

The Gator Box

How a man stays alive when he doesn't yet know how to feel.

When I first got to BC I was full survival mode and I was a mess.

My nervous system had something wrong. I didn't know what any of my problems were. I didn't know they had names. But like a renovator with no electrician, I knew my fuses kept blowing, so I just grabbed all the wires, pulled them out and started plugging them back in to see what worked.

That's when I started seeing there were a few different versions of me. The most dangerous one was Frank. Frank had one job. Guard the little scared boy inside. He didn't care who got hurt. His only job was to keep my ass alive. And to be honest, he did the job.

Someone would piss me off, or call me on my shit, or get a little too close to something I wasn't ready to look at. Frank would just grab them and chuck them in the muddy river. Grab the meat. Stuff it under the muck. Never seen again.

WHAT AN ACTUAL GATOR DOES WITH THE KILL

Gators don't always eat right away. When the prey is too big to finish in one go, they drag it underwater and wedge it under a log.....anywhere it'll stay submerged.....to rot. Never seen again.

This was Frank's strategy. A body doing what it has to do to survive a kill it couldn't process all at once. Which is what a nervous system does with a hurt it can't metabolize in real time.

WHY THIS IS THE BODY'S MOST LOGICAL MOVE

If you were a kid who learned that love was unsafe, that the people who were supposed to protect you didn't, that the cost of telling the truth is being made wrong.....your nervous system will build you a Frank.

It won't look like coping. It'll look like exits. Conversations that should have been had, never had. Relationships ended without a fight, because the fight itself felt more dangerous than the loss.

THE WORK

The work isn't to kill the gator. The work is to grow a wrangler. To build the part of you that can see Frank coming, thank him for the years he kept you alive, and tell him.....not today, friend. Sleep in the back.

NAME YOUR FRANK — A FIELD EXERCISE

1**SPOT THE JOB. SEE THE COST.**

Frank doesn't show up for no reason. He's on a job. Something walked up. A high emotional moment. A threat detected.

Behind every action is a positive intention. He's protecting something. You're not broken. You just didn't have a better way before.

What does yours look like? Mine shows up aggressive. My wife felt unsafe, shut down. Frank did the job.....unsafe situation crushed. Problem is she learned approaching me was dangerous. What might yours be costing you in the name of safety?

2**GIVE IT A NAME.**

A name you wouldn't pick for yourself. One that grates on you. The more it irritates you, the faster you spot him in the wild.

Frank. Or borrow one from a movie. Voldemort. Darth Vader. Anyone whose entrance music you'd recognize. The second he shows up, you don't want him driving.

3**TELL ON YOURSELF.**

Tell two or three people in your life. The ones close enough to see Frank coming before you do. Now they can call him by name.

"Sorry I went full Vader on you there.....I didn't mean to cut you off."

Name him out loud. The behaviour separates from you. You can own it without becoming it. This isn't a get-out-of-jail-free card. Naming Frank doesn't pay the bill. The work is still yours.

4**THANK IT. THEN BENCH IT.**

It may have kept you safe or alive before. Honour that job. Your Frank will always be there. Thank him for showing up through those tough years. Say "I got this" and send him to the back of the bus.

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