



Vince Walsh

Kawing Crow Awareness Center

Success Magazine: How do you define success?

Vince Walsh: Success is a journey. It starts by finding your passion, that thing you enjoy doing and are good at, that you are willing to do even if you were not paid for it. Once you have that figured out, the journey to success involves creating and providing a worthwhile service for others that positively impacts their quality of life. One can always improve their service to others, so honing your skills will make you have an even greater impact. Make mistakes and let the misfortunes of life come; you need only be open to the lessons found in them. To be successful you must be able to get knocked down, get yourself up, and grow from that experience. Windfalls and prosperity also show character, and have a role in defining success. I know I have succeeded when my services are validated by a simple compliment; I can then rest easy that night, feeling content and having a satisfied mind.

SM: You went to Paul Smith's College. What did you study there?

VW: I earned a degree in Environmental Studies at Paul Smith's. My studies included the political and policy sides of environmentalism and its applications, forest and wetlands ecology, dendrology, and biology. Specifically, I learned to better understand forest and wetland communities, identify the plants and trees that grow there, and also about the major global environmental concerns (human population growth, resource consumption, energy uses, pollution, etc). What was most striking was the amount of information that has essentially been common knowledge to environmentalists for decades.

SM: How did you end up in the Marine Corps? How long did you serve?

VW: Although I enjoyed learning and did well in high school, by my sophomore year I knew I did not want to spend any more time indoors, letting school hinder my education! I wanted to

travel, have new experiences, and be challenged. As an impressionable youth, everything pointed toward the Marine Corps, having the toughest and longest boot camp and a well respected, worldwide reputation. It all appealed to me when I was fifteen. I served one four-year tour of duty from 1990 to 1994.

SM: What was the most important thing you learned about yourself during your time as a Marine?

VW: If you want to accomplish something and are properly motivated, anything is possible.

SM: At what point did you decide to dedicate your life to nature?

VW: While serving in Hawaii, I became aware of how incredibly different the people and their culture, the seasons, landscape, forests and ocean were from where I grew up here in the foothills of the Adirondacks. I knew they were different, but it was not until I was removed from the "familiar" that I gained this

more accurate perspective. I was overcome with a sense of just how ignorant I was, not knowing even the common species that grew and lived all around me. Much of this is our cultural upbringing, but I could not let that stand in my way! When I returned to NY, I jumped into the woods and waters, absorbing as much information as possible, gaining direct experiences from nature. Instead of an exact date, I had an extended period of time in my life that shaped my understanding and sent me on my current path.

SM: What is the main goal of Kawing Crow?

VW: The main goal of Kawing Crow is to open people up to our past, present, and future. In our primitive past we all had many skills, and were rewarded and satisfied by what we could accomplish with our wits and communities. People at that time were more connected to nature, both spiritually and in everyday living, such as harvesting fuel, food and medicine. Presently, our modern cultures are lacking a



- Natural History
- Wilderness Skills
- Sustainable Living
- Cultural Folklore
- Adult & Youth Programing

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“ I hope to grow the Crow into a regional center where people from all walks of life can be empowered to make more sustainable lifestyle choices, and learn to enjoy nature from direct experiences. ”

healthy respect for nature. Our children have all sorts of issues, as documented in Richard Louv's book, *Last Child in the Woods: Nature Deficit Disorder*, and our earth is in peril, as many are acknowledging after viewing Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth." What will our future look like? The time to answer that question is now, and the goal of Kawing Crow is to work toward that answer.

SM: What types of programs do you offer?

VW: Programs offered here include natural history: animal tracking, ecology, tree treks-identifying trees and visiting 800 year old specimens, wildlife treks- visiting a heron rookery and other known critter homes, looking for snakes, frogs, turtles, porcupine, etc.; cultural history: talks, music, history and folklore; wilderness & primitive skills: fire making, survival, cordage, atlatl use, navigation, bark basketry, etc.; and sustainable living practices: composting, house design, energy use and sources, organic gardening, agro-forestry, etc.

Summer and many weekends throughout the year are dedicated primarily to working with kids here at Camp Crow and at various camps throughout Saratoga County, the greater Capital Region and into Vermont.

SM: Why do you think it is important to foster a relationship between humans and nature?

VW: Historically speaking, humans have been connected to nature far longer than to technology. Our ancestors were able to live and learn from nature, and were sustained as a population. Today we number nearly 7 billion, and our consumption and degradation of resources is occurring faster than they can be replenished. Not only does the earth provide us with resources to survive, we are able to thrive. These resources drive our economy, which can be sustained; just not the way current systems are operating. If our connection is lost,

we will fail to protect that which sustains us. People need to understand that living and doing business in an environmentally sustainable way is good for our health, communities, and economy.

SM: Do you provide nature courses for individuals, or groups? What age group do you target? Are you able to offer customized programs?

VW: We offer a variety of programs for all age groups and can customize any program. Groups tend to be girl and boy-scout troops, youth birthdays, school field trips, civic organizations and clubs. For individuals, I offer one-on-one apprenticeships in natural history and primitive / wilderness skills. During our kids' camps, we have children ranging from 7 - 17 years old. Family events include babies and grandparents- no one is too young or too old!

SM: What makes Kawing Crow unique? What sets you apart from other wilderness programs in the area?

VW: The Kawing Crow Awareness Center is all encompassing and is more a lifestyle and philosophy than just a skill to be learned. Everything we do has nature in mind, from the energy and resources we consume to the impact our actions have. We expose people to new perspectives and choices, which benefit them and the environment. I am very passionate about what I do and enjoy giving as much as possible of myself.

SM: You own 60 acres of woods and wetlands. Where are you located?

VW: Kawing Crow is located in northern Saratoga County in the town of Greenfield.

We are only 7 miles north of Saratoga Springs, and just 3 miles from Wilton.

SM: What is the Foothills Tree Service?

VW: Foothills Tree Service is another branch of Kawing Crow. I provide a much needed service in a green, sustainable manner, including limb pruning, full removal, and on-site property assessments. Working with homeowners, I serve as a bridge between what they want and what is good for their trees. I use biodegradable bar and chain oil in my saws, practice sustainable urban forestry, and try to use the waste products in this industry as the local resource that it is. Trees I harvest become lumber, firewood, sculpture and woodchips, and are put to use at the Kawing Crow Awareness Center. One of my favorite past times is climbing trees, and the tree service allows me the opportunity to climb quite often.

SM: What is your hope for the future of Kawing Crow? The Adirondacks? The earth?

VW: I hope to grow the Crow into a regional center where people from all walks of life can be empowered to make more sustainable lifestyle choices, and learn to enjoy nature from direct experiences. For the Adirondacks, I'd like to see the park expanded, better protected and enjoyed more wholly. For the earth, only the best: clean air and water, healthy ecosystems, and a peaceful human population that reveres all life.

SM: What accomplishment are you most proud of in your life?

VW: Outgrowing and overcoming my own faults and limitations.

SM: What is the best piece of advice you have ever received?

VW: Trust your instincts.

