

## **The Case of the Grizzly Bear**

Dwain was two years old. His brother Hank was almost one. Dwain loved Hank and Hank loved Dwain. Their parents, Dwain Senior and Martha, were happy. Their family was complete, if you count Ruf-Ruf, the golden retriever who just loved everybody. Their lives were meandering along the rutted road of life in solitary confinement to most of the outside world. They worked hard. Dwain Senior was the chief engineer with a large government defense contractor. Martha was director of the physics department at a local university. They were busy. They were energetic. They worked hard. They worked long hours. They were happy. Dwain Junior, Hank and Ruf-Ruf were also happy.

Eleven months earlier Dwain Senior and Martha had found just the right childcare facility for their children. Ruf-Ruf, who had earlier in his life been house-trained by a professional trainer, was now in charge of the homestead for up to twelve hours a day. "Good doggie," said everybody to the hapless Ruf-Ruf as they left every morning for work and play at 5:30.

Life was such fun. Ruf-Ruf wouldn't pee in the house. Dwain Junior was now potty trained and little Hank would sleep all the way to the childcare and all the way home.

Last night Dwain Junior had a nightmare and kept the whole household awake most of the night. Now everybody was tired, cranky and late. Dwain Senior had to leave early today for work because the senior Department of Defense customer would be in town this morning to discuss the newest and most sophisticated defense technology being manufactured by his employer. Martha had a meeting of university department heads at ten o'clock. The inclement weather had made the roads dangerous. Martha forgot to pat Ruf-Ruf on the head. Dwain Junior was now asleep and little Hank had soiled his diaper and it had seeped through to Martha's pristine pink suit. Only twenty minutes late.

What to do? Tie the children in their seats, rush indoors again to change clothing, kick Ruf-Ruf out of the way, grab a fitting suit of clothing to impress the colleagues and give a boost to the flagging confidence. Mutter aloud that men had the easy part and impress upon God that things had to change. Proceed without caution while driving the children to the daycare, and dump them (forgetting to announce that their daily snack was at home). Just forty minutes late now. No time to make decisions. Pray the sleazy cop at the top of Chipper Street would be in hospital today with a broken leg. Martha smiled broadly as she passed the spot where the ubiquitous cop would normally position himself furtively. Yes! She made up ten minutes and pumped the air with a clenched fist.

Good grief! Someone had the nerve to park in her allocated parking slot. Darned students! "I'll sort that out," she spitefully muttered and proceeded to put a large note of discontent on the window of the offending car. Her spite barely intact, Martha drove

around until she found an empty parking space. Grabbing her bag and making a hasty exit she was finally there. That's when Martha noticed her brown-spattered Gucci heels. Rush to the nearest bathroom. Wipe shoes, wash hands, daub on lipstick and approach the day from a different angle. Success. Walk purposefully to office and put finishing touches to presentation for department heads.

Meanwhile, Dwain Senior had the undivided attention of his corporate executives and Defense Department customer for his PowerPoint presentation. The adrenalin was working. The exhaustion was forgotten. The deal was almost in the bag. The 5-point sales strategy, worked out weeks before, had everyone's attention. The nagging vibrations of the snug cell phone on his hip became annoying. He lost his train of thought. Dwain wouldn't excuse himself to take the call. The nagging got worse and the dismembered thinking became apparent. The Defense Department customer now wanted to query a miniscule element of point five in the strategy. Poor, poor Dwain Senior. The customer waited. The chairman was not amused.

Martha was attending to her own pristine presentation. God was on her side again. All was sliding into place and she had renewed confidence that the university president would give her the award she had sought for so long. Next slide please. "As we view the troposphere on this slide...." Martha excused herself and left the room to take the call that her vibrating cell phone wantonly demanded to be answered for the past five minutes. "This had better be an emergency," she muttered as the university president's wife passed by carrying a large note of discontent.

Dwain Junior would not sleep for the childcare people. He cried all morning about a grizzly bear under his bed and someone would have to come and get him immediately as he was totally disrupting the daily agenda of the other children. "No, Ma'am, we can't keep him any longer," was the emphatic reply to the feeble question.

As a tearful Martha dragged her two sleeping children into the house she noticed the smell. Ruf-Ruf had done the unthinkable. Poor, poor Dwain Senior didn't arrive home until well past bed-time. Dwain still loved Hank and Hank still loved Dwain. Tomorrow was a new day.

What technique would they use to get rid of the grizzly bear? Ask any employer.

Any manager who does not take emergencies, exhaustion or vibrating and beeping cell phones into consideration when about to embark on an important matter needs a grizzly bear to bite them in the bum. And, parents who do not make adequate provision for emergencies with their children, particularly in inadequate childcare facilities, need another bite in the bum. That's not the business of employers.