers who wish to be emperors it presents a choice.

WHO CAN RUN A SMALL ADVENTURE BUSINESS?

Anyone. Anyone can run a small adventure business. For many people, being their own boss is the only way to live and there is nothing standing in your way of making this a reality, except perhaps, yourself. Hard work, long hours, financial risk; these thoughts will be front of mind for most looking to break out on their own, but there is an area of thought many forget to consider: where do you sit on the moral spectrum? This is an important consideration because unless you're among the few who have invented, chanced upon or noticed an untapped market or opportunity, you will be steering your adventure business directly into the headwinds of established competition. Here, you'll see the best and the worst of behaviour and you need to decide whether to commit to both. This is especially true if your business model is similar-to or basically a carbon copy of the already established businesses in your field. And let's be honest, would your bank or angel investor or parents-in-law have funded you into business if you departed from industry status-quo? No. So, maybe you commit to it all. Good business practice and bad. Can you handle that? OK. Because this book will deal with both.

Here's why: Rules. And when we talk about rules in business, we are really talking about Laws. The laws of our land keep the great machinery of the country's economy running smoothly. This in turn allows society to work. The laws are essential for social cohesion. They're also essential for getting ahead, but not in the way you think. To get ahead, you must have a complete

understanding of the laws, so you can know when to break them. It's in this way you're able to reduce competition's headwind. Follow the rules when everyone else does, you stay with the pack. Be the only one who follows the rules and you'll be left behind. At the very least, you need to break the same rules as everyone else, but, getting ahead of the pack will usually mean breaking rules no one else is.

Let's return to the original question; Who can run an adventure business? These days, there is little need to be an expert in the thing, product or service you wish to trade in. Why not? Paperwork. Qualifying paperwork has allowed participation of those without any experience in - or will to learn of - the activity they intend to operate. The industrywide audit scheme put an end to this and changed the adventure industry irrevocably. Also, bear in mind that industry experienced staff are expensive. You can show a new, inexperienced recruit the paperwork you have, bestow upon them an experienced sounding job-title and your obligations are fulfilled. You may even have avoided paying anyone, at all. When it doesn't matter where you get your staff, there are plenty of opportunities to recruit them for free.

WHY AN ADVENTURE BUSINESS?

There are two reasons. The first is *glamour*. The second reason is that you can operate outside of the Law whenever necessary with hardly any risk.

Let's examine glamour first. Bubbling from deep within everyone's understanding of the of the word 'adventure' are feelings of romance and excitement. The tight-rope walk of danger versus safety, self-harm versus self-improvement. Laughing in the face of doom, freeing mind and spirit by relinquishing control of the body. Challenge and survival. Sun-bleached hair and chapped-lipped smiles. Suffering and succeeding alone or as a grinning, muddy group. This is what you are selling, this is what your customers are buying. Intangibility is your friend in both marketing and customer satisfaction. But best of all is that you can literally dress yourself up in all this glamour even if you've never actually partaken in the activity yourself. It's the ultimate case of the emperor without clothes but with your adventure audit legitimacy no-one will realise you're nude. You will look like a provider. Even if you're an extractor, you will look like a provider.

And the Law. From time to time, an opportunity will present itself. But, to seize it, a law will need to be evaded. At other times broken. A true emperor makes their own law. And, here again, intangibility is your friend. Is this staff member an employee or a tourist? At

what point does work-based training become work? Who's even working? Aren't we all just having fun? Even if you do find yourself cornered into admitting making little errors here or there, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, the Employment Relations Authority and the Inland Revenue Department are staffed with lovely people who are extremely pragmatic, helpful and forgiving. The Department of Health and Safety will only get excited if you don't have health and safety paperwork. But you can copy and paste that from the internet the same day you register your company name. Of the adventure industry you might ask: if laws can be ignored without consequences, should we even consider them laws? Or, should we view them merely as helpful guidelines or a state-suggested hypothetical template for the efficient operation of business? It's a free country and you are free to be a ruler of your corner of it. Intangibility. In the words of the great Bruce Lee: 'Be like water, my friend'.

WHICH TYPE OF ADVENTURE BUSINESS SHOULD I OPERATE?

This is a legitimately difficult question in this country. We are spoiled for choice. In every corner of the land there are opportunities apparent, each one with benefits and challenges, depending on what it is you wish to achieve. If you wish to run a multi-activity adventure centre offering full-day or multiday adventure challenge or educational programmes, geographical isolation and close-proximity to natural resources like rivers and mountains is an obvious advantage. If you sell short bursts of adventure, all done in less than an afternoon, you'll want other traders of adventure activities nearby, because customers might not journey long distances for just one thrill. An area's infrastructure is important. Do your customers like 'to rough it', or do they prefer the conveniences and comforts of home? Areas known for wide ranges of activities will attract more varied and longer-term visitors – and you'll have your pick of many of these to employ as staff members.

Let's select a few different business types to examine in brief:

Transport Company: If you already have a transport company, almost any adventure activity added will provide you with instant glamour. You're a shuttle service, basically, but if you shuttle customers to and from an adventurous activity – a mountain walk, a self-guided river journey – they will assume you are an expert - a mountaineer, a river-guide. You aren't and there's no need to be,

but that doesn't mean they need to know that. But, it won't stop there; the authorities will also believe you're an expert. They'll have proof of this in the paperwork you got from the internet. Soon, even *you* will come to believe you're an expert. This is arguably the easiest adventure company to run, and many operators find it simple enough to combine this with equipment rentals such as canoe-hire. Your company's soul is in 'transportation', but your bottom line will benefit from the added value while you benefit personally from the added glamour. The customers of shuttle companies are travellers without vehicles or with only a single vehicle. Your base of operations will need to be where they can find accommodation. A hotspot where a variety of activities are is best.

Equipment Hire Company: The core idea of an equipment-hire company's concept is simple, but the type of activity you serve will determine the level of complication. They can be expensive to set up, depending on the activity, but once they are going, profits can be huge. With activities like stand-up paddle-boarding or skiing, the closer you are to where your customers will use the equipment, the better. This isn't so important for canoe-hire outfits because the canoes will go on your company trailer to get them to the river - the customers won't take their hire-gear themselves the way they can when they go skiing. There are other differences, too. To hire canoes to customers, you need zero expertise because you can trick them into believing that you're an expert with few potential negative consequences to the company - the interconnecting factors of the activity are relatively simple, until things start going wrong - but to hire skis it's essential to understand how the equipment works, how the activity works, the science which drives weather and snow and road conditions, how details of the operation of the ski resort work, how to diagnose customer skill levels and heaps of other details that will help your business run efficiently, keep your customers happy and your costs low. This applies to your staff, too, but don't worry, experienced ski shop staff are easy to find because it's a fun industry to be involved in.

Business will fluctuate dramatically due to weather, weekends, school holidays, inaccurate weather forecasting or people simply forgetting about the snow as winter fades. Overreaching financially is a risk, but you must keep your stock up to date and in good condition. You'll become a weather expert, praying for good weekends and great school holidays – most seasons you will have no more than three months to earn your annual income. Now, for any hire company, there's something interesting going on with the customers; when a customer has a 'not negative' experience with their rental equipment, they will likely be your return customer forever - assuming their go at the activity wasn't a one-off try. People go with what they know. It will usually take quite a bad experience for them to leap into unknown territory by trying a different operator. Even price can have little effect. This means that multiple hire companies existing in the same area can deliver wildly varying levels of product and service quality, as long as the customer population is big enough. Even in a highly competitive market, it can take forever for an equipment-hire shop to die. Hire shops grow mainly from gaining new customers to the activity, not from poaching them from their competitors. When it comes to the authorities, there are differences in the ways various types of hire companies are viewed. It comes down to what information you impart to customers. You'll need to be health and safety certified if you hire equipment and instruct - even in part - the customer in how to *do* the activity. You hire out a canoe, you teach the customer *how* to canoe, you need health and safety paperwork. Not so with skiing. You hire out the skis and explain how they attach to the ski-boots, so the customer can get started but you *don't* teach them how to ski. This means you've no need to be health and safety registered. The ironic thing to note here is that the person renting out a set of skis is likely an expert in the industry while the person renting a canoe and explaining its use likely has never canoed before. Weird, huh?

Adventure Centre: The good thing about an adventure centre is the variety of adventure or even non-adventure programmes you can run. This means your potential customer base is virtually unlimited. For this reason, you should be able to operate year-round. A rarity in the adventure industry. There are quite a few working parts with this kind of business, especially if you offer a diverse range of programmes - not least because most will be residential, customers staying onsite - so key staff will be important, especially those hard to replace ones like administrative staff, programme coordinators/managers and kitchen managers/cooks. Instructors are a dime a dozen in this country, especially if you're running entry-level, low skill programmes. You can pick up internationals with visa exchange programmes to reduce costs, but even locally sourced instructors and other staff members can be found quite cheaply if you catch them in between work periods. The potentially complicated nature of the way the business runs will require good decision-making from you. If you aren't an expert, expect a high turnover of staff, safety issues and the quality of programmes coming nowhere near their potential. All this complication will also be reflected in your paperwork. Unlike the guiding industry, it's best not to take shortcuts here. Your paperwork must be written by an expert or experts. It needs to also relate to the ways you actually-do things. This is more difficult than it sounds. If you as emperor aren't an expert, you will rely wholly on your paperwork. You'll view it as the only way things must be done. You'll likely fill your company with inexperienced staff who cannot but do things the way they are written. Programmes and activities will be formulaic in how they're presented and run. They'll happen the same way no matter what. Skilled staff, however, will understand the paperwork, view what they've read as defining limits and never ignore industry safety standards, but they won't see the paperwork as a prescription of the only way to do things. They'll work *within* the paper-work, but their goals will align with more accuracy to those

of the customers. They will be more dynamic in the ways they present activities and programmes, more creative, more adaptive to changing circumstances and far, far safer. They will have judgment. But, can you handle working with experts? People who know more than you do? Most adventure centres will be based near natural features like mountains for off-site activities, they'll be some distance from main centres for a sense of isolation and have onsite activity facilities at the centre itself, like ropes courses and climbing walls. The more of these facilities, the better, because programme design can be more diverse, expanding your customer base. With good enough staff, solid enough operating systems and enough space, you may even be able to run over-lapping programmes, maximising income potential and more reliably provide your staff with work. This is another enterprise where you can easily retain return business. People don't shop around, they go with what they know. This can even be said of the styles of programmes they request, too; school groups will be your most regular return customers and even if they specifically ask for something new and different to what they've done before, the senior school staff will be uncomfortable with ideas which they can't easily imagine, even if there is evidence of the efficacy of new philosophical departures from the status-quo. They'll ask for something new, but they want the comfort of the old. This reduces your need for skilled staff because repetition is favoured over innovation.

Guiding Company: These outfits have the initial appearance of being a simple business, but you can make life extremely complicated, depending on which business model you pick. *Structured season or un-structured season* – I'll examine this point later. Long periods of the year will have no cash-flow, so you'll need to factor this into your financial forecasting. It's possible to run an adventure guiding operation within employment law but only if you choose a scheduled season business model. The transient nature of people in the industry means that it's easy to find guides

who happen to have a spare few days between jobs. But, it's becoming difficult to find longer commitment because the adventure guiding industry has been so determinedly racing to the bottom that skilled, experienced New Zealand guides know they'll only be exploited. In fact, it's rare now to see New Zealanders working as guides, unless they are freelance contractors recruited for short periods as a last resort. But Internationals are easily recruited, won't consider employment law, will work for free or for low rates and haven't already been burned by employers before, the way their New Zealand contemporaries have. And, they no longer need adventure industry experience or qualifications for the same reasons you don't. Adventure audit. Just make sure they read your paperwork. Many guides, whether locals or internationals, will have no formal training anymore. Everything they know about the activity they guide will have been learned from others with no formal training.

Not for profit organization: There are many charitable organizations operating in the adventure industry. Some begin and end in a particular-pursuit, with a narrow focus on activities like surfing. They'll have straightforward aims, objectives and operating procedures and as a result will be able to quantify their outcomes and show how they are of value. Others will have wide interests in social areas with an adventure focused department as one of these. These organizations can be forests of bureaucracy. Bigger ones will have operating boards, but board members will usually be unpaid amateurs. This can make these larger organizations vulnerable to mis-management. Non-professional, inexperienced board members can be led into poor decision making by the managers that they hire to run the organization. The organization will rely heavily on ensuring operational paperwork is followed to the letter, because most staff will have little professional experience in the fields assigned to them. The reliance upon paperwork can allow poor performances of staff and managers to go un-noticed. This is partly because those receiving

the services of the not for profit organization aren't always the ones paying for them. Funding comes from government grants or from sponsorship. It means that throughout the entire organization, from board members to managers to personnel, there might be only a handful who aren't essentially play-acting at their roles. But, where they can truly go wrong is that members of these organizations can feel they've earned so much social credit from the charitable charter of their workplace, that they can turn it into a living hell. Astounding abuses of employment law, bullying, financial mismanagement or fraud and incredibly high turnover of staff can be normal day-to-day operations. All this will likely pass without scrutiny of the authorities. A new employee can expect an ill-defined job role where it's unclear which work is re-numerated and which work is voluntary, confusing direction from managers with ever-changing standards, goals, expectations and procedures, the most demeaning bullying, low wages and frightening attitudes to safety. But the not for profit can dress in the glamour of its charter and charitable appearance of helping the most vulnerable in society. Hiding beneath this glamour can be a malevolent core which subsists off the community's most disadvantaged, vulnerable people and consumes its own staff.

Providers for 'youth at risk': Youth at risk are defined as young people who are at risk of heading down unproductive, disruptive, destructive life-paths. They have been identified as falling through cracks of the normal pathways for young people or they're drawing the attention of the Police. They may have been instructed to take part in adventure programmes by the courts – with the express aims of deflecting young people from bad outcomes through the potential positive personal growth which adventure activities can provide*. The programmes are invariably tendered for by not for profit organizations – the bottom-feeders** - but they don't believe they can work. Neither do the authorities, if they are honest. Whether through the frustration of witnessing recidivism, the 'too hard basket' frame of mind or plain-old prejudice – conscious or

subconscious – the expectations are for ‘failure’. For these programmes to have any level of success, the participants need to be shown that they are of value. Personal worth. This is harder than it sounds as much about their lives until this point will have taught them the opposite, including their view of the process which sees them referred to these programmes. They need to be taught how to empathize. This will require a programme structure and operational culture which allows participants to switch out of ‘survival-mode’ – to see that others have value, too. That it’s safe to do so. In many ways, the participants will need to be built from scratch. How to communicate through means other than violence. Resilience to feelings of frustration. What trust is. Practical tools for recognizing and dealing with stress. Controlling their circumstances by control of themselves, rather than others. That rewards for *empathy towards* others are infinite and better than the narrow rewards from *power over* others. A good way to design these programmes is as an island. The programme is isolated from the world – from the environment the participants come from and from anything or anyone which might harm the participants or distract them from the programme’s goals. You can control the environment. Limit visitors – who may represent lifeboats to the participants (remember, at the start, none of your participants want to be there). You can limit opportunities for them to engage in misbehaviour, giving you greater opportunity to reward them for good behaviour – show them they are of value. You can target your delivery with a more accurate focus. You can work towards lofty outcomes in shorter timespans. Effective staff are key. There are experienced expert instructors and tutors who can work to achieve the aims of therapeutic youth at risk programmes, but they are rare. They’ll need to bring all their empathy and patience. They’ll need all their professional skill. They’ll need to be able to relate to participants whose divergent life paths have left them with gaping holes in ordinary knowledge and skills. They’ll need a good programme to follow with clearly defined aims and

objectives. They'll need skilled, hardworking colleagues. They'll need supportive managers. But, instructors and tutors will likely find they'll only be able to count on each-other. Not their managers and not the organizations sending the participants. The problem isn't that these programmes could never work, because they could. If we look at this from the point of view of society, we might say that it's an 'ambulance at the bottom of the cliff solution'. Even this isn't the problem. The problem is that there are only broken, ill-equipped ambulances available which aren't fit for purpose. Maybe you, dear emperor, can change this. Maybe you will drive up with a new ambulance. Society needs these programmes to work. The participants need these programmes to work. Will you be an extractor or a provider?

Now, for many people unfamiliar with this style of therapy-based programme, it's often assumed that they are the same as 'boot camp' style programmes. This couldn't be further from the truth. Boot camps are designed to 'break' their participants while therapy programmes are designed to 'build' them. See the difference? The problem comes from the definition of the word 'discipline'. Discipline can be viewed in two parts; the first is a structured commitment to modelled/demonstrated or self-determined behaviour. The second is the act of attempting to enforce behaviour modification through punishment. The first works because it's self-determined. The second fails because the punished victim doesn't recognise the punisher's legitimacy. People who favour boot camps see no downsides to discipline. They can often convince the authorities and others that their programme will be successful where every single other boot camp programme has not. Boot camps are set up by bullies who want an endless supply of powerless people to victimise. Positive outcomes are impossible in this kind of environment. Even if these programmes are set up with the misguided belief that they can produce positive outcomes, the extreme power imbalance between tutors and participants will inevitably create a bullying environment.

*A weird belief of those unfamiliar with personal development philosophy is that 'leadership training' is the beginning and end of positive possibilities adventure programmes can provide. By extension, that leadership training is a catchall tool for the salvation of at-risk youth. This can be a distracting aim for a programme of participants who have yet to feel valued in any way and haven't the skills or will to contribute to society with positivity.

**Where there is poverty, deprivation and people falling through society's cracks, there is money to be made. Public and private money flows like a river into the hands of those organizations who can convince the authorities and other sponsors of the credibility of their qualifications, the authenticity of their positive values and their ability to deliver positive outcomes – remember, '*convince*' isn't the same as '*demonstrate*'.

HOW DO I CHOOSE A BUSINESS MODEL?

Equipment hire companies have little choice regarding their business models. Scheduling is nearly impossible for them. They have to react to scattered periods of customer patronage. For these businesses, there is a small amount of predictability which can be learned - to a degree - but separate interconnected external factors can often blow your predictions out of the water – the weather, rugby world cup, et cetera. Everything shifts and changes and all is affected by everything else. It's difficult to maintain appropriate staff levels which make it nearly impossible to follow employment law while ensuring sustained optimum levels of profitability. Adventure centres have predictability because all bookings seldom come out of the blue. You should be able to function within the law here, although your programmes will vary in length, numbers of participants and activity content, requiring careful staffing management. Adventure guiding outfits, on the other hand, have options for their business model. For guiding companies there are two business models to choose from. The choice is easy for most who make it because no one will pick the more committing of the two. The first option I'll present is the more committing...

Pre-scheduled season: Pre-scheduling your season provides predictability for all areas of your adventure business. There are many benefits, but you're going to need to strictly adhere to your pre-scheduled structure to see them realised. Easier said than done, but if you can, financial forecasting will be made easy. Equipment outfitting is straightforward. Finding the right staff and

keeping them won't be difficult. Transport - one of your biggest expenses - will be a manageable part of operations. Reliable systems of operations for the day-to-day running of your business can be established and adhered to; all staff members will be on the same page making your operations safer and able to be of the highest standard. Cashflow - in and out - will be simplified and easily managed. Interactions will be straightforward, too; you'll be freed to conduct yourself while guided by empathetic values in all your interpersonal relationships both within and outside of your company. You'll be able to operate your business within the Law. Communications are simplified. Even your customers will love it; guests will be able to view booking spaces on your website and match the most appropriate dates to their own schedules. Limited available bookings will encourage a sense of urgency in potential customers - if they don't book it now, someone else will. This same exclusivity means your prices can be set at a premium, compared to your competition. It's this fact which will off-set your reduced income potential. And this brings us to the main problem: your growth options are limited due to a finite number of booking spaces. This is why no one chooses this business model. And it's why you probably won't either. You are too greedy.

Un-scheduled season: So, you'll go for an un-scheduled season business model. The status-quo of the adventure guiding industry. Your customers will schedule your season for you. You'll allow them this control of your business because you won't be able to bear the thought of them going to one of your competitors if your availability doesn't line up with theirs. You'll say 'yes, we can do it.' You'll pride yourself on your flexibility. There will be nothing standard about your standard operating procedures. You and your staff will be chasing your tails, but you'll convince yourself that this is what you do best. Adapt, shift, change. You'll quickly realise that your season consists entirely of scattered periods of largely unpredictable customer patronage and when it rains, it pours! You'll have to react; overlapping bookings will mean more

equipment, more staff, more vehicles, communication challenges, weathering a storm of errors pre-booking, during bookings and post-bookings, patching-up safety issues and responding to incidents, higher overheads and greater stress. It's boom and bust, baby – periods of cash shortage even within the season will mean bills and staff go unpaid. But, the most definitive and amazing part is that when you consider this business model, and in your imagination, overlay it with Employment Law, you will see that the two are utterly irreconcilable. This too, will become your accepted reality but remember, any niggling feelings of discomfort will be easily buried in justifications which come swiftly to mind, not least that you are an emperor! Your 'employer' status in the wider community is above reproach. So, set your chaotic course and don't look back.

SHOULD I WRITE A BUSINESS PLAN?

You'll only *need* a business plan if you're going to be applying for a loan for start-up finances. But there are plenty of other reasons why writing a business plan is a good idea. It will force you to take a realistic view of whether your business idea is financially viable or not. It's an opportunity to examine the way the business will operate and how it will fit into the adventure industry. What threats to its success are there? You can discover problems or inefficiencies before you even begin. Or, you could discover areas of opportunity or profitability you hadn't considered before. If you are writing a business plan for the purpose of presenting it to a loan provider, you'll need to be thorough enough to convince them to take a risk on your venture. You'll need to be persuasive, too. Most adventure companies have customers which are difficult to identify. There'll be only seasonal opportunities to earn an annual income. Most financial forecasting will rely on a degree of guesswork. These concerns combined with the mysteriousness and glamour of adventure activities will make the analytical minds of lenders nervous. Describing your adventure business with clarity can be hard. But, if you don't need a loan to get going, you might see that there are reasons *against* writing a business plan. When your idea occurred to you, what was it that attracted you to

it? Why cure yourself of the romance of it with a dose of reality? A business plan will obviously add paperwork. There's likely a mountain of paperwork your business will need to complete to be compliant with relevant regulations; food safety – to ensure food you supply is safe to eat, risk analysis and management – to help prevent incidents, first aid certificates – as part of emergency management, Department of Conservation concessions – so you can legally operate within a national park, a business plan – so the authorities can ensure your business is sustainable and employee rights will be protected. Just kidding. No one will check your business plan for this. Few adventure businesses would get off the starting line if this was the case. Even so, having a business plan could put you in an uncomfortable position. It's one thing to start a company and then later discover it's impossible to follow the law, but it's quite another to know it's impossible to follow the law before you even start, but continue, regardless. It's a question of appearances or of definition and is subjective; at what point does innocent ignorance, blindly joining an industry's status-quo of operations - or of other things which might lead you into illegality - cross the line and become criminality? Consider this; illegality is not the same as criminality. If through writing a business plan you discover your business idea can't operate within the law, would you walk away from it? If you have committed to writing a business plan and realise starting your business is too risky, too expensive or too illegal, you might consider it merely a first draft. You have the reasons it won't work already written down, so it should be easy to find solutions or work-arounds to those problems. If your problem is that your business start-up finances are unaffordable, consider ways to reduce these costs; operate at a reduced, less financially committing capacity. Outsource your transport. Instead of multiday tours, offer single day tours. Share facilities and other resources like staff with other companies – strategic alliances*. Remember, you don't have to do things the way everybody else does them. Be creative.

*In general, strategic alliances in the New Zealand adventure industry are limited to those areas which will not increase the natural paranoia felt by most emperors. Like will seldom be closely aligned with, connected to or reliant upon like. And during times where two competing businesses *do* come together in a strategic alliance, the respective emperor's will almost certainly try to gain some kind of advantage – often in subtle ways but just as likely overtly and very often incredibly destructively, even to the point of destroying future opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation.

What should go in my business plan? The following is based on the Bank of New Zealand's 'small business enterprise' business plan template. After all, we may as well examine a template preferred by a money lender.

Executive summary: This will be your 'elevator pitch'. It's an introductory letter for anyone involved in the starting up of your business. Make the reader want to continue reading. It needs to express what you hope to achieve, where your idea is placed in the market, a brief outline of how your business will operate and the reasons you believe it will work. You need to distil everything about the business into a clear story which fits into a single page. While the executive summary is the first part of a business plan, it shouldn't be written until you've completed writing the rest of it. You write your executive summary last.

Goals and Objectives: Your goals are what you hope to achieve. Your objectives are the steps you'll take to reach your goals. List your goals first, then list your objectives. This is a chance to get right into the heart of the why's and how's of your business. It's a chance to examine the business even as you write it. Here is where you discover whether your market has room for you, or not. It can be a dis-heartening experience or an inspiring, energizing one.

Competitive Advantages: Where do you sit in the market? What are your points of difference to your competitors? How will you deliver better value for your customers? How will you be safer, more efficient and more professional than your competitors? How will you make these competitive advantages obvious without people having to take your word for it?

Competitor Analysis: Who are you up against? This is a valuable exercise to help you find on which points of business operations you can compete. It helps to have an in-depth understanding of the ways your competitors do things. Due to the mercenary nature of most experienced adventure industry workers, you may have worked for most of your competitors as an employee. This is part of the reason why adventure industry employers are such notorious micro-managers; they're paranoid that their staff will eventually become their competition. They want employee awareness of business operations to be as incomplete as possible. This is especially the case, if their own expertise is low or of a narrow field. But, an observant employee can come to understand a great deal and besides, it's not rocket science. If you're from outside the adventure industry, you'll need to be careful to look passed the glamour of the way adventure businesses present themselves. Don't let them fool you the way they do the general-public and the authorities. The simplest way to structure your competitor analysis is by examining *strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats*. Write a S.W.O.T analysis. To help a potential lender understand this at a glance, you can assign value to each detail you've noted and table this information into a graph or some other visual example. You can present a simple visual explanation here with more detail to furnish this in an appendix at the end of your business plan.

Core values: This is where you express the unchanging heart of your company. These are what everything about your operations are tethered to, revolve around or grow from. They represent the

ground beneath your feet. Do you want stable footing, unstable footing or to float in space without any footing at all? You may be surprised at the number of adventure businesses who couldn't tell you what their core values are. They might view this state as being dynamic, adaptable, pragmatic. But, having a set of core values doesn't prevent you from being these things. An example of a core value of an adventure company might be a guiding company who has committed to a 'structured season'. Or an adventure centre who commits to employment law. Despite the standard industry attitude, it's possible to tether your operations to empathetic values and a sense of environmental responsibility without abandoning profitability.

Growth plan: You may feel comfortable filling a small gap in the market and be perfectly happy to provide a limited service to your customers, indefinitely. You've found your niche and you'll stick with it. In fact, this attitude would solve a lot of the problems which plague the adventure industry. But, this isn't the normal view of business. An ordinary business concept is to expand. This can be a problem for reactive unstructured business models when it comes to avoiding abuse of employees. But, because growth is the status-quo, you'll need to consider and include growth plans in your business plan, even if you've no intention to grow beyond a certain point. This is because a lender expects to see them. They'll think that you're naive and a risk to lend to if you leave them out. So, consider, list and examine as many realistic options as you can. If nothing else, it will give you a sense of mindedness and control over your business's growth – if growth does occur - rather than finding it thrust upon you, unbidden.

External Threats: These can often be easy to identify and predict. For example, if you intend to commit to tax law or employment law in your corner of the adventure industry, you might find you are the only one. A disadvantage like this could be considered an external threat. You can avoid – or at least become aware of -

disadvantages of these sort with thorough competitor analysis. But other external threats can be more difficult to identify before they present themselves. Access restrictions to places you run tours or adventure activities, Department of Conservation not renewing your concession, weather events affecting earnings, staff without the relevant qualifications, strategic alliances failing. You'll need to be imaginative when you examine your potential external threats, so you'll be able to protect your business from them or at least mitigate their effect. Use this part of your business plan to understand what risks there are and how you can manage them to eliminate or minimize their impact on your company. Try to be honest during this exercise, it may be a lender's money, an employee's livelihood or a customer's dream holiday riding on the outcome of your business. You aren't the only one with something on the line.

Marketing: How do you make sure money spent on marketing isn't simply money wasted? It can be tempting to throw huge amounts of money towards marketing. Find out – as accurately as possible – who your market is, where your market is and then advertise directly to it while limiting the amount that your ego affects your decisions. Satisfy the needs of your business, not the needs of your ego. While 'waste' is a perfectly legitimate way to express your personal status, it won't help your business's bottom line. Your marketing will always have an experimental element to it. To judge the efficacy of these experiments, you'll need to understand your *Critical Success Factors*. These are the outcomes you want to see for each of the different types of marketing you choose to employ. You can then calculate the expenses to benefit ratio. This means that this part of your business plan doesn't stay buried in your business plan. It's an integral part of your operational paperwork. Next to consider are your *Distribution Channels*. In which mediums are you going to get your message to your potential customers? There's quite a few to choose from and each will sit on a spectrum of cost versus benefit. *Holiday Tour Brokers* are a great way to reduce and

streamline your administrative workload; your customers will be channelled through brokering companies and up to a hundred percent of administrative tasks – regarding the booking of customers - can be outsourced to them, including pre-tour/activity information and advice. The amount of responsibility you're able to off-load will depend on the level of complication of pre-adventure communication. The cost will vary between ten and fifteen percent of before tax earnings from each booking. A *website* is basically essential, these days. You'll be invisible without one. Even if your customers come from tour brokers, having a website is a great idea. You can express a huge amount of information to potential customers, removing mystery and providing an easy to imagine picture of what they can expect. Your level of professionalism can be expressed well or if you aren't professional, you can easily pretend to be. You can indicate available booking spaces and add links to your tour brokers. Or customers can make contact directly to you. '*Familiarizing*' tours or activities can provide good marketing, too. These are nicknamed 'famils' in the adventure industry. Influential people such as travel writers or information centre workers or tour brokers are provided with experiences for free. You show them a good time and they refer customers to you with their own positive experiences front of mind as they do. Famils cost hardly anything – there are ways to reduce even this small impact with careful timing or by adding a famil to an existing booking – but the benefits can be huge. Carefully nurtured strategic alliances like this can be extremely beneficial. *Print* advertising is another matter. It's important to know who your customers are and where to find them. Make sure your – usually – expensive advert is placed right in front of the attention of potential customers. Which publications will you target? Long-form articles can have a positive effect on readers. But a continuing difficulty is: how will you quantify results? *Radio and television* – although the latter will likely be out of reach due to price - is another scatter-gun approach that should be employed with

discretion. *Social media* can deliver your message as widely as you want or be as targeted as you want. But, people have high expectations of this form. You'll need to have professionals do this for you or if you want to do it yourself, you'll need a certain amount of professional nous with the tools available. It's becoming easier and easier to tell stories in longer or more widely ranging formats, too. Attractive videos, 'instagram' and other posts can very effectively express your brand, show what you do and make viewers excited to join you. Remember, consider each post very carefully. It's easy to be misread. Despite what they say, not all publicity is good publicity. You don't want the only connection to you in people's minds to be something negative. *Strategic Alliances* are mutually beneficial business arrangements designed to reduce certain costs and boost certain areas of income. They can work well for the adventure industry because everyone needs somewhere to stay or something to eat. You can deliver a more complete customer experience package, even if you only actually provide a small part of it, yourself. *Cold-calling* is usually a last resort in marketing because of its unpleasant and time-consuming nature. But, if your business is seasonal then you'll have plenty of time during your off-season to get used to it. Sometimes, the only way to let people know you exist, is to call them on the phone. If they don't brush you off, you can deliver your info packet or refer them to your website or develop a relationship. For some potential customers, this might be the most effective way of reaching them; school groups or clubs are ordinarily very hard to reach but can be successfully approached this way. *Staff uniforms* are an effective and inexpensive way to advertise, too. They have the added benefit of helping with staff rapport once they are with their customers. You'll need to make sure they're practical and can be worn in comfort during whatever challenges the working environment throws up. And you'll need to bear in mind that a lot of modern commercial workwear can make the wearer look scruffy. Be careful what you choose. Employment matters may arise from

unreasonable expectations of dress – sexiness, for example – so don't be an idiot. Employees will have to consider that while they are in your company's uniform, they are representing your brand. You'll need to include a behaviour clause in your contracts. Your *signage* is an area where you should put a great deal thought. The first thing to do is decide on a business name. The name of your business can be self-descriptive, helping customers understand the kind of product you offer in a word. A lot can be expressed in the name, so you need to be sure that what you are expressing is exactly what you intend. It's easy to alienate customers or set the degree of your perceived level of professionalism below its true position. The visual aspect of your identity is important, too. Your logo. Even more than the company name, the company logo can express a huge amount of information about your company. Ideally, your logo will become so established, that it's recognizable outside your industry, making it the first choice for people investigating the kinds of services you offer. Colours are expressive, too, and can be suggestive of all kinds of things at an emotional level. Colour combinations have become expressive of cultural meaning. You can use these concepts to augment the information you wish to convey. It's worth doing some research in this area. *Business cards* might at first seem as if your ego is throwing money away. But, opportunities pop up. Short-lived ones. A business card can be the continuation of an interrupted conversation. Your business's contact details are in someone else's wallet, now. *Sponsorship* gets the name of your business in front of people. But, it can go beyond this. It can identify the values of your business. In fact, if you're not careful with what you sponsor, you might find yourself aligned with values that aren't yours. So, consider what you put your business's name to with care. *Pamphlets* are expensive. But you'll be invisible to people staying in hotels, backpacker places, bed and breakfast places and information centres if there isn't a pamphlet for them to read. So, if your potential customers will be in these places, then you'll need

to seriously consider the expense of getting pamphlets made. And consider getting them professionally made. Like anything communicating complicated ideas effectively, good design is essential.

Financial Budgets and Forecasts: This is the part of your business plan which holds the most interest to a potential lender. You'll need to go into detail and you'll need to understand that information here will illustrate the making or breaking of your business idea. Being honest is important. Make a list of all your *commitments*. These represent all your out-going finance – money you don't get to keep; rent of facilities, loan repayments, wages, concession costs, vehicle costs, et cetera. The more complicated your business is, the longer the list will be. Try to not to leave anything out; you won't want any surprises down the line and you don't want to ruin your shot with a lender who is more thoroughly researched than you are. Consider your *payments*. How will you manage cash-flow? How will you receive and make payments? How will you manage the timing of your out-going payments? And *periods of cash shortage*; can you predict when these will occur? How will you maintain operational viability during these times? To a lender, a seasonal business is particularly unattractive or even difficult to imagine. Most will prefer a normal business model of continuous customer patronage providing predictability of growth, so you'll need to be able to ease their concerns by providing a reliable payment system for your out-going commitments without becoming buried in debt. Show that during your off-season, most of your payment commitments come to an end at the same moment your season does; wages, transport and other operational costs. Your business will go into hibernation. *Equipment replacement* can be a difficult thing to imagine – especially to an inexperienced emperor – but everything wears out or needs to be up-dated, eventually. You'll need to include an estimation of the costs associated with repair, maintenance or replacement of the equipment you use. Helpfully, most equipment designed for use in adventure activities is robust

and hard-wearing for practical and safety reasons, so in many cases, your costs will be eased by this. Make good decisions when you purchase gear with this thought in mind. Some adventure companies like ski-hire shops will have very high maintenance and replacement costs. For other businesses there are limitations on the length of time items can be used to remain compliant with industry standard. These companies will need to keep records of purchase dates for some items and even detailed equipment logs for things like ropes. When it comes to your *cash-flow predictions*, you will either enjoy the calculations or be disappointed by a low income. Making an honest estimation of your company's cash-flow prediction is essential. And its not always good news; how much business set-up debt can you pay down in your first season? How much money can you pay to yourself? Can you survive the off-season? When considering cash-flow, calculate three separate amounts; your honest, realistic first season prediction, your honest, worst-case scenario first season prediction, where customers only show up on holiday weekends and an honest, realistic best-case scenario, where you are busy throughout your season. If you can be sure a worst-case scenario season won't make you broke, then your business idea should survive. *Market research* goes beyond a spur of the moment decision to start an adventure company – beyond the moment you fell in love with the glamour of the idea. You need to thoroughly consider whether there is room amongst the competition for your business, what kind of product and service your customers want and what price they'll be willing to pay for it. Those who've already worked in the industry will have an idea of these details, but it's not you that needs convincing. It's your lender. Provide a detailed *equipment outlay* list. You can put it in an appendix. But you will need to provide the total costs of this in this part of the business plan. Don't leave anything out, no matter how small. And remember, this is an area where you may have some flexibility if you initially realise your start-up costs are unaffordable. If you need to reduce your business capacity to get

started, or redesign your business model to cost less, you may only require a fraction of the equipment on your 'wish-list'. Just because you start small, doesn't mean you have to stay small. Set your ego aside. You need to consider your *base of operations*, too. How much will it cost? Will you need to spend money to make it suitable for your needs? Now examine your *ongoing expenses*; rent, insurance, power, et cetera. And finally, calculate your *totals* of all the above.

Team and Management Structure: Everyone on your team needs to be listed, here. Describe each role and the duties and responsibilities therein. Show who reports to whom. If you can, include relevant backgrounds to present an idea of degrees of experience.

The New Zealand adventure industry is very diverse, providing plenty of opportunities, but each of the separate pursuits will usually have a relatively small or unpredictable customer base. This means that few businesses will have extensive hierarchical structures. There will be you the emperor, and then everyone else. Middle management is rare and if it exists at all, personnel will usually find themselves micro-managed by a secretive, unpredictable, paranoid boss.

Transport: For many adventure companies, this will be your biggest ongoing expense. For this reason, you might examine it in detail. Will you have your own vehicles, hire them or arrange strategic alliances? How will you employ drivers? Their workload might be very unpredictable and not enough to live off this income alone.

Appendix A and B: In appendix a, you would put competitor analysis. In appendix b, you would put your equipment outlay and your ongoing expenses.

WHO ARE THE BEST EMPLOYEES?

This depends on the type of adventure company you have. The adventure industry is attractive to a very transient, cheerful and usually highly responsible type of person. After only a few short years in the industry, they will have gained an extraordinarily wide set of useful and transferable skills. They believe when one door closes, another will open. This means if things aren't going well at one workplace, they'll quietly move on to the next and view new experiences as exciting opportunities for further education. Most commit to 'quality' and, as long as they've worked in jobs where quality is prioritised, they will have a high level of skill in certain fields and enjoy working hard and to a high standard. This detail can't be understated. They'll usually deliver this level of performance because of deeply ingrained personality reasons. They love it! They're adaptable, intelligent and good at coming up with imaginative solutions to problems. They're able to communicate effectively in emotionally charged and stressful environments. They are often picture-thinkers, which means they view their work in multiple dimensions and can make decisions quickly and with confidence based upon an equation of everything; the environment, the people, the equipment, goals, safety, fun. Many of them are dyslexic, meaning that they've trained themselves in problem solving and relationship building since they were five or six years old.

They are very often extroverted people who gain their energy from interacting with others which is perfect for the adventure industry because they'll keep customers' group energy and focus levels high. The introverts who enjoy the industry usually have worked out how to act extroverted when required but can also bring the advantages which come with needing to sneak out of the limelight from time to time; introspection, observation, planning. Whether introverted or extroverted, they will invariably truly care about improving the lives of their customers. They are people-people. They'll usually be very ethically aware and determined to treat people in fairness, forgiving of transgressions and openminded and compassionate to the fears, motivations and attitudes of others. They value experiences over possessions and feel that if you're doing what you love, you'll never work a day in your life.

All of this presents obvious benefits to an employer. There are zillions of these people to choose from either already here or visiting the country as tourists. If the working conditions at your company have driven-off most of your employees by the halfway point of your season, there will be new ones lining up to fill gaps. They will work for nothing; experience-gaining, somewhere to stay the night, a meal. They'll take jobs without contracts, partly because they don't expect to ever get contracts and partly because they can be easily confused by the details within. You can be creative with their pay - if they're doing a paid gig - for this reason, too. You can be like water, my friend. You might never make promises; you might allow them to assume that because you are a business, you'll follow the law and provide them with work. Or, you won't tell them about holiday-pay, and you'll never discuss tax. You can be as dastardly as you want behind the scenes, as long as you're a charismatic presence to their face. They'll assume you're like them; 'honest'.

Industry Experienced: Some businesses, like ski-shops or adventure centres will need to splash out on industry experienced staff – or on people who at least have useful skills from other workplaces which cross-over effectively to yours. But, you can be discretionary with numbers. Only key positions will need the extra expertise. These employees will shoulder most of the responsibility in the workplace, but remember, to an *extractor*, no one is irreplaceable – bear this in mind, ensure everyone is aware of it and you’ll be able to keep your wage-bill low. Many businesses don’t need experienced staff, at all. Guiding companies are now in this category, thanks to the adventure audit scheme. As most guided adventure activities are ‘once-in-a-life-time’ experiences, customers and guests will have no standard to compare their adventure to. They’ll enjoy the experience they have, even if it could’ve been a hundred times better. How would they know? You also need to bear in mind that expert staff members will discover inefficiencies of operation and irregularities, in a legal sense, of the way you do business. How will surrounding yourself with experts make you feel? Like an emperor who everyone admires, or an emperor who you imagine no one respects?

Beneficiaries: The Ministry of Social Development goes to enormous effort on your behalf to create a pool of compliant workers for employers to choose from. New Zealand culture itself, provides a tail-wind towards this end; hard work is highly regarded – at least on an emotional level. The worst thing you can be in New Zealand is lazy. By extension, anyone not in work is easy to vilify. This highlights in New Zealanders a certain contradiction in character. In general, a generosity of spirit exists which would see the less fortunate cared for, but at the same time, those who seek assistance of the state awaken feelings of contempt or disgust*. When a person seeks the assistance of the Ministry of Social Development, they throw away their status in the community. And the path to gaining assistance is carefully designed to be so humiliating that only those most willing to

debase themselves will qualify. They become the property of the state. Then, the real work begins. C.S. Lewis said: 'Of all tyrannies, a tyranny sincerely exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive... those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end, for they do so with the approval of their own conscience.' The operating procedure of the Ministry of Social Development has been refined over decades. Beneficiaries are systematically destabilized and de-humanized, even to the point that they'll question their own sanity**. Any clung-to sense of dignity is stripped and scoured so that individuals allow themselves to become the state's property, not only in a legal sense, but in their hearts, too. But, because they know they'll eventually be destroyed, they will take any offers of work presented***. An emperor can swoop in to 'rescue' them. There are even schemes in place which will see you paid to do so! Their ownership will transfer from the state to you. You'll get workers who've been destroyed to the point of easy manipulation who will serve you with gratitude because they know 'it could be worse'.

*An individual's status is cemented and identified more easily by denigrating others of lower status and trapping them there than by the individual, themselves, earning their status through hard work or striving towards being 'deserving' of it in other ways. Added to this is the truth that people hate what they fear they could become. In the same way disease is feared and those who are diseased, ostracised, so is poverty feared and those who are in it ostracised – 'But for the grace of God go I...' can be an empathetic call to compassionate action or a horrifying realisation of the fickle winds of fortune, triggering contempt and abuse; in a way not unlike the instinctive swotting at disgusting contact of something with one's skin or the fright of the sudden closeness of a bug.

**Every facet of a beneficiary's life is first quantified and understood. Next, every facet is forcefully reduced. And finally, every facet is ultimately and utterly controlled. In this, we

recognise the same *modus operandi* as in any abusive relationship. And the abused must love the abuser. The abused *does* love the abuser because they are abuser and provider in one. We should remember that all this is possible not only because of the approval of the conscience of the Ministry of Social Development, but also because of the approval of the consciences of all in society.

***In fact, beneficiaries are contractually obligated to accept any employment offered. However, they may legally reject offers of work from an employer who they know has or does operate their business outside of the law. But, this is not widely understood. Part of the operational culture of this organization is to never volunteer information of any kind, except of the *obligations* of beneficiaries. Beneficiaries can only learn of their rights, opportunities and protections through their own investigations. Because of this, employers can view the Ministry of Social Development as New Zealand's most established, powerful and ruthless *third-party provider* to date.

Work Experience: Work experience employees are free labour. They come from schools or training providers like polytechnics, usually during their holiday breaks. Some polytechnics write work experience into their courses and expect feedback from employers and evidence of learning from their students. Over time, this has legitimized the practice into an established part of the adventure industry culture. Most students will view the experience they receive as remuneration enough. It's the reason they can be considered free labour. It also helps to establish an industry-wide acceptance among young people entering the industry that work routinely goes un-re-numerated, under certain circumstances. The timing also, couldn't be better. Holiday periods for almost all adventure companies will see drastic increases in customer patronage which are easily mopped-up without costing the company anything in extra wages. In fact, during these periods, the amount of work provided to existing paid employees can be

reduced to merely the time it takes them to train the work experience crew.

Internationals: Whether they have working visas or not, internationals have always been an important part of the New Zealand adventure industry. It's worked both ways, too. Adventure professionals from New Zealand are well-travelled and well-established, internationally. This exchange can keep industry skill-levels high, meaning a higher standard of work and safer, more efficient operating procedures. But, the adventure audit scheme has altered this aspect of the industry. Only a few niche operations like white-water rafting, sky-diving and some others still operate at a high standard due to firmly established cultural and operational norms. The rest have allowed a lowering in standards in direct correspondence to the reliance-upon and importance of qualifying paperwork. Adventure centres can legally fill every role available with internationals by making the most of international exchange programs. But, outside of this, employers are required to make an effort to fill as many roles as they can with locals. This problem can be solved by keeping up the appearance, only - making sure positions are advertised locally, but locals are never considered seriously. You can say: 'There weren't any suitable local applicants.' Who's going to bother proving otherwise? There will always be an international at a loose end, willing to fill in somewhere. It can be a chance for them to do an activity without having to pay for it. It's win-win; they get some thing for free, the business gets something for free. Just remember to call them a 'guide' on your paperwork. Internationals will have even less knowledge of employment and tax law than locals, which can directly benefit your bottom line. They'll also have less understanding of legal procedure, if they do realise they are being abused and therefore, they'll be less likely to initiate an employment grievance. Using internationals in your workplace will help keep local employees de-stabilized, easier to manipulate and hungry for work.

WHICH EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT TYPE IS BEST?

It's worth noting that in the New Zealand adventure industry, employment contracts are rare. While the practice of not providing contracts to employees is illegal, it's not illegal in the sense that you are at risk of sanctions from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. For an *extractor*, the trouble with contracts is that they provide certainty of expectations – of both the employer and the employee. They legitimise all kinds of things which are better left illegitimate and they formalise relationships which are better left informal. The reason is, most adventure company business models simply can't function within employment law – so, when this is the case, it's best not to promise that you will. With a formless business model, it makes sense to have formless business practices. Advantageous opportunities pop up when you least expect them. You know you don't want to limit your business's money-making potential by following the rules. And, providing contracts will make your departures from employment law stand out in sharper relief. The condemning evidence will be writ large with your signature on it.

Remember that in the New Zealand adventure industry, it's not the services of people which are hired, it's the people, themselves. Consider the distinction.

Due to the fluid nature of the adventure industry, the transient, unrooted nature and generally happy-go-lucky attitude of employees, workers unions have never gained an influence. The industry is a can of worms best left alone by the authorities, too. 'One or two bad apples' is a common delusion of government ministers with no wish to look too closely. The result is most workers in this industry will never initiate an employment grievance. They know what you know; they are separate of the protection of employment law. They may as well try to enjoy themselves.

Casual Employees: A third of New Zealand workers are defined as 'casuals' but you won't find this definition in legislature. It's merely a colloquialism. The nearest definition in legislature is 'intermittent employee', written for those who are hired for disparate, very short periods at a time, such as carnival workers. It was never written for the purposes for which it's mostly put to use these days; work which may be seasonal or year-round with somewhat predictable hours of a normal working week. Permanently temporary. A short-term casual contract will provide the date of the end of the contract but also a clause that the contract may end at any time or be extended if the employer wishes.

Standard Contract: All workers in New Zealand, regardless of nationality, are protected by a standard contract, even if they aren't provided a contract by their employer. In theory, this gives employees the same protection as if they were provided a contract. It's a basic casual contract. If you decide to present employees with a contract, you are meant to view the standard contract as an example of minimum requirements.

Zero-hours Employees: A common arrangement for ski-shops, bike-hire and other operations of this sort. This kind of contract will often be considered in place whether a contract has been presented or not. The term 'zero-hours' is another colloquialism and not specifically defined in legislation. A zero-hours employee could be viewed as your property. They are a business chattel. This

is the contract that says to employees: 'you owe me everything and I owe you nothing.' Employees must make themselves available to the employer without restraint - the employer has exclusive rights to their employees' time - but the employer has no obligation to provide work. This type of contract essentially writes the company out of following legislation which states that once a jobseeker is employed - especially to the exclusion of other work - the employer must then provide the employee with work. Another way it's put to use is that if an employee refuses to comply with what you want or has over-riding commitments on their time outside of your company, you can legally reduce their hours and hold them to ransom until the employee complies with your wishes or relinquishes all their time to you. However, since a recent law change, employers must now negotiate a base level of hours and an agreed upon amount of predictability during a working week and because they are 'on-call', they must be compensated for this; retainers or other arrangement. These law-changes came about because the workers union for fast-food firms and other retailers fought for them. Employers using zero-hour contracts hire far more staff than they need to ensure they are never caught short and to keep those staff hungry for work hours and easy to manipulate. The law changes were hailed as a big success for down-trodden workers everywhere, but in those negotiations, emperors, who holds the power? The prospective employee, desperate to pay their rent and live their life, or the employer with a job to give? The main result of this law-change has been that instead of employers working to destabilise their staff into compliance, the employees, themselves, will race each-other to the bottom, trying to gain small advantages over their colleagues.

Contractors: A contractor/client employment relationship is a common but usually illusory arrangement for guided adventure companies and adventure centres. *Real* contractors are self-employed and aren't protected by standard contracts. They usually have their own which they present to employers or they come to

an agreement with the employer. Contractors must pay their own ACC levies and their own PAYE taxes. They'll usually provide their own equipment, too. As an employer, not having to pay all of this is attractive. It's also attractive to have employees who aren't protected by employment law. Not least because you can let them go whenever you like. But, the truth is, in the adventure industry, there aren't very many employees who could technically be defined as contractors because the most clarifying factor in the legislative definition is that a contractor is hired to fill a role or carry out a task for their employer - the client - and they are free to do this in the way they see fit. This is compared to an employee who has very little control over the way they do their job. Few adventure industry employers are comfortable allowing workers decide how to work but an emperor can have their cake *and* eat it. You can avoid employment law and tax law but still operate the way you want to operate. This is made easy by appearances; your fluid business model – scattered periods of employment giving the impression of a contract-like reality. Your guides or instructors will often have their own gear for personal, recreational use. At work, they'll prefer to use their own equipment because of personal preferences in comfort, safety, equipment efficacy, ease of use and trust. If they aren't in a company uniform or using company gear, they appear more like a contractor. All these reasons combined means no one will be paying very close attention as to whether you are breaking the law or not. Also, if an employee – one who you are pretending is a contractor, perhaps going so far as to provide a contract - wants to bring a grievance against you, the first step is to determine whether they are in fact a contractor or an employee through employment mediation, then employment court. It's only after that point, that they can invite you to respond to mediation for the original grievance. Another advantage is that with the general fluidity in operating procedures of almost all adventure companies, workers within the industry are forced to accept a certain mercenary aspect to the way they make a living. They'll

take what's offered to them and if that's random offers of a day or so of work with un-taxed, cash remuneration, there's little they can do about it. You can leave it up to them whether they declare their tax or not, but because hardly any of them actually-operate as self-employed contractors – nor do they consider themselves self-employed contractors - they likely won't. They'll probably assume you are deducting PAYE. This means you can run your business full of employees who aren't truly your employees. You can even pay a cash equivalent to an 'after-tax' amount to allow them their illusions and discourage tax declarations, keeping these transactions un-noticed. If they are aware that they're being paid 'under the table', they might not consider it affordable to declare tax on the amount you pay them, or they may find the processes for compliance too confusing or they may be concerned that their tax declarations will put you and others at risk of sanctions from the authorities. This will trap them into a complicit relationship of tax evasion. It's cheaper for you and you'll always be able to find experienced, willing people passing through your area.

Third-Party Provider: A third party provider is a middle man in an employer/employee relationship. Presently, in New Zealand they are usually set-up by community organizations to help those who've found themselves less employable than others into work. Due to the myriad reasons which cause under-employment for individuals, the role is far from straightforward. On the one hand, they will have prospective employees who might have limitations or challenges regarding personal qualifications, experience or skill, difficulties with availability or challenges of physical and mental health. On the other hand, are employers who temporarily require a position filled. Some third-party providers make efforts towards a kind-of wrap-around service for prospective employees; directing these people to training, offering or arranging advocacy for various needs or making their clients aware of government services available to them. Employees will be sent to all manner of workplaces to fill gaps in the labour-market, as they appear. But, a

community, charity or government funded third-party provider's income isn't dependant on ensuring great outcomes for employees. They'll be paid for poor outcomes or even no outcomes, at all! And, it shouldn't be over-looked that businesses are their clients, too. As an emperor, you'll be able to tap this rich resource of vulnerable employees at your leisure. It means that you can keep wages low and working-conditions unfair. Both the third-party provider and your business can hide callous contempt of employees behind the glamour of social credit. When there is an 'ambulance at the bottom of the cliff' frame of mind of the society you're in, people will fixate on providing more ambulances, not on reducing the need for them. And while third-party providers ostensibly fill a need, they also perpetuate it. Their own survival requires an endless supply of recruits. For this reason, they need to be careful to lift people up only so much. Businesses will always seek, make use of, normalise and establish into employment culture the most cost effective and efficient operations they can. Of what use to them are employee rights? Eventually, as these organizations become more established, we will see their natural evolution towards a far less employee-centric approach – private enterprise, profit driven - as we have in America; employees work their shift for a company, but they are paid by their third-party provider, who is paid by the company. The third-party provider earns their living from taking a cut. This muddies the water as to whom the employee is employed by, reducing worker security and making it unclear whose responsibility the protection of employees is, in terms of workplace safety and employment law. It works well for employers because an entire facet of ordinary business operations is outsourced which reduces responsibilities and saves time and money. It also effectively enslaves the employees in a permanently temporary work-life. To protect their margins, the third-party providers will become ruthless. To ensure they win tenders from companies, they'll need to promise the lowest price, meaning the lowest possible wages for employees. By providing transport to

work and charging employees for the service, they can claw back some more profit. Offering pay-day loans is another good earner, especially as the third-party provider controls employees' income. They can keep them in perpetual debt, increasing their control over them and ensuring their continued availability. They own the employee, not just their service.

'Woofers': Usually without formal agreements. W.W.O.O.F stands for Willing Workers On Organic Farms. Accommodation and food in exchange for work is the basis of the arrangement. The legality has always been debatable, but it's never argued to the point of putting an end of to the practice. Of course, it was an idea which quickly caught on, expanding from the niche of freewheeling, young international travellers keen to learn about the philosophy and science of organic farming practices, to young international travellers filling positions across huge swathes of the labour market. And why not? Why should organic farms be the only beneficiaries? In fact, the idea expanded into many areas of the labour market. Anyone an employer doesn't want to pay, no matter the job-role, might be termed a 'Woofers'. It spread into the hospitality and accommodation sectors; cafes, restaurants, backpacker establishments, hotels, campgrounds. To horticulture; market gardens, orchards, wineries. To farming; farm-stays, conservation, labouring. The idea found especially fertile ground in the tourism and adventure industries. As it spread, it became well established. Many businesses are staffed entirely with woofers – both international and local - and freely admit they couldn't be in business if they had to hire and pay ordinary staff. And, this is the reason the practice isn't going anywhere - it's become too big to fail. If the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment was to crack down on these operations, a huge portion of the economy would go down with them. At least, this is the line of thought that those making use of the practice promote. The fact that this situation exists is ongoing proof of a business-owner's unassailable

position in New Zealand. It's a foundation idea of this book; business models which can't function within the law are A-OK!

Ninety Days: This is a relatively new amendment to employment law. An employer can 'release' a new employee within ninety days of their start-date, regardless of contract type, without providing a reason. It's designed to circumvent every other employment law relating to the way in which employers dispose of employees. From the business community there were two arguments for its instatement, one followed by the other. The first appealed to the country's sympathy for businesses in that sometimes you just need to get rid of people – misconduct*, unsuitable in the role**, or the role no longer exists***. The second appealed to our sympathy for those looking for work, because if a business can't fire people at will, how confident will they be to hire them, in the first place? Again, we heard the delusion 'a few bad apples might take advantage, no more than that', and in-spite of everyone knowing the truth, somehow, it was passed into law before enough people pointed out that it is a blatantly contemptuous and cynical rort. The ninety days law has since been altered to apply only to businesses employing twenty staff or less. That's you, dear emperor. In fact, for the adventure industry, the introduction of the ninety days law changed nothing at all of operations. It was as if the rest of the labour market was finally catching up. But, it did legitimize the way the adventure industry already operated and reduced the danger of adventure operators being held to account for other illegal employment misdemeanours.

*A simple legal template has long existed to allow employers to release employees who commit misconduct or a breach of contract, while ensuring fair treatment of the employee. Never-the-less, 'misconduct' was a part of the argument put forward for the need for the ninety-day law.

**A business might hire someone without the complete set of skills required and training is a drain on resources in time and personnel.

The separate roles within many businesses change in their focus all the time. It's easier to release one employee and replace them with another who more accurately fills the brief than expand the skill-set of the first.

***There are many roles which employers would struggle to fill if prospective employees knew how short-term or unstable they were. The rhythms of businesses change, and business fortune rises and falls – it's not personal...

SHOULD I WRITE A 'STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES' DOCUMENT?

Your Standard Operating Procedures document will be either the defining tenement of everything about the way you will conduct your business, or a lie written to camouflage illegal activity, low levels of expertise or unprofessional processes. Whichever case, while some adventure companies won't need one at all, others will find it indispensable. Some businesses will require their standard operating procedures – SOP's – as a part of the adventure audit. Health and safety. This will include your business if your customers will be guided or instructed by you or your staff during the course of any activities. The purpose is to help prevent safety incidents, but it's also to provide a framework for investigators to test against any incidents which do occur – were there any departures from your SOP's in the events which led up to an incident? If you won't be guiding or instructing your customers for their adventure activity, then SOP's aren't a requirement. But, there are no downsides to having your SOP's written down. It's your plan of everything. It's the supporting beams of your whole company. This is what you present to new employees and it's what everyone comes back to if you ever start going astray. But, it can be even

more than this. You can include where you feel your business will fit in the world. 'Providing' or 'extracting' – will you serve your part of the world or mine it? Why will you do things the way you will do things? This is where job satisfaction lives. It's the difference between deserving to be doing what you're doing and merely playing a role. This is where all your paperwork can live. At least, it can unless you're terrified your staff will disappear and start a company of their own. Because all your paperwork combined is a blueprint to your operation. You can put all your templates here, too. You reproduce them as you need. Activity templates, programme templates, customer feedback forms, gear lists, query letters, impact reports. And, don't forget, a lot of this stuff can be revisited, improved, redesigned, repurposed.

So, how do I put it all together? The following is a brief example of a hypothetical multi-day guided river tour company's standard operating procedures and operational paperwork. This business will have no employees, so no contracts are required. You can consider this a jumping-off point for your own company, in terms of understanding how to view standard operating procedures...

Mission statement: the aims of your company. A clear and brief expression of what you wish your company to achieve. This is your magnetic north, so it should be something you actually-believe in. If you like, you can go into further detail on the points of the mission statement, but the statement itself should be no more than a paragraph in length. It can help to have an *impact report*, especially if you will be operating within a national park, on land which doesn't belong to you or if you're seeking to build a relationship with local Iwi. You can examine your company's impact on people, the area you wish to operate in, the local community, river access points – landings – and the wider environment. List both the potential positives and negatives. Next are any templates you want have for *pre-tour customer correspondence*; pricing schedules, gear lists, et cetera. You can

include your *booking schedule* in your SOP's. I'm biased, here; my preference is for pre-scheduled seasons. *Guest accommodation* prior to and following your tours. Your tours start early on day one and finish late on your last day. You will definitely-need your customers to stay near your base of operations before the tour starts and some of them will prefer not to make a long journey home or to their next destination immediately afterwards. So, what are your processes here? – strategic alliances. Your tour *transport systems* will need explanation. This is because it's one of your biggest ongoing expenses. It's also where mistakes can easily occur due to communication breakdowns with your provider, so consider it thoroughly and have the simplest processes possible. Your *food safety registration* documentation from your local council. You might write your *safety brief and paddle instruction*. This will help standardize your presentation, keeping delivery quality high and ensuring nothing is left out. Write detailed *tour operations*; your *tour food shopping lists and menus*, your *trip report form* should include *operational details* like weather forecasts, river levels, guest numbers, guide names, pick-up and 'over-due' times, et cetera, a *guest disclaimer form* on which customers provide their names, signatures and evidence of exactly who is on an adventure with you, an *equipment list* to tick items off as you pack the tour gear, a *guest feedback form*, an *incident and accident form*, a *hazard identification registry* and an *equipment maintenance sheet*. You will need to have a *safety management plan*, too. In this will go your definition of an *emergency*, an explanation of the kinds of *medical conditions* you'll need to be aware of pre-tour and a brief management plan for these, who your *emergency management coordinator* is – the person affiliated with your company who is tasked to help coordinate rescues from outside the tour or liaise between the tour and the police and other rescue personnel and media in the event of emergencies. The final part of your safety management plan is your *risk analysis and management system*. This includes analysis of risk for your *base, transport, on the*

river and at the campsites. You should also include the how's and why's of these separate subjects. After any incidents, health and safety inspectors will want to know how normal operations are meant to run so they can identify any departures from it. Not having this information could result in serious consequences.

Risk Analysis and Management System: Don't forget, your business, whether your customers are guided or instructed through activities, or not, will need to have risk analysis and management systems - RAMS - documents drawn up. This will be the written evidence that you know what you are doing - whether that's true or a lie. In fact, it's a legal requirement of any business. Make sure your staff read it, understand it and work within its limits. Each part of your operation will need to be analysed separately. Individual businesses will require differing amounts of paperwork; a river-guiding company should look at their depot, transport, river operations and campsites. But an adventure centre will need to write up their compound and buildings, transport, each separate activity they run, including both off-site and on-site activities and their kitchen and dining facilities and operations. Schools and other organized groups are required to have RAMS documents when they do anything off school grounds, so, if these groups are in your customer base, it can be a great way to add value to your product and build relationships by providing the school with the programme you've designed for them and all the supporting RAMS forms. They'll appreciate the load of extra stress and work lifted from them. If you have multiple activities which staff will rotate through - as instructors-in-charge - it can be helpful to present abbreviated or simplified RAMS documents in the staff room or gear room for instructors to have a quick glance at to refresh themselves and re-focus, eg: *last* activity session was at the indoor climbing-wall, *this* activity session is at the abseil-tower. You can choose to organise basic risk analysis and management forms for the separate facets of your company merely to cover yourself legally, or you can use your paperwork to define and develop your

company's level of professionalism, refining every part of the way your business functions in safety, value, product delivery, efficiency and staff skill, productiveness and satisfaction. In other words, it can help take your business to the highest level or merely legitimize and legalize a poor standard.

A separate, but related part of risk management paperwork is a *Hazard Identification Register*. This is different to your risk analysis and management systems paperwork in that it's considered 'living'. If someone on your team identifies a new hazard - anything from a fallen tree in a river to foliage blocking a slow-speed sign - they must record it in a Hazard Log. Each new hazard identified must have a date when the hazard was first noticed, a recommended course of mitigating or resolving action, including whose responsibility it becomes, and finally, when the hazard is eventually dealt with, it's dated and signed-off. You can't simply spot things and avoid or fix them - the whole process must be documented step by step. Putting a hazard board up in a staff room or gear room is a good idea to ensure company-wide input and awareness of ongoing hazards, but remember, any information presented on the board must be transferred into document form.

An *Accident and Incident Registry* follows the same operating template - minus the public notice board. It needs to be clear to members of your staff what kinds of things should be recorded here. It's important to record incidents as accurately as possible so that you and your staff and your business are protected from misinformed, exaggerated or mischievous claims of unhappy customers or even staff members. If you have a good relationship with your staff, they'll feel comfortable to record what needs to be recorded. But, if you have a bad relationship with your staff, they may feel that you'll hang them out to dry if they are honest or forthright.

Staff Profiles are essential, also. A staff member's relevant qualifications need to be documented - actual copies presented. This will ensure staff members are never asked to perform duties beyond their level of qualification or skill. As training is gained or qualifications completed, evidence of their learning will be added to their file. At adventure centres, instructors must be signed-off on individual activities before they can instruct them unsupervised, no matter their level of expertise gained elsewhere. This is known as a *site-specific* qualification. The intention is that activities will always be run by experts. But, there is risk here; novices can be taught the narrow specifics of the operation of individual facilities without the back-up of experience, eg: qualified as a climbing-wall instructor - no experience in rock-climbing. Knowledge might provide skills, but experience provides judgement. A risk of qualifying staff in a site-specific manner is that it can lead to over-confidence. Staff can collect qualifications like merit badges, but in truth will merely be highly qualified novices. Another qualification that some staff will need, if they will be working with children, is to be *vettted by the Police*. The staff member fills in the required form, you send it to the Police, it's checked against the Police database and they'll alert you to any prohibition or restrictions of them working with children. A staff member cannot be alone with children until you have confirmation from the Police of a clear history. Bear in mind, this process can take up to six weeks.

What about *Emergency Management*? It's true, sometimes, even with careful risk management, you may have an emergency. My definition of an emergency, as relating to an adventure company is: a situation in which immediate expert assistance is required to prevent serious injury or death or requires the immediate evacuation of a patient/patients to prevent serious injury or death. At the very least, someone in your organization will need to be first aid qualified. If individual staff members will be alone for long periods with customers, especially if they are isolated from medical help by distance or other difficulties of access, those

individuals will also need to hold first aid qualifications. There will need to be a first aid kit available and especially in the case of isolation, a reliable* form of communication like a satellite phone or emergency locator beacon. Keep a set of instructions** with your first aid kit. It may not be a skilled first aider providing care. Likewise, for your satellite phone or emergency locator beacon. It can be a good idea for the guide to show their group where these items are kept, in the case of the guide's incapacitation or absence. Your business should have a well written emergency management plan kept as part of your systems of operation paperwork. Emergencies, by their nature are stressful, unpredictable and the stakes for all involved are incredibly high. It needs to be clear who owns which role, what each role entails, what procedures there are and in what sequence they are carried-out so that personnel can follow a general plan towards positive outcomes. Don't overlook how important this is. Processes, equipment, expertise and decisions will be examined in the event of serious incidents. When considering whether your emergency management systems are robust enough, imagine being asked: 'Show me your paperwork. Were your processes followed? Could you or your staff have done anything differently towards a better outcome?'

*More reliable than a mobile phone, however, in New Zealand, no form of communication could ever reach one hundred percent reliability.

**Such as an up to date Red Cross First Aid Manual.

Here's a few other things: Is your company *food registered*? If you prepare food for customers, you'll need to go through the process of becoming food registered with your local council. There are fees to pay, too. If you don't prepare food but you do provide it for customers to prepare themselves, you need to ensure fresh food is stored for them at no more than five degrees Celsius. If your business operates – in total or in part – within a National Park, you'll need to have a *Department of Conservation Concession*. You'll

find the relevant information specific to your activity on the DOC website under 'Permits'. Again, you will need to pay fees. You'll need to have liability insurance – in case through your activities, a National Park catches fire, or some other mishap occurs. You may also need to develop a relationship with local Iwi as part of your DOC Concession, depending on the area you wish to work in. If you have staff members who will drive vehicles with passengers, they will need a *passenger services endorsement* on their driver's licence – don't think that because you are exempt from employment law, the same is true of traffic laws. *Fire alarms* and other systems for any buildings will need to be compliant with relevant regulations, be operational and periodically checked by a registered fire safety company. If you intend to operate in places owned by other organizations, you'll need *permission*; a hike on a farmer's property, an abseil from a power company's hydro-dam or from a New Zealand Transport Authority's bridge, et cetera. Your paperwork must be reconciled with their paperwork.

WHAT IS RISK MANAGEMENT?

Why do people want outdoor adventure experiences and why do we believe in providing these opportunities for our participants? Because in our line of work there is Risk. Sometimes the risk is *absolute* – unavoidable – sometimes *real* – but controlled – sometimes the risk is only *perceived* – the participant ‘feels’ risk but is not in harm’s way. Without risk, the activity would provide no value for participants. There’d be nothing to learn, no boundaries to push and no personal development. And, it wouldn’t be fun!

But we can’t simply put people in danger and hope to reap rewards. We use risk management. To successfully manage groups or individuals engaged in adventure activities, an instructor needs to be competent in instructing the activity that they are running. This is a bit more complicated than it sounds because during any outdoor activity there will be multiple concerns to be conscious of, many of which have dynamic, changeable and uncertain qualities. With training, practice and experience, an instructor can become aware of potential *Hazards*, the ways in which these hazards can put participants in *Peril* and finally, minimise the hazards identified and pursue the activity towards the goals of both themselves and the group while avoiding an outcome of *Loss*.

I've already used a few key words so far that I'd like to explain. These will become the basis of what you and your staff need to consider*:

Loss: This refers to the loss of something of value. This could mean equipment damage, injury, death, emotional or spiritual harm, or simply the loss of the potential value of pursuing the activity in the first place. This is an end-result that we should be able to avoid with careful risk management.

Peril: The thing or event that causes the loss. A rope snapping, an arrow fired at somebody, a lightning strike.

Hazard: The thing that can cause the peril to happen. The rope rubbing on a sharp edge, people in front of someone shooting a bow, thunderstorm during a high-ropes activity.

Let's talk about hazards in more detail. A single hazard may not be enough to cause a peril. Usually, peril is the result of more than one hazard combined. Using a teaching tool from the Mountain Safety Council's manuals** on managing risks, we can refer to a hazard as a 'lemon'. Think of a poker machine. When you pull the handle, you might get one lemon, or you might get many lemons in a row. A complete set of lemons in a row will result in a 'jackpot'; a peril.

Here's a real-world example: *Peril: Hypothermia*. We go for a multi-day hike in the bush. We haven't checked the weather forecast - lemon. But we go anyway, without informing anyone of what our plans are - lemon. We have no reliable form of communication - lemon. Most of the participants have ineffective wet-weather gear - lemon. Our tents and sleeping gear aren't designed for poor weather - lemon. The participants are wearing clothing beneath their wet-weather gear that makes them cold when it gets wet - lemon. The weather becomes cold and it rains - lemon. Do you see where I'm going with this? One of these lemons may not be enough to put our participants in peril but when they line up and combine, we have a problem.

There are three different areas that an instructor needs to be conscious of to identify lemons and minimise their potential effect:

People: Consider all the ways in which the people involved in the activity - including the instructor or guide - could present lemons.

Environment: Consider the ways in which the environment that your activity takes place in can present you with lemons.

Equipment: Consider how your equipment or the lack there-of could present lemons.

At this point those Instructors who are '*Picture-thinkers*' will have an advantage. These Instructors will walk into an environment with their group and simultaneously assess the environment, how their participants are likely to react to it and many of the potential outcomes of a combination of lemons lining up, in order to safely manage their activity. They continuously compute a changing 'equation of everything' in their head. Picture-thinkers can run their activity in a holistic, multi-dimensional way which allows them to adapt to changing elements and situations very quickly. However, technical components of an activity can take longer for a picture-thinker to learn, if they are presented without big-picture context.

'Linear' or *'Language-thinkers'* however, have a more difficult road to travel. They need to consider all the separate elements in the sequence of how they've been taught to safely manage the activity. It can lead to slower decision-making in quickly-changing situations or even 'freezing' in panic, if the activity goes too far beyond the instructor's prior experiences. To help prevent this, an instructor may commit to running their activity 'by the numbers' rather than the way that would benefit their group the most.

However, to their credit, technical aspects of activities will be more easily learned by linear/language-thinkers.

It's helpful for an instructor to understand which type of brain they have; 'picture-thinking' or 'linear/language-thinking'. Then they can figure out how they gather and assess information, understand their strengths and weaknesses and improve upon their risk management towards the best activity outcomes.

*Sometimes, while examining risks, it's difficult to know where to draw the line. My basic rule is that once I get to 'sunscreen' and 'water-bottles', I stop. With whatever elements you are examining, there will be a sensible cut-off point. Otherwise you might never stop, as technically speaking, everything in the universe is interconnected, making possibilities infinite.

**The NZ Mountain Safety Council's manual on risk management – 'Managing Risks in Outdoor Activities (1993) ISBN 9780908931194', updates available - is a benchmark resource on the subject. Make sure your business owns a copy. You can design much of your systems of operation based on its philosophies and use it to supplement the training of your staff. Also, there is a great Risk Analysis and Management form template, copywrite Grant Davidson.

WHAT ABOUT COMMUNICATION?

In any business, frontline staff are key to everything from first customer contact to the way the job is performed and how the customers feel about it. In an adventure company, almost everyone who works for you will have direct contact with customers at the frontline. Most professionally trained and industry experienced staff will have high levels of personal skill and a commitment to bringing their a-game, but there are less and less of these people about. So, you'll need to know how to train staff to meet high standards in efficacy and professionalism. Remember, staff who are new to the industry will follow your lead, so if you're unprofessional...

How should I use marketing? Besides word of mouth, your active marketing is going to be the first communication from you to your customers. One difficulty here is that most adventure companies have widely varying customer bases, both geographically and demographically. How do you accurately target your marketing? The first thing to do is have an honest conversation with yourself about who exactly your customers are. Who are they and where are they? Now, you can think about how you might reach them. Television, radio and print can be almost impossible to target accurately and just as difficult to quantify results. So, as a small company, you need to be careful you aren't caught up in the glamour. You can pay a lot for dubious results. Finding your potential customers and marketing directly to them in a way which

will allow you to quantify results is harder than it seems, but some companies will have advantages, here. For all companies, a good website is key. Easy to find, easy to navigate, easy to place a booking. Try to put yourself in your customers' shoes when you design it. Make sure it can do more than just advertise what your business is and what services it offers. Get as much information across to them as you can. Get a relationship underway.

Early contact: If customers have a clear understanding of what you offer and how you operate, your early contact will be efficient and with limited chances of miscommunication. An uncomplicated business model helps, too, and you'll need to be comfortable divulging information. Yep, I know – you have an un-structured season, making a mess of the way you run your business and because you aren't an expert in the activity you trade in, you're unwilling or unable to provide honest, clear, uncomplicated info. You'll be forced into micro-management of your business. Here's the news: when we look at feedback from customers about their experiences with companies; difficult, confusing or dishonest pre-adventure contact is always noted as a huge negative. Your move...

When should I offer discounts? It's very easy to find yourself trapped in a discount war with your competitors. This is especially true if new customers to the industry have no way of discerning differences of the quality of the product you offer. But, it's not only about them – it's about *you*, too. You're more likely to fall into this trap if you, yourself, see little difference in your operations. You may feel the only competitive advantage at your disposal is price. But, a race towards un-profitability helps no-one. Core business values which set you apart will be an advantage, here. Make these obvious to potential customers and justify realistic prices. This will keep you out of battle with other businesses, at least on price. Sometimes, customers will ask for discounts – school groups feel especially motivated to – but, before you acquiesce, ask yourself: 'What has the customer done for me?' A discount is a coming

together of positions, not a freebee. You need to be careful you aren't simply giving away your profits for no good reason. If you use discounts to clinch sales, then you need to first have a firm price as a starting-point. And, know where your line of affordability is. Remember, many factors can contribute to this. You may have some products where price simply can't be lowered but you can offer customers discounts in other areas or on other products with higher margins, if they commit to their main purchase. This trick can be used to increase sales earnings. If you offer discounts because you want customers to like you as a person, then understand you're making a commitment to discounting every time that customer repeats their business. You might also find these customers gumming-up your operation when they will only deal with you, personally, as your staff aren't authorized to present discounts. If your business model is chaotic and your daily operations full of mistakes, then you will find your customers insisting on discounts or refunds. Many adventure companies in New Zealand understand and accept this as their reality so require a deposit-only before an adventure begins with the remainder paid afterwards. This way, they can more easily factor in errors of operation and discounts in price with less administrative difficulty. If discounts are a part of apologetic remediation towards customers, then ensure your personal apologies added – expressed verbally or otherwise - are heartfelt and well received by the customer. The idea of an apologetic discount is for the customer to leave without hard feelings. If you give them a discount and they still leave with hard feelings, you've thrown money away.

So, they're in the door: Here's where you show your customers that you know what you're doing, that they're in safe hands. Or, it's when you trick them into thinking this. Remember, just because they're there, doesn't mean you've made the sale. Take care of them. A ski-shop can be an intimidating place for some people; make sure everyone feels comfortable being there and take care to listen to what they say and how they say it to ensure you can get

them the right gear for the best fun, sap as much mystery from the activity for them as you can and get them on the ski-slopes as efficiently as you can. Those booked in for some time at an adventure centre have a huge amount riding on outcomes, not least because of the expense. You can make life easier on yourself by having a variety of programme templates which can be matched with the customers' general aims. These can then be refined or embellished with personalized goal-minded focus in activities and philosophy – your 'objectives' - after conversations with them. There may be a bit of back and forth but designing adjustments before a programme starts is easier than making them once a programme is underway. Being secretive or aloof will not be helpful. Guided adventures need as much mystery removed as possible for customers to be put at ease. The simpler your business model, the easier this will be. Your website can do a lot of the heavy-lifting informing your customers, as much as is practical, of your operating procedure. Try not to get wires crossed or have customers and staff on separate pages. Make sure your customers will arrive on time and are equipped with sensible, activity appropriate clothing, et cetera. In all communications, you should be honest.

Gear lists: Adventure activities inherently have unknown qualities. This shouldn't be the case when the customers are packing their bags. When they arrive, you need them as ready as they can be to start the activity with appropriate personal gear for comfort, safety, confidence and focus. A gear list can be an early step in helping put customers at ease and build rapport. Most gear lists are merely exactly that; a big long list. But this can leave questions in a customer's mind. Why do they need this or that? Is their inexpensive rain-jacket going to be good enough? - it usually will be good enough. Why do they need lace-up, closed-toe or strap-on footwear? If there is 'warm clothing' on your list, they'll wonder: how cold does it get? So, help them out*. Solve some mysteries for them. As for how your list looks; it should be part explanation and

part list with items to tick-off as they go in the travel-pack. This will help ensure nothing is forgotten. But, while you're at it, try not to give the impression they need to outfit themselves with expensive new stuff. It's a gear list, not a shopping list.

*What happens if you slip on snow wearing plastic rain jackets or pants? Can you protect your modesty while getting into a canoe wearing a skirt or using a climbing harness in short shorts? How likely are your footwear to stay on your feet and offer protection while hiking, swimming in a rapid or abseiling down a cliff-face? If you are at risk of going blind while on bright-white snow, does that mean your children are, too? Which clothing materials reduce the risk of getting too cold when you are soaked? Will there be any power-sockets, eftpos or internet where you're going? What effect will baggy clothing have while you're in water? How much weight can you carry? See what I mean? – help them out.

Emails and other written material: You don't have to be a literary genius, but you need to read as a professional. Bad grammar and spelling mistakes won't go un-noticed. Whether your emails are meant for a customer or a staff member, get the tone right, it's easy to miscommunicate in the written form. Put yourself in the readers' shoes and ask; am I too familiar, or am I too officious? Do I sound aloof, abrupt, unappreciative, condescending, or an extensive list of other things I haven't intended? Express your messages in as few words as you can. Don't leave room for misinterpretation. Leave the reader feeling clear in what you're saying, where you stand and where they stand. Efficient, clear communication will imbue your staff with confidence and prevent mistakes in procedures you want them to follow or tasks you want them to complete. It does the same for your customers and can ultimately reduce the amount of time you spend emailing. Consider what you've written with care before pressing 'send'. You can't take it back or screw it up and put it in the rubbish-bin. It'll exist forever. So, is what you've written true, is it fraudulent, is it legal? Even if you aren't deliberately up to

mischievous, there may be something you've over-looked in your hurry, or frustration or carelessness. Discrimination, bullying, being misleading – these aren't just points of bad character, they're points of law, too.

How can I plan for behavioural issues? It can be hard to imagine what kind of behavioural issues you might come across with groups. It's during programmes run by adventure centres that you are more likely to need to deal with them, especially if you run adventure therapy programmes for youth at risk. The key is to actually-have a plan. You can divide bad behaviour into certain escalating levels – bit naughty, misconduct, serious misconduct. Physical violence or sexual misdemeanours will usually slot straight into 'serious misconduct', with consequences such as immediate removal from the programme*. Make a list of what behaviours warrant which response – you can discuss this with staff. The roles within your company should be clearly defined. As many staff members may be novices it's unfair to put too much responsibility on their shoulders. Have a *disciplinary procedure* in place, make sure its processes are simple, clear to everyone and easy to follow. And, for goodness sake, follow them! Present the participants of your programmes with the procedure so they know how it works. They won't need to push the boundaries to discover where they are, if you *tell* them where they are. In this way, groups can come to self-manage. Then, it's up to you and your staff. Be consistent and be fair. Do not be arbitrary. And, don't betray your staff who have followed procedure by first trying to deal with low level issues themselves, then by seeking advice, finally by kicking it up the ladder to only discover senior staff won't follow through with their own roles to play**. If this happens, behaviour issues will worsen, negative experiences will ensue, and staff will become frazzled. By having a plan and following it, your uncomfortable conversations with an excluded participant's caregiver can be more straightforward, easier and more professional, gaining better acceptance of events and greater buy-in of the process. It may also

reduce the chance of a child 'getting a hiding' when they get home because the professional and calm process limits stress levels and reduces embarrassment.

*Remember to consider *how* you will remove them.

**We've all seen a manager strike a dramatic figure as they espouse their tough zero-tolerance policy. But this is often smoke and mirrors after the fact to disguise the truth that tolerance *was* shown for 'zero-tolerance behaviour or activity' under their supervision.

OK. Now you and your staff, your technicians, your guides or your instructors are up to the plate, face to face with customers. Here's how to do it:

Do they know who I am? You should always begin a presentation or activity by introducing yourself and any colleagues working with you. Do this even if there is a chance that the participants already know your name. They may have forgotten it. This isn't such a key point if you work in the hyper efficient environment of a ski-hire shop. Wearing name badges would cover it. It's also helpful to do your best to learn the names of your participants to help with crowd control, rescue or other emergency situations or simply to build rapport. If you're working with school groups, don't get hung-up on the fact that students may call you 'Miss' or 'Sir'. They've been taught to address those in authority this way as sign of respect. There are worse things for students to be than respectful.

Have I eliminated all the distractions I can control? If your participants are distracted for parts or all your presentation, little of your message will sink in. Remember, they'll naturally be projecting their imaginations forwards in time, imagining what the activity will be like or whether the road to the ski-slope will be icy. Bring their consciousness into the 'now' and transfer info as effectively as you can. Try to put yourself into the minds of your audience. 'I'm freezing', 'Why is this guy dressed like that?', 'Ouch,

the sun is right in my eyes', 'Oo, that other group is already in the water'. Any distracting thoughts will get in the way. Put the sun to their backs so it isn't in their eyes. Make sure they feel comfortable emotionally and physically – you might have them put a jacket on or take one off. Choose a safe place for your presentation. Don't dress in a way that confuses your audience or makes you look silly or un-reliable. You need to look 'the business', so dress in appropriate clothing with appropriate technical gear. But, don't over-do the wearing of technical gear – it'll make you seem as if you're trying too hard or could further worry already nervous participants. Consider your posture and other body-language cues – confident, relaxed, calm. Your going for: looking as if you've done this a million times before, yet, are still happy to be here. Position yourself so that they have their backs to interesting stuff as you make your presentation. Manage 'wild-cards' - I'll pick up on this later. Mind your language, don't use swear words. Don't give them props to hold, look at, inspect or play with until you absolutely have to. Try to make sense as you speak, don't ramble or stray off on a tangent. Keep what you say structured and on subject. Every sentence is calculated for maximum impact, effect and efficiency, brimming with all your favourite key words – action words, doing words, reassuring words. If you invite participants or other guides or instructors to contribute, ensure you have a tight hand on the reins. It's easy to get bogged-down or stray off subject or re-enforce something which needs no re-enforcing. Try not to frighten people. They may already be nervous enough. Scared people don't listen very well. Make sure you give people enough time to prepare themselves for the activity before you deliver a presentation on how you will run the activity – they've taken a jacket off, finished packing their canoe or have their sunscreen on. Try to not be too short, too tall, too attractive, too hairy or too anything else.

Do I know my subject? You'll be unlikely to achieve any level of success if you're going to bluff your way through your presentation. Learn your way around your subject, know some

background or history behind the activity and understand the reasons that things are done in a certain way - in case a participant asks or needs to know before they can comprehend - so that you don't dig yourself a hole beneath your own rapport. I know - It's going to be tough if you aren't an expert. And now that there's no need to be - as long as your paperwork says that you are - you might let this one slide. Besides, your customers assume that you are an expert - how could you hold the position otherwise? And in this way, you convince yourself: it's not really *you* who's fooling them, it's *them* fooling themselves. But, remember, one day, an emperor with no clothes will be exposed for what they are.

Should I brief my brief? For any presentation that involves a lesson - after which the participants will immediately put this new information into practice - to give them the best hope of retaining as much info as possible then you should try to structure your brief. List the items you'll talk about. You outline what kind of information you will cover, the sequence that it will be delivered, then go ahead and deliver the lesson. If nothing else, by spending time outlining your brief, you'll give your participants time to adjust their focus to you before the main lesson happens. It can help you to organise your own thoughts, too. And sometimes an observant participant might point out something you've missed, when you finish. So, brief your brief, then when delivering your lesson, ask if anyone needs clarification of certain subjects, as you go - 'any questions about those paddle-strokes?' - finally, tie the presentation up with a bow by finishing with a simple summary. Remember, this isn't for all activities, just the ones which involve actual lessons. If your activity has more than one guide or instructor, you should ask them if they have anything to add. This is done for the sake of politeness and to ensure that all guides or instructors have the respect of the participants - to help establish or reinforce their rapport. There should only be something to add if it is actually-pertinent or was actually-missed. It's not an opportunity for a second-guide to usurp control or show-off.

Professional guides or instructors who share adventure philosophies – similar training and backgrounds – will often be able to develop very effective working relationships, with each anticipating the thoughts of the other. In these cases, they'll be able to run effective presentations together as a team. But, if this isn't the case, it's best to have one speaker for the whole brief. Presentations early in an adventure set the tone for your rapport, activity safety, and the participants' sense of personal responsibility, confidence and fun. Don't underestimate the value of a well presented brief.

What is a 'group contract'? With any group that you feel may have the potential for behavioural issues, you can use a group contract as a behaviour management tool. These are usually for multiday adventure challenge programmes or multiday adventure therapy programmes. With the instructor's help, the *group* comes up with a list of realistic behavioural expectations for the duration of the course. By allowing the group to make these guidelines, themselves, they'll be more likely to stay within them. Optimum group buy-in. They can even suggest punishments for certain transgressions, if it's appropriate – press-ups for swearing, et cetera. The group contract will provide a standard of expectations which instructors can periodically refer to when they feel the need – have a written version somewhere visible. It will hopefully lead to effective *self-management* of group behaviour, too.

Should I explain what's ahead? For customers of an adventure company, a certain amount of mystery is inevitable and can even be a good thing. But, complete mystery is never good. Customers will naturally be in a default state of anxiety, even if they aren't conscious of it, unless you help dispel it for them. You can do this by explaining in general terms, the outline of the day ahead, the activity ahead or the process ahead. This will be as beneficial whether you're working in a ski-shop or on a river. If you run an adventure centre, you can write the day's programme on a big

notice board and participants can check it whenever they like. A good river-guide or trekking-guide might provide a brief outline of what to expect at multiple points through the day, using the opportunity to re-focus their group whenever getting back into their boats or onto the trail after breaks. It can help to bear in mind that many people exist within daily routines of relatively narrow experiences. And that's fine, but remember when they step outside of this, they may bumble about a bit. Anticipate that you might need to explain or help with things which to you are common sense. Be empathetic, be patient, be generous. Inexperienced guides or instructors or company owners, however, will often like to keep their customers in the dark during activities, to allow or encourage an illusion of their vast knowledge, skills and experience. But, as they develop in these areas and gain *real* knowledge, skills and experience, they'll lose this unhelpful trait. If guides or instructors are at war with each-other – trying to establish or assert seniority due to uncertain employment structure – they may resort to ambushing one another with sudden changes of plan or secretive management of activity timelines. This can have poor outcomes for both staff and customers. Another trait of some guides is to 'surprise' customers with highlights of various elements during an adventure. But even good surprises for someone experiencing sustained anxiety – whether they're conscious of their anxiety or not – are exhausting.

Information overload? Your participants don't need to know everything about everything in one go. Give them a simple overall idea of what they can expect during their activity. This picture is stored in their mind. Any new information you give will be assigned its appropriate place within this picture. You can furnish them with bite-sized pieces of info in the sequence that serves your activity, as your activity progresses. By running your activity this way, you should find it easier to keep the general flow going as your instructions are only being given as and when required, rather than all in one bunch. You'll also be able to keep abreast of confidence

and comprehension levels, re-enforcing points as you go. Remember, only give information relevant to your activity. Fleshing out your presentation with personal anecdotes or descriptions of the molecular make-up of your equipment is unhelpful, will erode your rapport and waste the available time you have for your lessons – although detail like this can be helpful if you're training guides or instructors.

What does it mean to 'de-inhibitize' my participants?* If people didn't have social inhibitions, life would be chaos. Societies function along rules of established social expectations and these can be deeply embedded into the ways we interact. This is a good thing. This is most obvious when we view the differences in the ways we interact with our closest friends, compared to the ways we interact with strangers. But in the adventure industry, we often require short-cuts to help people go from being strangers to friends quickly, in terms of the way they work together. Once their inhibitions are lowered, we can more easily work towards the goals of the group and the activity. We need to *de-inhibitize* them. It's a delicate process, though, because everyone is so different. An instructor or facilitator will need to be empathetic, energized, focused, skilled, perceptive, observant, adaptable, creative, willing to experiment, and willing to accept changes in direction or even stepping backwards in order to make progress. So, what's an efficient, effective way to de-inhibitize your group? Games. Playing games brings people out of their comfort zone and into their stretch zone – I'll explain this 'zone' concept in more detail, later. Playing games will help people shed their inhibitions, align their personal goals to those of the rest of the group and work towards them as a motivated and productive member of the team. The goals to work towards can be endless; learning names, improving communication skills, discovering hidden talents of problem-solving or leadership, developing empathetic skills, physically warming-up, preparation for later activities by learning of and acclimatizing to 'safe touch', developing trust and any other goals

you might want to work towards. There are a zillion different games to choose from but, remember; the key is gradual progression. Don't push too hard or try to progress too fast. You might sabotage your good work by being impatient and need to start all over again. At each stage of development, debrief and cement learnings. This will give you solid footing for progression. If you're looking for material to get you started, you can do no better than the dozens of books written by Karl Rohnke – 'Silver Bullets (1984) ISBN 0-8403-5682-X', 'The Bottomless Bag (1988) ISBN 0-8403-6633-7', 'Quicksilver (1995) ISBN 0-7872-2103-1' and many others. These books and the knowledge within, in my opinion, set the standard for adventure-based philosophy, and the adventure industry owes Karl Rohnke and others of his generation a huge debt of gratitude. If you're an experienced operator in the adventure industry, you will almost definitely have studied or used Karl Rohnke's work. Very often, you won't have realised it. Especially, as it's heavily plagiarized.

*'De-inhibitize' is a colloquial term which has become a part of adventure industry vernacular.

What if they can't hear me? During some activities the participants won't always be able to hear what you say – distance, noise. How will you deliver your message? How can you be sure that they've understood it? Hand signals. River-guides have a whole language of basic communication which they use. Between each-other, they can share a great deal of info across distances and through sound-cancelling noise. But it's easy because they speak the same language. Sometimes, you need to talk to your customers, too. Depending on how you like to run your river tours, you'll want your customers to understand some rudimentary signals. But, keep it simple; the signal for 'do you understand?' – your fingers or a fist pressed or tapping on top of your head, while your arm presents a big 'O' to the recipient - is the same signal for 'yes, I understand'. And, the same signal as this can ask: 'are you OK?' Which is the

same as: 'Yes, I'm OK.' Pretty-efficient, huh? Then, there is: 'go that way'. You simply point in the direction you want them to go. You can easily add urgency, here. Finally, a whistle-blast is a good way to get people's attention. There's a rudimentary language of info you can convey here, too, but you can keep it for the guides. Information overload is a thing. You'll be unlikely to need anything further than the above signals and if you do, you can usually brief your customers in advance of standout circumstances.

How do I manage stress levels? When you're designing adventure programmes or a customer experience, you should always consider participant stress levels. Adventure activities will naturally heighten stress levels, there'd be little reason to do them, otherwise. But, sending your customers on a rollercoaster ride of stress throughout your activity is a mistake. The ups and downs will confuse and exhaust them and could result in misbehaviour or negative experiences and a wasted opportunity to reach goals. You need smooth, gentle transitions from up to down and down to up, again. Try to keep energy flowing at a steady rate. On an emotional even keel. Physically, too; a hike over a mountain is an exercise in fitness management. Carefully diagnose fitness-levels in the first thirty minutes and set the walking-pace accordingly. On uneven terrain, remember many people will try to keep the length of their steps the same as when walking on the flats. This will quickly wear them out. Keep heart-rates and lactic acid in their muscles - 'the burn' - at normal levels by adjusting the length of your steps as you lead them on steep sections. Use a sensible pace, short photo opportunities and drink breaks as ways to keep groups of disparate fitness levels together. Promise your customers that you'll be considerate of energy levels and will manage breaks accordingly - this will prevent them taking breaks of their own volition which will disrupt your timeline and group energy management. You'll need to keep your communication up, explain as you go, gain customer buy-in. Other aspects of physical condition need to be managed, too. Ensure you're aware of foot discomfort. Prevent

blisters by asking your customers periodically of any discomfort. You don't need to supply expensive medical remedies, like sticky bandages. You can use wide strips of electrical or plumbing tape. Electrical/plumbing tape stay's sticky even when wet – as long as the skin was sort-of dry when you stuck it on - and because it's plastic, the same friction which caused the blister won't rub the tape off, the way it would rub a medical bandage off. And it's cheap. When running activities on high ropes courses make sure sunglasses are on the gear list because participants on the ground will be looking up into the sky. Understand the weather in your area. Keep participants in the correct clothing as the weather changes. Consider hunger; anticipate how your customers will feel throughout the day. Remind them that high-energy activities will burn lots of calories. Suggest they eat more than they normally would. Ensure everyone has water to drink and remind them to drink it – it's easy to forget during busy activities or on days which aren't hot. If you have groups where you know bad behaviour will be a risk, eliminate as much down-time from your programme as you can. Busy people don't have time for bad behaviour. Control their exploration of the group's pecking order by constantly working with them. Don't allow them time to explore the pecking order on their own. Nip play-fighting in the bud. Play-fighting will sabotage focus levels and heighten stress levels. Some groups can't play-fight without it turning into a real fight. Guides who are asked by their customers 'how long until we reach the campsite?' should give an estimate that's longer than they truly believe it will take – but not by much. The idea is to reward the customers with the success of coming in under-time. If the guide's estimate is too close to the actual time it will take, they run the risk of coming in disappointingly late. You should always give customers reasons to feel good about themselves. So, if you know something usually takes forty-five minutes, tell them it will take 'less than an hour'. Give them easy-to-imagine goals. If you've designed a nicely flowing programme or adventure, and you have a calm, confident

demeanour and commit to delivering a smoothly flowing experience, then your participants will get a lot of value from your work. All of this is not only beneficial for your customers, but also for your staff. Too much stress for too long can lead to burn-out or a resentment of customers*. Or even too much of nothing happening. Too much of any one thing is never good but dramatic swings from high energy to low energy – the rollercoaster - is worst of all. Consider this when you design your business model, your activity programmes or as you schedule your staffing. Try to get to know your staff – changes in the way they're acting will alert you to stress levels.

*Strangely, gaps between customers being too long can lead to resentment of customers, too – when another one finally walks in your shop. Staff can spend ages wishing it was busier, then suddenly hate it when they get their wish. Keeping staff energy levels up with other tasks can help, here. Another problem is when you're waiting for a group to show up at a prescribed time – everything is ready, energy is high but now you're just waiting...

How important is timing? As they say: timing is everything. Having a good understanding of how the timings of the details within your business affect operations will give you control of your participants' energy levels. It will improve efficiency; reduce your costs, improve reliability and trust both within your own staff and with strategic alliances such as transport operators. Your system of standard operating procedures is your best ally, here. But, life will be made very difficult in this area if your business is 'reactive', rather than following a plan. If your business model forces you to make things up as you go, timing will be a constant headache, rather than an effective tool of operations management. In a ski shop or other equipment rental business, you can learn to predict when your store will be busy, as your experience grows. The weather, ski-lift facilities' closures or delays in opening, road conditions, snow conditions, the day of the week, the time of the

day. Hundreds of separate calculations of dynamic elements will keep you on your toes and can add a rewarding level of skill and knowledge to bring to your work. When guiding groups on journeys over mountains or on rivers, the guide's time management is always front of mind. They need to constantly plan ahead in their mind, adapt to situational changes so they can keep within their schedule. Rest breaks, meal times, photo opportunities – all managed with efficiency so when you're moving again, your pace is comfortable, enjoyable. Don't erode your rapport or sap the fun out of an activity by being a 'hurry-up guide'. You won't have to be if you're efficient *between* periods of travel. Remember, any unscheduled stop burns time – on a river, an average canoe rescue will add around fifteen minutes to your timing schedule; rescue, gear recovery, changing customers out of wet clothes and into warm clothes. A five-minute toilet break will always be five minutes longer than five minutes. Anticipate your customers' needs as much as you can – arrange your schedule accordingly. Make sure your guides and other staff members commit to being a part of your operational machinery – no lone wolves. A single lone wolf can throw your whole operation out, especially if your operation or activity has a lot of working parts. This is why having simple standard operating procedures can be so beneficial. Everyone can follow the plan with ease. If you have no SOP's, you'll need to be very good at communicating with all your separate team members every time your plans are forced to adapt to changing situations or to your chaotic management. Even with the best SOP's and time management, changes can be forced upon you. How will you communicate problems, solutions to problems, changes of plan? In person, on staff info boards, providing cell-phones of overlapping networks? At an adventure centre, you can provide your staff with walkie-talkies; as activity times are nearing their end, you can warn all the separate instructors simultaneously, allowing them time to wind their activity down without an abrupt finish, activities ending in a rush or participants missing out. Anomalous

issues can be immediately communicated and dealt with. Staff struggling to get activity elements set up in time can request help. Kitchen staff can work in their own timings by listening-in to the radio chatter.

What are state changes? How do you ensure people are listening to you? How can you maintain or reset the focus, the concentration or consciousness of your audience? A 'state change' is a technique an instructor or guide or anyone giving a presentation can use which is designed to achieve these ends. Some techniques can be very overt and obvious, and others are super-subtle. They can be used continuously throughout a presentation or only if you notice attention wavering. Here are some great state changes you can include in your bag of tricks: You can speak very quietly so your audience needs to concentrate to hear you – this works best with small groups. Vary the cadence of the way you speak, upset the rhythm of your sentences - poets use this trick a lot. Vary your speaking volume - louder, quieter. Your pitch, too – higher, lower. If you want to hand out pens or other things, you can make participants come to get them, or you could throw them for participants to catch - it's even better if you're an inaccurate thrower. You could place your hand briefly on the shoulder of someone who's been gazing away into the distance – always the shoulder closest to you, don't wrap your arms around people. Walk around your participants as you speak, so even if they don't turn to still see you, they'll need to consciously follow you with their ears. Plan ahead - if your presentation involves a few demonstrations, you could re-position yourself or even the entire group for each separate demonstration: *example: canoeing safety brief and paddle instruct: Life-jackets (check/help each-other), rescue-swimming (demonstrate), rescue throw-bags (demonstrate), then ask them to turn around and face the river so they can point out hazards to you – then you move to a canoe to demonstrate what they need to do if they've crashed into a hazard – then you move to another canoe, demonstrate getting into it at the front and the relevant paddle*

strokes – then move to the back of the canoe to demonstrate the canoe captain’s paddle strokes. Each time you move, they need to follow so they can see and hear.

How do I best use props? Props are helpful tools you can use to convey your message efficiently and memorably. They can be great, because visual or tactile elements of your presentation are absorbed well to illustrate and re-enforce your lesson. But there are pitfalls for the unwary when using them. Here are some do’s and don’ts regarding props: do check whether your prop is working, if it has a function to perform. Do ensure your prop is a good size to see, hold, fit, hide, lift, etc. Do mention any safety hazards involving being near your prop or tips for the safe handling of it. Don’t hold a prop in your hands while you’re talking - unless it’s about the prop. Don’t let your audience hold a prop in their hands unless you are describing specific attributes, mechanisms or uses of the prop and are sure that they are listening to what you are saying. Combining props with a lesson is especially important in a ski-shop. As you demonstrate the equipment’s use, your use of key-words will re-enforce and transfer information effectively and should be easily turned into practical use once the customer is on the ski slopes. Running on a kind-of script will ensure nothing is left out and you’ll be able to be very efficient. You’ll also find any previously undiscovered problems with the gear this way, and while this can be embarrassing – and will throw a spanner in the works while you fix or replace the gear - it’s better than the customer discovering an issue once on the slopes.

Should I try dark humour? Dark humour puts the focus on the worst thing that can happen. Why would you want that? People trying to imagine themselves participating in an activity that seems terrifying, uncomfortable, beyond their confidence level or other such discomfort will not benefit from or appreciate the use of words like ‘splat’, ‘dead’, ‘snapped’, et cetera. Your role as an instructor or guide is to re-enforce and build the confidence levels

of your participants. Dark humour will have the opposite effect. Dark humour is used by people who have difficulty empathizing with others and by bullies. It can make you seem arrogant, aloof, too cool for school or simply that you wish that you were somewhere else.

What about funny humour? Humour is a great way to build and maintain your rapport with a group. It can relax nervous people and make it feel as though the activity is going to be something individuals can achieve, even if at first, the thought had them feeling pretty-nervous. It can diffuse conflict - when used with skill - and provide comfort to the uncomfortable. Humour can do all these things - but only if you are actually-funny. Also, beware that humour doesn't become a weapon wielded by bullies, whether it's you or others. Beware also, of any temptation to use sarcasm. The point of sarcasm is to make the victim feel stupid or small. Remember, it's easy to over-do anything and that's the case here, too. A carefully placed joke can release pressure or alleviate stress. Badly placed jokes will have the opposite effect. And, be careful as a guide or instructor to remember that you are *with* the group - you aren't *of* the group. It's easy to step into the culture of a group, lose your footing, and be swept away. Keep a hold of yourself.

How can I use body-language to my advantage? The subject of body language can seem to the uninitiated a mystical, even super-natural art. But the bits that are useful in the adventure industry are nothing to be afraid of. People both project and interpret body language subconsciously. It greases the wheels of social interactions. This is why it can be used as a tool in the adventure industry. We can interpret many things about the way a person may be feeling by diagnosing their posture, body language or facial expressions. Most of what you'll be observant of has to do with an individual's confidence. Regarding posture; are they in a protective or defensive position? Regarding the face; is it turned down or away? Do their eyes meet yours? Are there other messages their

face can tell us - frozen with fear, not telling the truth, telling you what they think you want to hear, et cetera? Regarding the rest of their body, are they protecting their core with their arms or hiding their hands? Often you may pick up these things as much on a subconscious level as a conscious one. Gut instinct is your ally. And remember, people who are affected by things like Autism Spectrum Disorder, child abuse or some other set of challenges may have a very different way of interpreting the world and relating to it. You'll need to learn the ways these individuals operate. You can also be proactive with your use of body language. Project confidence and empathy. Imitation is a great body language tool that can be employed in multiple situations. Here's how to use it to establish rapport with a group: while close to your group - normal speaking voice distance - you'll be more or less surrounded by people either sitting, lying or standing. Those participants will subconsciously feel that you are one of them, for them, with them or on their team if you imitate aspects of *their* body language. To start with, pick the prevalent thing amongst the group - eg: left foot slightly forward with more weight on the right leg. When you transition from one position to another, you need to be subtle about it and make your moves only during your sentences as you speak, never in the spaces between, otherwise suspicion can develop instead of rapport. If you accidentally instil feelings of suspicion in your participants, you'll be stuck with it for the duration of your time with them. This is because it's developed in their subconscious, rather than the conscious part of their minds. Imitation can also be used to check whether your participants are listening to you and that your message is sinking in. Once you've been talking for a while, employing the body position of your participants, make a change of your own position. Do this as naturally and as subtly as possible. If your words are reaching both the conscious and subconscious minds of your participants, you might observe them making the change to follow you in your new position. They'll do this without thought. At this point, you will

know you have their full attention. You can work your way carefully through the whole group - if you have time - gaining optimum focus from everybody. Your personal energy is something to consider, too. You emit energy whether you're aware of it or not. Where does it go? How can it affect others? Your energy goes where your thought goes. You can consider your energy as a force flowing forwards from your chest or face - picture a lamp. This is part of the reason it's important to wash your attention over the whole group as you speak. How will your energy be felt by others? Remember, they have their own energy. If you're directly in front of them, yours will oppose theirs. There are times when this is what you want. If you are beside them, your energy will flow in the same direction as theirs. Where you are and where you direct your energy in relation to your group can have a huge impact. Be conscious of this and use it. Then you can add context and work towards yours and their goals while avoiding pitfalls; Are you talking *with* them, *at* them or *to* them? Are you working *with* them, *for* them or *against* them? Are you laughing *with* them or *at* them? Whether you're in a ski shop, hiking over a mountain or at an adventure centre, you can develop this for the benefit of your work.

Encouragement is good, right? Encouragement of participants is great when it comes from other participants. This means that the culture of your group is healthy and that participants are de-inhibited, empathising with each-other and sharing each-other's goals. But, encouragement should be considered within the philosophy of 'challenge by choice'. Ensure that encouragement doesn't have any negative effect on this concept. 'If I can do it, anyone can!' is a self-deprecating cry from participants who have already successfully completed a challenge, that we've all heard before. But because everybody responds to challenges differently, this comment can often be damaging to confidence levels if a participant chooses to not complete the challenge or opt out entirely. This can result in a negative way in future opportunities in the programme, with regards to participation. If you are

instructing a participant who is in their 'stretch-zone', encouragement can have a detrimental effect on their success. This is because encouraging words can re-enforce their fear. It can also make the participant feel that you aren't telling the truth; if they've set themselves a goal of completing an activity, yet are frozen and can push themselves no further, telling them that they're 'doing really well' will sound like a lie to them. Instructors should instead use a constant patter of instructions to keep a participant focussed less on their fear and more on the procedure you need them to follow to achieve their ultimate success. With each small success - every time they follow your instructions - reward them with simple positive comments. Deliver these with a calm, relaxed high-to-low pitch - 'goo-ood' or 'thaaat's-it'. The high to low pitch to your voice is important here, because of its calming effect. Consider a nice, predictable flowing cadence with your patter delivery. And keep a close watch on the face of your participant - if you can - so that you know when to shut up. If your participant is trying think their way through a problem, your silence is what they need.

*The '*stretch zone*' is one of three conditions of the equation between confidence, fear and learning. While in the '*comfort zone*', participants are happy, but no personal development will happen here. If participants are pushed or slip into the '*panic zone*', this is a negative experience which can harm the participant emotionally and sabotage the goals of the instructor, the participant and the group. It can undermine the reason for doing the activity, in the first place. The stretch zone lies between the comfort zone and the panic zone. Its where personal development occurs. Working with an individual while they're in their stretch zone is a careful balancing act because everyone responds differently to various situations. When working with groups, you'll need to balance everything very carefully, indeed because this difficulty is multiplied. You need to consider your own goals as the instructor, the goals of the activity or programme, the group's goals and the individual participants' goals - all within the philosophy of

'challenge by choice'. Be especially mindful of your own goals. Are they aligned to the goals of the participants of the group?

How does 'challenge by choice' work? Challenge by choice is based in the concept that it's a fundamental human right to not be forced into doing things you don't want to do. Forcing a participant beyond what they want to do is bullying. Doing this will undermine your rapport and erode all the trust the participant has in you. This means that future participation could be affected. Participants operating within their stretch-zone, where learning happens, are often super close to the panic zone, where negative experiences lurk. It takes empathy, concentration and practice to keep participants in the stretch zone. If you have a participant *stuck*, especially on a high-angle activity like a high ropes course, you can ask the participant: 'What do you want to do?'. If they say: 'I want to come down!', then immediately give them the instructions required to achieve this* - including safety tips like using their feet to defend against bumps or keeping their hands away from safety gear. The result will be a re-enforced trust between you and the participant and they may now have the confidence to push themselves further for their next go or in a different activity. Sometimes, simply by asking them 'What do you want to do?' will give them confidence to continue, after-all. They know that they have control over their destiny because you gave them the power to choose - continue or down. One of the things instructors or guides are often guilty of is promising a group that they are working within challenge by choice values, but then expecting full participation, none the less. Don't do it. If you put your money where your mouth is with this, you'll develop a great level of trust with the individuals in your group. But you need to call attention to the times you do this, don't just let them sneak off - 'So, would you like to sit this round out? Cool. Jump back in whenever you like.' By saying something like this, you prove to the individual and the rest of the group that you walk your own talk and the participant who's opting out will be far more likely to opt back in

when they are ready. The opposite of the challenge by choice philosophy is the theory of 'what doesn't kill me makes me stronger'. There are two flaws with this theory: due to infinite variances in personal confidence levels and the ways in which we process experiences, this theory doesn't work for everyone. If it works at all, it requires either expert facilitation and de-briefing by the instructor, or an eventual 'coming to terms' with the event, sometimes years after the fact; a process of self-evaluation that comes from natural progressions in maturity and life-experience. In the mean-time, confidence may've been so damaged that certain situations or activities are avoided for years. 'I don't get in water' or 'I hate the outdoors'.

*If you are about to lower a participant who is on a rope, always warn them before you allow them to descend; 'OK, you're coming down'. Then lower them slowly and steadily. When their feet are on the ground, ask: 'Are you standing up?' – this warns them they need to take their own weight to avoid an embarrassing tumble.

When should I not sweat the little things? The skill of knowing when to leap upon issues regarding behaviour or letting them slide is one learned over time and through experience. Situations are never the same which means that there are no hard and fast rules. Some behaviours are not as disruptive as they might at first seem. If the behaviour is unlikely to sabotage the goals of the activity, you might ignore it. Often, bad or disruptive behaviour is merely boundary pushing from participants to see what kind of reaction might result. In this instance a spectacular reaction will reward the boundary-pusher and encourage more of the same stuff. Consider your time management. Is working your way towards eventual perfect behaviour going to take you all activity and leave you with no time to actually-*do* the activity? Consider your own ego. What are your goals for the group members? Are your goals aligned with their goals? Are your goals realistic? It's important to not set impossible behaviour goals for your participants because you will

gradually erode your rapport while constantly trying to correct behaviour to your satisfaction. A great question to ask yourself if you are feeling frustrated is: 'Does it really matter?' If it doesn't, it could be that your ego is affected more than the actual activity and you can decide not to sweat it. During some youth at risk programmes, there will be a mine-field of these decisions to make*. One issue which comes up is fighting. Obviously, this isn't a little thing, but fights will almost always begin as some kind-of stand-off between parties who are exploring or trying to change the group's pecking order. They will seldom go from zero to blows without warning – there is a 'stand-off' period, first. During this stand-off period, if tutors or instructors' physically step in to stop the fight, the event will immediately escalate. In fact, in many cases, the participants have been hoping that this will happen. There is risk in fighting – losing, getting hurt or disciplinary consequences. If you physically step in during a stand-off period, the warring parties can more safely escalate from verbal insults, posturing, pushing and shoving, et cetera, to blows. They know the tutors and instructors will end it, keeping them safe from both harm and from losing face. It's as though stepping in to prevent people from harm is a signal that they've been waiting for to escalate their behaviour**. This situation puts both staff and participants at risk of harm. Another way to calm the situation is to distract from it - a *state change*; 'OK, guy's, grab your gear. We're going...' Move the whole group somewhere else, but, immediately - before someone tries to do something silly when an opportunity arises - debrief what happened with the group once the warring parties are apart. Use it as a learning experience and a way to re-enforce behavioural expectations. Often, they will be relieved that they didn't have to follow through and can contribute to remedial discussions with their egos intact. Obviously, every group, every programme and every situation is different. These situations will be fluid and unpredictable. So, take care. Whichever way you choose to play it – not sweating the little things - consistency is key. You need to

present a reliable and predictable set of standards. This will allow your participants to settle into the culture that you have set for them and get down to business.

*Consider the affects of drugs on your participants; addiction, withdrawal, et cetera. Previous head trauma, emotional trauma, limited social skills or anti-social tendencies. Expect unpredictability.

**We see this on a larger and far more complicated scale when riot police suddenly appear to separate opposing crowds or prevent property destruction. The result is always the opposite of 'calm'.

Is swearing ever appropriate? The short answer to this is no. Swearing is unprofessional and can be highly offensive. It will erode your rapport and may even result in complaints and/or disciplinary action. Use your words. Occasionally, you may find yourself working with a group in which swearing is a normal part of their group culture. It's a mistake to think that joining them in this behaviour will help cement your rapport. It won't. While working with these groups, it's important to find an acceptable middle-ground with regards to their bad language. 'Don't sweat the little things' is a good mantra to live by as an instructor but there will be times when the bad language of group members will need to be jumped on. Consider the general tone and culture of the programme or activity you're running. You could also consider whether bad language crosses any lines - however vague - in bullying, public or shared spaces or simply whether it has slipped from jocular, relaxed banter into the realms of disgusting, vile sewage. This kind of thing is considered on a case-by-case basis. Obviously, during moments of fright or sudden, surprising pain a certain degree of forgiveness could be afforded.

What are key words for? There are a few different ways that you can use key words to your advantage. Repetition of 'action' words when teaching a participant something new to them can help

cement specific actions, with regards to motor-skills. Usually, you'll find a set of your favourite ones for use at all the separate activities you instruct. Key words are a short-cut to comprehension. Your set of favourites might be successful for around 80% of your participants. For everybody else, you'll need to search until you find the key action-words that 'unlock' the physical comprehension of the remaining participants. Repetition of 'pet' words for things can help when a group is in the development stage. They will own these words heading into future endeavours, eg: substituting the word 'lemon' in place of the word 'hazard'. Key words can express messages efficiently. They can effectively describe complicated, actions, theories, concepts, philosophies and all manner of other things you won't have time to explain. This way, you won't have to teach things from the ground up. People weren't born yesterday, so use your key words to explain the new thing you're teaching them by relating it to stuff they already know – allow their own experience and knowledge to do much of the work for you. Repetition of pet words for describing the type of behaviour you want for your group can help them come to self-manage their own behaviour if their friends cross whatever lines you and the group have established. This is a great situation to have because it means that your group is sharing that responsibility with you, allowing you to 'not sweat the little things'. Key words can become key sentences. This way you can re-enforce the ways you want things done. You can also use key words to ensure you don't leave anything important out of a presentation.

What effect do tone of voice and cadence have? These two things are interconnected. By 'tone' I mean the pitch of your voice. By 'cadence' I mean the rhythm of the words and sentences you say. With both combined – and mixed with facial expressions and body language - we have the character of our speech. We manipulate our speech all the time - excited, joking, authoritative, reassuring – there are lots of variations. Mostly, we do this without even thinking about it, we've simply learned the skill of it through daily

interactions with people. Here are some questions you can consider regarding tone of voice and cadence within your presentations: How long can I hold their attention if I don't vary my tone or cadence? How can I use variances in my cadence as state-changes? How conscious of my tone and cadence do I need to be with a participant in their 'stretch-zone'? When I'm delivering instructions, how important is my cadence and tone? How is my rapport defined or affected by my tone and cadence?

Who owns successes and failures? Adventure activities are dynamic situations with uncertain outcomes. For most of your customers, activities are at entry level – 'beginners'. 'Goals' are set by both participants and instructors during these sessions. For these three reasons you will find that groups and individuals will have some successes and some failures. A nice trick - that generally goes unnoticed by participants - is for the instructor to share the failures of the participants and allow them to own the entirety of their successes. Sharing a failure will soften the blow, limit frustration and help the participants to feel safe emotionally to continue pushing themselves. Giving participants full credit for successes will provide better de-briefing clarity and maximum confidence. *Failure:* 'We didn't quite get there. How can we improve? What would you like to do, now?' *Success:* 'Lovely work, you nailed it! What did you do well? What would you like to do, now?' If you can see the differences here, I'll bet your already imagining situations where you can use this.

What's a 'wild-card'? What I mean by 'wild-card' in terms of running activities is a person who is disruptive within the activity or who is a distractive presence. Allowing a wild card to pursue their own disruptive agendas will sabotage your activity's goals. You can either shut them down in an authoritative manner with brute force, the way a grumpy school teacher might or in a different way that will more reliably allow you to keep your rapport intact. Recruit the wild-card as your own personal minion. If your wild-

card is using their confidence in a disruptive way, try to turn this confidence into leadership. Doing this can gain you an ally in the crowd control department or set and maintain a new standard of behaviour. Disruptive behaviour can manifest in a variety of ways. Consider the motivations of your wild-card. What's going on with them? There could be good reasons for their behaviour that need to be addressed; drug addiction, previous head trauma, child abuse, et cetera. They may have some special challenges that you've not had explained to you. Remember, not all wild-cards are disruptive in an overt manner. Anyone participating at a vastly different energy level to the main group could be considered a wild-card. Can you find a role for them? How will you reduce their impact? When you're working with school groups, you might find it could be a teacher or a parent who is being disruptive. You may have to pull them aside for a chat during an appropriate moment. Be gentle. If they take offense, they might get even worse. Whatever you choose to do, do it before too long or risk finding yourself with an entire group of wild-cards. And when it's your turn as a participant or when you're assisting another instructor, for goodness sake, don't be a wild-card yourself!

What about those with disabilities? With careful management, adventure activities have virtually unlimited potential for the personal growth of participants. This is true of anyone. Having limitations of any kind doesn't diminish a person's wish for adventure. If you want to present activities for people who have challenges, you'll need to supercharge your empathy. It's hard enough to put yourself into the shoes of others, but even more difficult when someone experiences the world in a vastly different way to you. How will you describe equipment and its use to someone with impaired sight? How will you communicate with someone who has impaired hearing? When it's hard to understand how people are feeling, how will you ensure that challenge by choice is being observed? When someone needs help to participate in an activity, how will you ensure as much personal success as

possible is awarded to them? Think about how much value can be earned from: 'I did it!' How will you design your facilities, programmes and activities to minimise reliance on others and maximize personal empowerment? Remember, you'll seldom be running a program for these groups where they all share a similar set of challenges. You'll be presented with all kinds of challenges at once. Where are you going to find staff who are mature enough, patient enough, empathetic enough and skilled enough?

Should I express environmental concerns? You'll usually be well placed to demonstrate to or educate people in environmental awareness and impact. You and your customers will often be working in, surrounded by, experiencing and absorbing elements of the natural environment simply because of where your activity takes place. Often, it's part of the point of being there. There's no better place to consider the subject. But, you should remember that aspects of the subject of environmental appreciation, protection or regeneration can be very subjective, very polarizing, and individual beliefs and values very tightly clung to. Tread carefully. It's easy to upset people who are on a different point of the values spectrum to you. And there are ways to mitigate or even avoid an uncomfortable situation. When guiding a group in the wilderness, you might provide fruit for lunch. You don't want them discarding apple-cores in the bushes because it promotes the existence of animal pests. Do you tell an apple-core throwing culprit off, explaining that 'yes, it's biodegradable, but...'? Or do you ask everyone to put apple-cores into the rubbish-bag as the apples are made available? Or do you cut all the apples up in advance, put the cores in the rubbish, and avoid someone following their usual habit of casually throwing cores away? It can depend on the group. Is it an educational activity you're guiding or a holiday activity? There are ways to get people thinking without being explicit, without walking into a topic of conversation which might have controversial elements. If someone asks why the riverbanks are so muddy, you might explain that it comes from 'run-off. The

catchment is large'. Allow them to draw their own conclusions where possible. It makes for a better lesson and is less likely to offend – especially if there are people in your group who already feel vilified by environmental zealotry. Remember, it's easy to accidentally be drawn into discussions which might become xenophobic or political, due to the interconnectedness, largeness and global nature of the subject.

Humility: Too many chefs spoil the broth. From time to time in the adventure industry, a guide or instructor might be a part of a team where everyone has extensive adventuring backgrounds, are closely aligned in adventure philosophy and are equally committed to working hard and doing a good job. A feeling of being the working parts of a well-oiled machine is highly rewarding. In fact, it's not until you hit the jackpot like this, that you'll be able to develop your skillset to the highest level. Sadly, this is less and less the case as the industry is draining of experienced personnel. So, how do you knit a team together when many of the elements have never even met before or are out of balance? For a team to come together in a common purpose, first you actually-need to have a common purpose. Each member needs to be aware of this before you begin. Next, each member needs to have respect of the other team members. This is where humility comes in. A subordinate won't work *for* a senior team member unless they feel they have that team member's respect. And the same of the senior team member. Humility of the senior means empathizing with their subordinate and sharing workload where appropriate. The subordinate shows humility by being empathetic to the weight of the responsibility the senior is under and deferring to them when appropriate. When you get the balance right, you'll better be able to get the job done. If no one can show humility or respect, then there will be a workforce full of lone wolves. An increasing difficulty these days is that no one believes they should start at the bottom and work their way up in an organization, anymore. And while this point is based in a cultural shift towards narcissism*, it

can also be the result of bad leadership. Arbitrary leadership. Avoid this trap. You can nurture a culture of *legitimate* leadership – fair, respectful leadership - within your company and enjoy a smoothly-running operation with low staff turnover. Let's examine a part of this more closely - mitigation...

*This – ‘narcissism’ - is an unfair point. We have an entire generation of young people in which impatience, hubris and the expectation to make an immediate and spectacular impact has been imbued in them by up-bringing, social expectations and a switch in daily focus from the trials, support, learning and rewards of socially interacting with *people* to the immediacy, addiction, numbing and deceit of *social media*. This isn't their fault. A leader in a modern workplace needs to understand that in many ways, young people have been damaged, spoiled and sold untruths. Your workplace, or any workplace of the adventure industry can be just the ticket to build skills in resilience and communication of young staff. The usually long, arduous processes towards success in adventure activities can teach the virtues of patience and hard work. The adventure workplace can only function if those within learn to communicate effectively and build trust. And the impact individuals can achieve for their customers, their colleagues, their boss, the environment and the wider community can round-out a sense of fulfilment.

Mitigation: Never come up before? I know. But consider how integral mitigation is in effective communication and consider how essential effective communication will need to be in your workplace. Mī'tigāte (- *able*). Appease, alleviate; reduce severity of; - *ā'tion*. ‘We should go river-right in this section of river.’ – versus: ‘With the river flooded like this, do you like going river-right, or trying to stay centre in this section?’ Did you spot the difference? When do we use this within our communications? When there is an imbalance of power between parties. Effective use of mitigation can allow for smooth operations. An ‘Assistant-guide’ or ‘Second-

guide' understands that they are not in charge of the group. They defer to the 'Trip-lead' or 'Lead-guide'. The lead-guide shoulders responsibility for the group's safety and ensures all goals are met; those of the owner of the company, the guests and the guides. The lead-guide must also consider the goals of individuals or organizations separate of the company and its customers; landowners, health and safety, Department of Conservation, et-cetera. If there is a second-guide, this workload is shared but the *responsibility* still belongs to the lead-guide. But, it's difficult. Everyone involved needs to be conscious of how they interact. Is the lead-guide being respectful or arbitrary - bullying? Is the second-guide being respectful or insubordinate? Both guides have their own spectrum of mitigation along which to communicate on. Respectful authority from the lead-guide will create an environment where subordinates feel valued. This will help the second-guide to relax into their role while also feeling emboldened to point out things which could affect activity outcomes if they're concerned their superior is overlooking something important, or even to pick up any slack in the management of tasks. Everyone should bear in mind that whoever 'carries the can' if something goes wrong, also wields the authority. The chain of command is ordinarily an uncomplicated concept. But, the adventure industry is not uncomplicated. It's dynamic. The lead-guide may be juggling hundreds of balls at once while leading the activity and what do we see when things begin going wrong? Incidents or accidents are never the result of a single fluke failure, even if they appear to come out of nowhere. There is always a series of things which add together toward a bad result; tiredness, stress, weather, equipment failure, fast changing situations requiring rapid important decision-making – all these could be among an endless list of things which on their own might not matter at all, but combined and mixed with unfortunate timing, could result in equipment damage or loss, negative experience of personnel or guests, injuries or death. So, it's important to have a culture within your organization

where subordinates can feel safe to speak up. This is far easier to achieve in the adventure industry than in organizations such as an army or navy, because there is an inherent informality to the adventure industry environment. The trick is to find the right balance. Success in this area comes from good leadership, clearly defined roles of employees and a company-wide respect of the personal strengths and skills of all team members. What may not come instantly can be worked upon in open-minded and respectful feedback sessions, targeted training and on the job conscious practical application. Helpfully, mitigation isn't something which is suddenly expected of us when we enter the workforce and never used before this. It's a learned form of communication that most of us begin employing when we're kids. It should be easy. But, because of the dynamism of the adventure workplace and the fact that team members seldom have time to get know each-other, it will take practice to get it right. Especially as in this industry you will have employees from vastly differing cultural backgrounds. Different cultures relate to authority in different ways. With conscious effort and consideration from everyone, though, it is possible to create a thoroughly effective and rewarding team environment.

So, what happens if the second-guide goes rogue? What happens when they haven't used mitigation and they've usurped the authority of the lead-guide? At the very least, an uncomfortable and difficult working-relationship will ensue. Control over the activity will become a weird push-me-pull-you scenario which customers will almost certainly become aware of and which could result in a poor customer experience. Why would a second-guide do this? What would make them act unprofessionally, this way? 'Ego', usually. A certain amount of confidence in employees of adventure companies is very helpful – and it's difficult to think of an industry as awash with confidence as this one - but this can fill a person up to the point of over-confidence. Or, they may not have enough respect for the lead-guide to defer to them, at all. Perhaps, they may

feel enough respect isn't being shown to *them*, so they're going all-out to prove themselves the better guide. Maybe, it's simply not in their nature to defer to anyone...

But, there's another possibility; a possibility which the adventure industry is badly infected with. Perhaps, they are doing this because of *you*, dear emperor. Why would an emperor want to do this? Here's a list: your own ego; micro-management will provide an emperor the sense of power they need. Being surrounded by confident, competent staff may be uncomfortable if the emperor is not themselves, confident and competent. If staff members are allowed to realise their full potential, will you want to run a company which operates above your own skill-level? Paranoia, baby. What if your staff feel they could do better than you and decide to start out on their own as your competition? Or, if your staff aren't distracted by competing amongst themselves or trying to destroy each-other, how long will it be before they team-up and rally against you and any unfavourable or illegal labour conditions? And how would you achieve this? You would work to undermine the lead-guides. You would embolden the second-guides. Overload the lead-guide with too much work or have them perform duties which aren't suited to them to make them seem incompetent. Get them chasing their tails – change the goals you wish to them work towards, never allow them to feel confident that they're heading in the right direction. Take responsibility from them or find other ways to erode their standing in the company. Promote subordinates into roles which overlap or supersede the lead-guide. Secrets, favouritism, bullying. Stress and fear are useful tools of control for an emperor. So, mitigation can be an invaluable communication tool for successful leadership and business operations or it can be weaponised to manipulate and control to satisfy your ego or perpetuate illegal management.

How do I communicate in a crisis? A crisis or emergency or rescue situation is where you will be exposed as a novice dressed-up in qualifications if you find yourself in charge of a situation which requires the skills of a trained and experienced expert, while not having the skills of a trained and experienced expert. How you communicate during these emergency events is as important as the actions you take to solve, remedy, rescue, save, mitigate or survive the crisis. Your voice, body-language and general attitude should convey to those who are counting on you, that you've seen this kind of event before, you've successfully managed this kind of event before, and here again, you will successfully manage *this* event. You can fake experience on paper, but you can't fake experience in a crisis. You need to understand as much as you can about the crisis so that you can be decisive – causal elements, rescue resources or personnel at your disposal, what outcomes you can work towards within the limitations and possibilities of your skills, your people, your environment, your equipment and the expectations which come with your responsibilities. It will help to have good systems of operation and emergency management policies in place. Make sure they're understood and easy to commit to. Sometimes, emergencies aren't as dramatic as we expect – no explosions or broken bones or cries for help or other tell-tale signs – your systems can guide you in vague situations. Even vague or slow, gradual deteriorations of elements of *people, equipment or environmental* situations can have disastrous consequences. Hopefully, your training will have been diverse, thorough and repetitive enough to allow you to work through a checklist of decisions and actions without the distracting elements of emotion, indecision, fear or panic. Design a plan, then design a plan-b, a plan-c, d and e. But stick with 'plan-a' until you can't anymore. While communicating with your customers, speak calmly and with confidence – cadence, tone, eye-contact, body-language. Provide simple instructions, only. Don't re-enforce or raise their stress levels by showing any un-due stress of your own. If one member or

some members of your group are involved in the crisis, ensure other members are safe or have them move to safety. Ensure your own safety and that of your colleagues. Now you get to work. 'Plan-a' should be the simplest and the most likely to efficiently and safely achieve a positive result. If your emergency is on a large scale – with multiple people as casualties or in danger of becoming casualties, the senior-most member of your personnel will be in charge as *'incident controller'* or *'site controller'*. This person will keep themselves slightly separate of hands-on work, so they can keep an over-all view of the situation and any developments of it. They make sure everyone is safe from further mishap, triage their response – discover, assess and rank in level of seriousness the pieces of the puzzle prioritizing the most critical parts, coordinate remedial actions – and continue to manage the event to its conclusion until they are relieved by a higher-ranking or more qualified person. If plan-a is a success, your customers might barely register that there was a crisis at all. Work calmly, efficiently and effectively – this will help cement rapport with customers. Remember, you should always debrief any incidents. It's a learning experience and needs to be recorded in an incident report. Don't forget to debrief with your customers, too. Explain in simple terms what happened and what you did about it. To an inexperienced customer, waves are always bigger, falls are always from higher-up and close-calls are always closer. You don't want them going home believing an exaggerated, more dangerous or less competently managed version of events than what actually-happened, so without down-playing, dismissing or minimizing anything, don't leave them feeling that you let them down in any way. They need to continue to have faith in you. These debriefs don't have to be formal affairs. If you are dealing with rescuers outside of your organization – the Police or Search and Rescue - understand how they prefer to communicate and the likely ways that they will operate to resolve your particular-crisis. Be efficient and concise in how you deliver information. Understand how you can most

effectively work with them. In any emergency, a team response is preferable to situations where lone wolves are heading in different, conflicting or opposing directions. A happy outcome will only be possible if everyone understands and follows their assigned roles. All of this is as important whether you are guiding a group in the bush, on a mountain or on a river. It's important in a ski-shop or when dealing with behaviour emergencies and their aftermath during a youth at risk programme. In an adventure role of responsibility, you need skills, experience and professionalism to *prevent incidents*. You need skills, experience and professionalism to *successfully manage incidents* and you need skills, experience and professionalism to *successfully manage and report incident outcomes*.

What's a debrief? A 'debrief' can serve more than one purpose. They can be used to examine specific events to help find areas of improvement in the ways you do things. They can be used to discover how your employees feel about certain aspects of your operation or of events. They can calm troubled waters after events of high stress – if facilitated with care. They can cement lessons, learnings and progression during or after activities. The hard part is providing a safe environment for participants of a debrief to feel comfortable speaking up and being honest. Careful, skilful efforts towards the gradual reduction of group members' inhibitions is important. Strict feedback guidelines can help. Low-level commitment of the way participants are asked to express themselves can help, too – instead of describing feelings in detail, participants can be asked to show how many fingers best describes their feelings on certain subjects, one finger to five. You'll need to carefully word your questions to get useful info, here. There are plenty of other imaginative tricks like this. You might explain the '*sift and sort*' philosophy – participants are free to take on board some feedback and discard the rest. Don't forget, your staff will need feedback, too; to provide them with confidence that they're heading in the right direction, to help them develop areas of

improvement and to affirm their value to your organization*. Morale. So, debriefing sessions can be highly formal and structured affairs for working towards operational improvement or very informal and imaginative affairs where you need to quickly assess where individuals are at, in terms of their response to your management of their adventure, before quickly moving on. And remember, if you are no good as a 'debrief facilitator', debriefs will be a giant waste of time for everyone involved and will erode your rapport. For many adventure activities, an effective activity debrief is the difference between 'something we did' versus 'something we learned'. Which has more value? Depending on your goals, you'll often find, without an effective debrief, you may as well have stayed at home. And, what you learn doesn't always have to be what you set out to learn. Adventures are pursuits or activities of uncertain outcomes.

*Believe it or not, it may not be your business model or your managerial prowess which is allowing your business to function. In many cases in the New Zealand adventure industry, employees aren't successfully doing their jobs and meeting your goals *because* of you and your business model, but *in-spite* of you and your business model. An adventure business's unstructured systems of operation and its unpredictable emperor creates a chaotic, barely functioning workplace. It's your employees who are tasked with making it work.

WHY ISN'T LAW-BREAKING ILLEGAL?

Good question. It doesn't make much sense, but here we are. It must be that employment law is simply different to other law. Do we obey laws because we fear the consequences of being held to account? That might be a part of it. But it's not the whole story. We obey laws because we believe in the legitimacy of those who make and enforce them. They have our respect because we believe we're being treated with fairness. The rules aren't written and enforced in an unpredictable, arbitrary way. They are considered carefully and deliberated on in government before being passed into law and they are enforced equally upon the population. It's only because of this that we can see their legitimacy. So, why does an emperor of an adventure company feel exempt from obeying employment law? It's because when the government wrote employment law and the various amendments, they didn't take into consideration the specific conditions under which *your* company struggles. The uncertainty, the unpredictability, the risk. The law is solid, implacable, immovable, but your business is dynamic, ever-changing, adapting to the whims of customer patronage and the inconvenience of weather interruptions or any other considerations which can't easily be planned for. Do you design your business model with solidness, implacability and immovability to allow for conformity to the law or do you strive towards the best value outcomes of never letting a customer or opportunity pass you by? By what right does an out of touch

government tell you how to run your business? And so, in the eyes of most adventure companies, the law appears unfair, disrespectful - arbitrary. You now have a justification to ignore it. And you look around and see that everyone else in your field is, too. In fact, if you don't ignore it, your business couldn't possibly compete. But you worry: 'What if I'm caught?' Sometimes, enough time passes, and you aren't caught, nor any of your competition and soon you believe you never will be. The ways things are done become accepted and established, eventually losing their illegality in any real sense, altogether. Or, you are caught, and you discover how lovely, pragmatic and forgiving the staff who represent the authorities can be, so even if you once believed that the law and illegality is defined by punishment, now you do not. You are special, dear emperor!

So, let's get down to business. Which laws are yours to break? I know - who has time to familiarise themselves with legislation? And it's not my intention to reproduce or re-package employment legislation for you here. Let's look at this from another angle. Let's look at this from the point of view of your staff. Perhaps the following can be of service; it's based on a questionnaire for prospective employers written by a jobseeker looking for some small amount of certainty. Some security. And perhaps a bit of honesty. The author of the questionnaire based their questions on their combined experiences of well over one hundred separate periods of employment for over eighty separate employers. Forty-two periods of which were for three months or longer; these under the employment of twenty-two employers. Not everything presented here is against the law, but you may register a certain discomfort and frustration throughout as while not all behaviour is illegal, it can still cause harm to the recipient. I can attest to this because the author of the questionnaire was me...

Now, I know the way this may look. And I am conflicted about including it, here. I don't want it to feel like an attack, a lashing-out. I'm grateful to each of my employers for my employment. Opportunity for growth, to pay my rent, to eat, to participate in society. I've had some amazing experiences and been a member of some amazing teams. I value my work history, I value the lessons it's taught me. For all the personal development we can present for our customers of the adventure industry, our own development can be immeasurably greater, if we're conscious in its pursuit. So, yeah, I'm grateful. But I don't feel I'm in debt to my employers for this because I worked hard towards their goals. But, I believe *they* think there is debt. And here we are at the crux of the matter; an emperor's sense of social credit, an emperor's sense of moral licence. My Emperors' presented me with so much that was good that they felt justified to sometimes be less good. So, maybe you'll read this and find ways to operate your company which hasn't yet occurred to you – how to be a more confident law-breaker, a better emperor – and maybe you'll see that while it's true, you can feel justified in this, it's also true that it doesn't go un-noticed. These are the questions running through the minds of experienced New Zealand adventure industry jobseekers:

Contracts: Will you supply them? Will you define staff as 'employees' or as 'contractors'? If you define them as contractors, is this so you might feel able to end their employment at any time, or to avoid your employer obligations, or that you view an employee's role only as an 'interim' position? Is the position you offer available because an employee who normally fills it is away gaining further training, or on a short leave or otherwise temporarily unavailable for the short term, or pre-employed but not yet available, in which case, does the role last only as long their absence? Is the position you offer in any way subsidised by the government or other funding agency and will it be terminated at the point at which the funding ends? Would the position you offer exist without being subsidised by the government or other funding

agency? After agreeing to hire an employee - making them unavailable to other employers - do you reserve the right to change your mind before they start, or after they start, or simply to not provide them with work? If you provide accommodation, will you consider employees as Woofers? And if this is the case, will their work which earns beyond what reasonable accommodation costs are be re-numerated above minimum wage? Will they be expected to provide their own food? How isolated is the accommodation? Do you intend to hold employee's captive? If you hire an experienced employee, is it so they can train the Woofers and then their job will be over, and will this be clear before they start or remain undisclosed? If employees hold a position of responsibility, will you release them as soon as they've put together all your operational paperwork and set in place your systems of operation, and will this be clear before they start or remain undisclosed? Is the position you offer available due to a low standard of work-ethic or general inefficiency within your current team or even to an inefficient business model? Does your business model rely on or is it affected by scattered periods of customer patronage and other unpredictable variables such as the weather? Should Employees consider a 'promise' of predicted amounts of work in verbal or written form in no way a legally binding commitment on your behalf? Is the position you offer a 'zero-hours' contract and if such, are employees able to negotiate a base level of hours, a day off in the working week, a certain amount of predictability with their hours and re-numeration for being 'on-call'? Will employees have any days off or will they work every day? If employees have arranged a day off in advance, will this be honoured, or should they still consider themselves on-call, even on a pre-arranged day off? If there are periods within the week when employees are unavailable to work due to other commitments, will you seek their unconditional commitment and ransom their income by with-holding their pay or dramatically reducing their hours until they release themselves from their other commitments and relinquish all their

time to you? If employees aren't entitled to any degree of predictability in their shifts, will they know before they arrive at work whether they'll be starting that day? And if they are required, will you try to predict for them how long their shift will be, or will they simply know when you yell at them that they're done at any point between two and fifteen hours? If an employee's work colleagues have been given a roster of up-coming work, will they also receive one? - example: the next few weeks pre-booked river-tours. Will you provide employees with enough work to live on or merely enough work to ensure they will always be available and hungry for shifts? If employees have been rostered or provided with work in advance but someone you prefer becomes available, instead, will you reassign their shift? And, would you still like them to remain available in case their replacement pulls out unexpectedly or another job or shift comes up at short notice? If employees have not been provided with work for some time, nor had any contact from you, how long should they wait before they consider their employment ended and make themselves available for another employer? Eighteen days? Longer than this? If an employee is constructively dismissed, would you like them to remain available to work in case the person you've arranged to replace them fails to show up? If an employee's contract comes to an end and they've been promised a renewal of their contract, how long should they wait before seeking other work if a new contract from you is not forth-coming? - this becomes especially confusing if there is a break between contracts of weeks or months. Will employment come to an end if an employee asks for a pay increase at the six months point? If an employee has worked for longer than a year with weekly shifts of fairly-reliable hours, will they qualify for sick leave or bereavement leave? If you provide transport to your workplace but have decided an employee is not needed that day, how long would you like them to wait at the pick-up point before they conclude the pick-up won't happen? One hour? Two hours? More than this? Will you hire an employee for a particular-

role only to change their role upon the commencement of work? - for example; hire them as an outdoor instructor but change the role to kitchenhand and caretaker - this outcome is especially uncomfortable if the role is also a 'live-in' one in an isolated place without the means to leave. Are you or your business currently a 'Respondent' to an employment grievance? Or, have you or business ever been a respondent to an employment grievance? Are you or your business currently being investigated by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment or have you or your business ever been investigated by the MBIE? Will employees be expected to perform duties which put themselves or others at risk of harm through adherence to un-safe standard operating procedures or of un-safe or unsuitable equipment - or the lack thereof - or through the lack of skill and experience of other staff members? If an employee chooses to leave your employ before you wish them to leave, will they face sanctions - such as with-holding of pay or holiday pay - even if they've provided the required leaving notice in advance and in the prescribed timeframe or in the case of no contract, a fair amount of time in advance? If an employee provides you with their leaving notice will you seek to constructively dismiss them before the end date of their employment? If you wish to constructively dismiss an employee, will they be required to train their replacement? When they become your employee, do they also become your 'property?' - like a business chattel or a Slave.

Wages: Will employees be paid in cash, cash-cheque, bank-cheque, direct bank deposit or an alternative form of payment? If you have no money with which to pay employees, or prefer to arrange an alternative form of payment, will they be re-numerated instead with an occasional takeaway coffee, an occasional can of beer, left-over food like bread, carrots or lemons, or the use of a washing-machine or TV time? How many hours of work will be deemed appropriate for these types of alternative forms of payment? Half a day? A full day? More than this? How many days of un-paid work

defined as 'training' will employees be expected to do? Three days? Six days? One month? If employees are running training for less experienced staff who are not being paid while they train, will the experienced staff member's work also go un-paid? How much of an employee's regular working week will be considered un-paid? Four hours? Ten hours? Three days? - example: prepping-packing-loading for multi-day canoe journeys, plus liaising with and orientating guests the day before a river tour, following which, the days paid for by the guests are the only days the employee can expect to be paid for. Will you pay wages on a scheduled basis or directly after individual work periods or in random amounts at random times? If you won't pay wages on a scheduled basis, will you prefer employees to beg for their wages or will this cause you undue stress? Should they trust that will you eventually get around to it? In either case, will you pay them in full up to the point of which they've worked or pay them a portion of what they've earned which may or may not bear any relation to the rhythms of their work, to tide them over for the short term? Should they be satisfied to wait until the end of the season to receive their wages in full - or at least to your best guess? If your customers pay differing rates for the same product - with added luxury or exclusivity versus budget or discounted service - will employees be paid at a corresponding higher or lower rate? If employees have differing roles within their duties in the company, will their pay vary to reflect each role? - for example, Monday is river-guiding, Tuesday is driving a van. Will employees be paid above minimum wage? If employees are paid 'by the day', will they be provided a time-sheet to ensure they are paid above minimum wage? If employees ask for wage information, will you provide it? And if you do, will it be an accurate - or at least a reasonably close estimate - of their work done and their gross or net pay? Also, will it be clearly legible or presented as a faded photo-copy, collated post-it notes or written on a used napkin? If customers or guests choose to offer an employee a gratuity in cash, will you keep it for yourself or give

them the tip but deduct a corresponding amount from their pay? If an employee is familiar with a customer - family member, acquaintance, friend, regular customer - will you deduct from their pay the time spent working with that customer as a penalty for 'fraternizing', even if they've been in no way inefficient or unprofessional? Will you adjust employees' time-sheets by reducing the hours they've written so you can pay them less?

The Holidays Act: Will you pay holiday pay? If an employee begs for their holiday pay at the end of the season - and receives it - would you like them to keep it a secret from your international employees? Will you consider an employee's holiday pay inclusive of their total pay? If an employee asks for wage information, will they see inclusive holiday pay itemized? Do you believe that holiday pay is added to an employee's total pay or should they consider what their total pay is and subtract eight percent from that amount to arrive at their 'true' pay? And if they do this, will they be paid more than minimum wage? Will returning employees be forced to accept a decrease to their gross pay of eight percent from one season to the next if they have gone from receiving holiday pay added last season, to receiving holiday 'included' this season? - assuming that their per-day pay is unchanged. If an employee works on a holiday, will they be paid 'time and a half'? If an employee would normally be working a shift which this week happens to fall on a holiday, would you change their shift? If an employee works on a holiday, will you consider it un-paid because they're meant to view it as a holiday - they're just having fun working? If you run a guiding company and provide staff-trips as a treat, your employees don't expect to be paid for them, but, how many staff-trips will you add customers to? If you run a guiding company and wish to expand the areas you operate in, if you send employees into the new areas to check for operational feasibility, should they consider this un-paid?

Tax law, ACC legislation and Kiwisaver: If you define your staff as employees - rather than as contractors - will you take their PAYE or will you pay them the gross amount which they've earned and in the second case, would you prefer them to not submit a tax return? Will you take your employees' PAYE, student loan repayments and their Kiwisaver from their pay, then keep it for yourself? Will you contribute towards their Kiwisaver? Or will you contribute nothing but increase *their* supposed contributions with the intention of keeping it for yourself? If you intend to keep your employees' PAYE and student loan repayments for yourself, will you tax them at the correct rate for their tax code or at a higher rate? How much can they expect to see taken? Are you or is your business currently in bankruptcy? If your employees sustain an injury in the workplace which keeps them away from work while they recuperate, and ACC accepts a claim for compensation, will you follow through with your obligations or ignore them? - assuming they are not a contractor.

Workplace bullying and disadvantage: Will you berate or be-little employees in front of customers or other staff? Will you commit violence against employees? - verbally or physically. Will you post pictures of employees on social media platforms without their knowledge or consent? If employees hold a position of responsibility, will you undermine them by minimizing their role or placing hurdles or adding undue restrictions to curtail their effectiveness? Will you go 'around' them when seeking solutions to problems which fall under their role or promote others into positions which include duties that fall under their role to create confusing overlaps? Will you layer your employees' duties into an impossible to achieve work regimen? When it becomes clear that some employees will work tirelessly - once they understand the work - to ensure the work is performed in the prescribed manner and at the prescribed standard, will you allow their colleagues to reduce their efforts, or even yourself to reduce your own effort, as they and you know that the conscientious employee will take up

the slack? After an employee has been released, fired, constructively dismissed or their contract not renewed, will they find that their position has subsequently been filled by two or several employees to cover the same workload? Will an employee's strong work-ethic make them a target for bullying? If their working background has provided employees with a higher level of skill or if they learn their role to a higher level of skill than already exists within your workplace - or even your own, as employer - will they be viewed as an asset or as a threat? If employees are asked to write confidential reports detailing the work performance and skill - or limitations thereof - of their managers or work colleagues, so that you might gain a clearer appreciation of day-to-day operations, will you then present the subjects of the reports with copies? If you have a badly-performing manager, will employees be expected to perform both the manager's duties and their own duties? Will there be any compensation for this? Will the employee's continued employment be dependent on the badly-performing manager never finding out that the employee is comports themselves as manager? Will you require employees to perform duties for which they're not qualified? - for example: driving paying passengers without a passenger services licence. Will you force employees - by threat of sanctions - into illegal activity such as ignoring speed limits to reduce driving times or to commit tax evasion? If employees need to discuss anything with you - pay, lack of work, bullying, or queries to do with their work - will you make yourself available or will you ignore them, or perpetually delay conversations or meetings or otherwise make it clear you are not to be approached? Will you accuse employees of theft without any basis for the accusation? Will doing everything you ask in the ways you prescribe - including work or duties beyond reasonable requests and never being unavailable - protect employees from bullying and disadvantage or will it instead promote or worsen bullying and disadvantage? In your business, does credit for work go to the right staff members or is it stolen

from them by their colleagues or by you? Will a commitment to 'honesty' be a benefit in your work environment or a hazard? Will it attract bullying and/or lead to disadvantage? If your company sources new equipment on a regular basis and invites staff to also make purchases through the same supplier, will individual employees pay the shipping costs for everyone, including for the business? If you would like to end an employee's employment but prefer they left 'voluntarily', will you embark on a campaign of bullying to encourage their voluntary departure? Will you ignore a culture of bullying among staff members? Will you encourage, enable and/or direct staff to bully individual employees or to work towards their disadvantage? Will you, yourself, bully individual employees or work towards their disadvantage? Is your intention to humiliate them?

WHAT IF THERE'S AN EMPLOYMENT GRIEVANCE?

First, let's examine the risk. We can say that there is a low risk of ever being invited to 'Respond' to an employment grievance by an employee in the adventure industry. Most understand they have no protection of employment law. The trade-off for financial insecurity, employment abuses and bullying are the positives individuals can gain of lifestyle, job satisfaction, variety, responsibility, learning and skill which no other industry can provide. They are accepting of their mercenary lifestyle, forgiving of transgressions and interminably upbeat. In fact, any errant individuals who step out of these attitudes are quickly ostracized by their peers*. A clever emperor can make use of this. A self-managing obedient workforce. You can distract them from your abuses, pit them against each-other, make them work *for* you and *against* their colleagues. You are a charismatic presence. You're as much a friend as a boss. They know your family, you have beers, coffees and adventures together. Social time is blurred into work time. You've made no promises. Not of amounts of work, responsibility, rates of pay. You've only presented the job to them and allowed your staff to fill in the blanks, make assumptions. With practice, you can even get staff to travel from overseas to work for you, without making a single legally binding commitment. Intangibility. Be like water, my friend. They'll know some things aren't quite right, but they'll not be able to clearly define any of them. They won't want to cause you harm or disrupt opportunities of their friends. They know the adventure industry in New Zealand is deeply interconnected. The last thing they need to be known as is litigative, legally aware, self-protective. It's supposed to be about fun, good times. No Debbie-downer's, here, mate!

*For an employee to accept that a colleague is being treated unfairly may require acceptance of a painful or uncomfortable truth that they, themselves, are also a victim. Or even worse; that they, themselves, have been complicit with errant employers and/or have gained advantage from or worked towards the disadvantage of colleagues.

What if I realise one of my staff is becoming disgruntled? You might try to ignore them. They're here for a good time, not a long time. Soon, the season will end, and they'll be gone. Maybe they'll disappear by themselves. If you present them with an opportunity to talk with you, you'll find yourself in discussions you'd rather avoid. And what if avoidance doesn't work? If they present their concerns or fears, then you can minimise them. Confuse them. Make them wonder if they're going crazy or being unreasonable. Or, if their concerns and fears are undeniable, tell them you'll consider what they've said. Allay their fears. Buy yourself some time. It could be weeks before they come back with the same concerns. Maybe the season will be ended by then. You could even agree to make some adjustments, just enough to keep them at arms-length.

What if one of my staff take the next step? A letter of grievance. This is a huge move for an employee, for all the reasons already mentioned. It's a point of no return. They are officially litigative. In their letter, they'll outline their concerns, the things they would like to see changed. You have thirty days after the point of receiving the letter to have made changes to the satisfaction of the employee before they can invite you to employment mediation. Thirty days is a long time in a season. Maybe you could change a few things, make them feel as if you've made an honest attempt while never truly altering your most established abuses. They may be satisfied.

What if they are not satisfied? Then, they will ask the Employment Relations Service to invite you to employment mediation as a 'Responder'. This is the point that they lose control. The process or any of its potential outcomes is in their hands, no longer. You'll be approached by a representative of the employment relations service. At first, you can ignore them. Just as you did when you first realised your employee wanted to talk. Avoid taking their calls, or immediately replying to their emails. It's cat and mouse and you can drag this out for weeks. Maybe during this time, the employee will abandon the grievance. But, eventually you may be cornered and unless you want mediation to go ahead in your absence, you'll need to engage. Kind-of. Engage only enough, at this point to further put off mediation. With email contact, you'll be able to string them along for ages. At this stage, their role is merely to invite you to mediation - they won't provide details of the employee's grievance. But, when you reply to contact, only ask what the grievance is about, or other questions without relevance. You can convince them that you are engaged even as you delay meaningful commitment. Delay committing to mediation for as long as you can. Pretend you don't know how the process works. These tactics could further delay mediation for months, if you're lucky. By this time, the employee may have finished their employment, or will simply give up. The key is to delay beyond a period of ninety days. If any employment irregularities on your part occurred between the time that they wrote their grievance letter and their last day of work, these must be raised within a ninety-day period of the time at which they allegedly occurred. Otherwise, they won't be able to bring any of these up in mediation. Even if they were constructively or unjustifiably dismissed*! So, at last, you can agree to a date for mediation. There is a very strict protocol to the way these meetings work designed to promote maximum safety in terms of airing grievances and levelling the playing field between the employee and the employer. If you learn what this process is – easily found online - you'll be best able to

disrupt it. Weight the playing field in your own favour. Now you go to work; no matter how prepared your employee – or ex-employee - is for the meeting or how many employment laws you have broken, you can take the upper hand. Again, you must be like water; this is where your company's intangibility is expressed to its ultimate degree. First, debunk any and all grievances. And, never settle on a subject; swing from one subject to another, never stay still. Never reply to an issue directly. Be vague. If you've delayed beyond ninety days, the employee will be restricted to only the grievances expressed in their letter of grievance – but you have no such limitations. Bring up anything and everything, except points which make you look bad – even old agreements or expectations from previous seasons. Jump forwards, backwards, sideways. Discuss other employees. Go into long-winded irrelevant anecdotes or stories. Burn time. As much of it as you can. Force the facilitator to push the employee to make decisions under pressure. You might even agree to make a few concessions, but only ones where there is already legislation in place - from this point on, you will provide employment contracts, et cetera. It will usually be obvious as to whether you have a legal leg to stand on with regards to grievances presented, giving the employee a false sense of confidence, but the impartial facilitator will do such a good job in their impartiality that they will become your ally; the employee will feel confused, humiliated and as if they are wasting everyone's time. The facilitator will also do such a good a job of reminding the employee that if mediation fails, the next step is Employment Court – the employee will be highly motivated to close the grievance, here in mediation, instead. They'll be reminded that if they lose in employment court, they will need to pay costs. They'll also need a lawyer to fight their employer's lawyer. You can even offer a token payment to the employee to make the matter go away, before it goes to employment court. As long you do it during this meeting, it won't be considered obstruction. In fact, if you've successfully made the employee's claims – no matter how legitimate – look

spurious or thin, you will appear magnanimous if you offer even an insulting amount. Whatever you do, never let your charismatic demeanor slip. You should be able to come out of this unscathed. In fact, we can say this with certainty. When we look through the Employment Court's previous cases of employees awarded the maximum compensation for 'hurt and humiliation' - \$15,000 - not a single adventure industry case can be found. Indeed, any casual or zero-hour work is barely represented at all in the records. This means that they're settled in employment mediation and don't reach employment court, or they don't even make it to mediation. Remember, any agreements or settlements made in employment mediation are not only binding, but confidential. This means that mischievous or illegal behaviour on your part will never see the light of day. So, we could view the entire Employment Relations mechanism as a highly beneficial tool for emperors of the adventure industry for the suppression of employment grievances. You simply can't lose. On top of this is a very vocal point of view expressed by the business community as to a perceived imbalanced playing field, favouring employees. This is a lie, but it's a lie which finds fertile ground and has come to be accepted as truth.

*This is an odd contradiction in the way the process works and as it's likely to not be explained clearly to the employee, will be very confusing to them and be very costly to them in terms of the credibility and/or success of their case.

What about the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment?

This organization was set up by a business-friendly government. But, they have shown in some cases, they will pursue non-compliant employers with vigour. They are becoming especially focused on non-compliant employers of international employees as abuses here can affect the country's international reputation. Helpfully, for emperors of the adventure industry, the gaze of the MBIE is focused elsewhere. This follows the general lack of interest

in the way adventure companies operate, in spite of – or perhaps because of - the deep connections with what is now the country's biggest earner – tourism. This means the risk of coming to their attention is still low. If you are approached by the MBIE, you might employ the same delay tactics as already described, but remember, the MBIE is not the employment relations authority. It is still a new entity, with plenty to prove, so don't push your luck. The good news here is that again, you will be dealing with friendly, pragmatic people. Further good news is that due to the way that the organization is structured, your potentially many and varied employment abuses won't be examined by a single investigator. There are specialists for the various types of law-breaking who will build their case based upon only the information within their limited charter. The minimum wage investigator won't investigate whether you're following the holidays act, for example. This scattered, compartmentalised view of your business means that you will appear as an occasional mistake-maker, rather than a committed, serial employment law abuser. The one is far more forgivable than the other and forgiveness is exactly the attitude you can expect to face. There is a great deal of discretion accredited to the individual investigators and an apparent lack of interaction between them towards case-building.

DOES MY BUSINESS HAVE A TAX EXEMPTION?

No, it doesn't. It's easy to follow tax law in New Zealand. The processes involved become simpler and simpler every year. The best thing to do is have a simple business model with uncomplicated cashflow systems, keep accurate records, employ a good accountant and enjoy the feeling of being a contributing member of your society. But the way New Zealand taxes are collected is based on an honesty system, so, while your business does not have a tax exemption, you might give it one. Let's face it, after justifying employment abuses as a reaction to the perceived arbitrary and unrealistic expectations of an out of touch government, it's only a hop, skip and jump to consider yourself exempt of tax law, too. Besides, how will you compete with the other players in your market if you aren't at least breaking the same rules as they are? The intangibility of the way you do business is your ally here and can extend to all areas of your financial management. Your staff are transient mercenaries who barely exist in reality, let alone in your paperwork. Your business is a mess of ever-changing intangible elements. Only those within the adventure industry will have any concept of your company's working mechanisms, so how could the Inland Revenue Department possibly discover that your business is operating outside of tax law? You might show them only you what want to show them. How will the authorities scrutinize your business if you

don't present them with anything to scrutinize? These days, investigations of small business tax evasion are often outsourced to contractors, rather than conducted by the IRD, themselves. These contractors can be easy to avoid, ignore, perpetually put-off, or placate, leaving you to conduct your affairs however you see fit. And, if you are caught out in mischief, as I've said, staff of the IRD are friendly and forgiving. If you find yourself cornered, you simply pay the outstanding amounts they've discovered, adopt the systems they've insisted upon and move on. They want you in business. They understand that everyone tries them on and it's no big deal. Whatever you do, don't fight them. You might awaken a beast. Bury your pride and pay up. Otherwise, they'll do a proper investigation, discover the truth about your business and that will be the end. A very expensive end.

HOW LIKELY AM I TO GET AWAY WITH RIPPING-OFF MY CUSTOMERS?

This is an inevitable next step of your thoughts if you already feel justified in other mischief in business operations. It's a logical progression which many operators will stoop to. But, it's usually on an opportunistic scale, rather than a systemic one. Businesses within the adventure industry are not of the sort permitted to systematic ripping-off of customers the way businesses of other industries are accustomed to. Usually, dodgy-dealings towards customers are restricted to small discrepancies of the sort that customers may not notice. They would normally be viewed as 'short-cuts' by emperors, rather than scams; opportunistically selecting certain services to leave out of the customer experience – how will customers make comparisons of a once in a lifetime experience or quantify the mysteries of an adventure activity on their first go? But even if you are committed to fair dealings with your customers, there are many pitfalls to be wary of in terms of the way your customers may view their experience with you. They may *feel* you've ripped-off them off, even if you never set out to do so. This is part of the reason why pre-tour, pre-programme, pre-gear rental or pre-activity, you should be as forthright, clear and honest in your early dealings with customers as possible. If you aren't, this is where you can open yourself up to claims – spurious or legitimate. But, being honest, clear and forthright isn't always as easy as it seems. There could be factors beyond your control

affecting your activity, so sometimes you'll need to present as much information as you can and allow customers to make their own informed decisions as to whether - or how - they spend their money. Do they really want to ski in the rain? Show them what conditions are like - webcams, snow reports - what the weather forecasts are predicting. Help them understand what everything means in practical terms with honesty but allow them to make their own call - they'll be less likely to blame you for the loss of their money, if they make decisions they later come to regret. This is a balancing act of careful communication. You don't want them to leave town, abandoning their accommodation at a hotel, their dinner booking at a restaurant, or a chance that they'll commit to a sale at a later time when conditions are more favourable. It's easy to accidentally help them make decisions which affect more than just your business. But, neither do you want to mislead them. Other adventure businesses have similar concerns influencing the information they deliver and the way they deliver it. If your values allow indulgences in mischief, you might at least consider that customers have long memories when they feel they've been deceived. Being a 'cowboy' - taking your customers' money and leaving them disappointed will make you no friends in your interconnected business community.

CONCLUSION

So, it's time for a summing-up. An emperor of a company in the New Zealand adventure industry is free to run their business as they like. You do not need to be an expert, but if you are a novice, you may need to be a highly qualified novice. Or, you can discover what it's possible to achieve for yourself, personally, and in the quality of your product and its delivery to your customers. Many of the limits of this industry are yet to be discovered. Your personal values will affect your product's value. Your product's value will affect your personal contribution to the wider community. What is your true worth? The law and whether you obey it or not is a poor indicator of your goodness. The law is amoral, dispassionate. It's merely a set of guidelines or a starting point. The laws are neither your enemy or your friend. And it doesn't have to be the point. Why can't it be about the adventures? The adventure industry is one of the most rewarding vocations to be a part of that there is. Ordinary businesses trade in commodities and simple services - *you* can trade in experiences, the personal development of individuals in confidence, empathy, appreciation of the natural world and of individuals' self-worth. You could be of perfect usefulness as a conduit between individuals, communities, the environment. You

could be the ultimate *provider!* Or, dear emperor, you might merely be another *extractor*. Because for all its great beauty, charisma, opportunity, excitement and mystery, the New Zealand adventure industry presents equal measures of temptation towards inglorious behaviour of its emperors. As ever, the choices are yours to make. And as ever, I hope the work I've presented here has been helpful to you.

Your ever-lasting servant,

The Author,
Grant Beaven.

The New Zealand commercial adventure landscape is filled with exciting opportunities for new business owners. But where do you start? You may know the *what* of your business, but have you considered the *how*? Which path should you take? To your customers, either of the two paths will appear beautiful, exciting, charismatic, mysterious. But, only one can provide them with true growth, real value. And only one is based in positive ethics. The other is just smoke and mirrors. Both ways are legitimate, and in this book, you will discover many of the secrets with which to forge your own path.

Emperors and Gods was written by an experienced adventure industry insider to help you see beyond the glamour of goggle-tans, thousand-yard stares and canoe-paddle high-fives. So, take a look within, jot down some notes, and set your adventurous course - dear emperor!

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