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# CREEL

## “Do Your Job, George!” Words to Live By

Story by George Krumm

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I have a head full of concerns regarding Chinook-, coho-, and chum salmon runs, particularly in Cook Inlet (including Kodiak Island) and the Bering Sea. I look at all the Chinook Stocks of Management Concern and can't help but wonder why the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) hasn't come up with the required Sustainable Escapement Thresholds (SETs) for ANY of those stocks as part of their respective recovery plans, some of which have been designated as Stocks of Management Concern for a decade or more. They are not doing their job. We need to do our jobs and hold them to account. This dereliction of duty by ADF&G needs sunlight urgently, but I need to do a little more research before tackling that one. So instead, I'm going to talk about what Sage Johnson of Katmai Trophy Lodge told me to do one day last fall on the Naknek.

Sage is one of my favorite people to spend time with on the river. There are many reasons. I think our brains work the same way. Every once in a while, you meet someone with whom you just feel comfortable, and who seems to be on the same wavelength. It's kind of like that. We've fished together a lot over the years. I'm pretty sure I've spent more time with Sage than any other guide on the Naknek. I remember when she was new to Katmai Trophy Lodge and was just learning the river. She had a lot of drive but not a whole lot of Naknek experience or knowledge, but she learned really fast. I know few guides who are smart enough, alert enough, or willing to work as hard as she does all day long to make it happen. Her husband, James, is one of those few.

This year I had the pleasure of fishing with Sage for four days during my annual weeklong Naknek megatron rainbowpaloosa. She knows that I want

to catch big fish. She knows I'm not concerned with numbers. She knows what I'm capable of. She knows how far I can cast. She knows I require a half gallon of coffee on the boat. She knows I'll fish like a machine until she tells me to stop. She knows I trust her to put us in good places, and that I'll listen and follow her advice.

I know what she's capable of. I know she is always focused, anticipating what's coming if we're boat fishing. If she's walking the boat, she's aware of the buckets and diligently works to position the boat where it needs to be so I can reach them. If I screw up a cast and she can help it swing better, she sees it and helps. She's aware of who's where, and what spots might produce based on traffic and fishing trends. We both see everything; we both know what to do. We're like the A team.

One time this year—I'm not sure how it started—I missed a fish or something and I mumbled something under my breath: “\$#!T! Do your job, George.” Sage heard it. It became a joke she ruthlessly used on me more than once as the week rolled on. “Do your job, George!” It was always said with a light heart, and that's how I took it. We had fun with it.

But looking back on it now, I realize there is a lot of truth in that short sentence; words to live by, if you will. They certainly apply to a destination fishing trip that costs you a lot of time and money. Your guide wants you to do well, and they'll usually ask what you want to do. Want to catch lots of fish? Go to Brooks Camp. Want to catch a 30-incher? Consider staying on the Naknek. In any case, the guide is going to do their best to help you reach the goal. Your job is to fish hard, to “do your job,” to help make it happen. It's a team effort.

When on the boat or bank, focus is important. First things first. Stay off the phone (if you're in coverage). Pay attention. Listen to your guide. Do the next right thing, which might be as simple as making the 100th Perry Poke of the day, and then carefully fishing the swing through to the hang-down. Don't immediately jerk if you're swinging a fly and a fish starts to play with it. Do your job, and if you're fishing with a guide, your job is to work hard to help the team reach whatever goal you're working towards. If focus fades, take a break and have a cup of coffee or eat some food. Then get back after it.

As I mull over the phrase, I realize this sort of attitude or mantra applies to everyday life, too. Everything good in life is attainable if we do our jobs. Employment is part of what I'm talking about. We need to show up and work hard. Our employment is a privilege our employer extends to us. Obviously, we need to do our job, or we won't have one for long. But I'm not just talking about employment.

Our relationships with friends and family are part of our job, too. It takes focus and effort to build and maintain good relationships.

A couple phrases I mentioned above that are important in my life (but which I often still fall short of) are "First things first," and "Do the next right thing." I didn't come up with these; they were taught to me by a friend named Bill. These cliches are simple to say, but not necessarily simple to consistently do. They fit in with "Do your job" rather well, for if I'm prioritizing well and trying to do the next right thing, whether it's while fishing or at work or in a relationship, I'll be doing my job, and things will work out the way they are supposed to.



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