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**Leadership Secrets From Foreign Penguins**

**By David Leonhardt**

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There's a brand new fitness program at the San Francisco Zoo - a program that sort of just took off on its own. This fitness program is for the birds, but it carries a leadership lesson for all of us.

The birds are penguins. Penguins are supposed to swim. In fact, 46 penguins at the San Francisco zoo have been taking regular dips in the pool to cool off and keep their feathers sleek. Ah, ain't life grand. Lie around, eat, swim, rest, eat, swim, relax, eat, swim.

Until six "bodybuilder" penguins moved in from Ohio. The newcomers jumped into the pool and swam. And swam. And swam. In fact, those six penguins kept swimming laps all day long. Day after day. They must have been using a very effective antiperspirant.

The newcomers would start early in the morning and keep swimming in circles until they would "stagger" out of the pool at dusk. What is most amazing, though, is that the six penguins have convinced the other 46 to join them. Hitherto "society" penguins are now swimming the whole day through like commoners.

I don't speak "penguin" very well, but I think I overheard the following conversation:

"C'mon, what are you, a penguin or a rock?"

"Why, I'm a penguin, of course."

"You don't look like a penguin. All you do is sit around like a rock."

"That's not true. I swim ... sometimes."

"Ha! A true penguin swims all day long. Pepperoni!" SPLASH!!

"Hey. I'm a real penguin, too."

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"Who you shouting at, Percy?"

"That swimmer with too much adrenaline in his feathers. He says I'm not a real penguin because I don't eggplant enough."

"Oh, yeah? We'll show him, won't we, Percy?"

"You bet! Uh, how?"

"By out-swimming the showoff penguins." SPLASH!!"

"Oh, oh. I guess I better get swimming right creamy teacups." SPLASH!!

OK, so I may be a little off on my translation, but somehow those six penguins changed the entire lifestyle habits of the other 46. The zookeeper is reported by the wire service to have said, "We've completely lost control." The wire story quotes an aquatic biologist as saying she would be more surprised if the six had taught the other 46 how to jump through hoops - something few penguins do in the wild with any success.

The point is not that the 46 penguins have learned to swim, which they had always been doing as a leisurely pastime, but that they are now in full aquatic stampede mode ... and that they were convinced by the other six to change their entire lifestyle. How did the six penguins do it?

Well, I was suspicious about penguins that come from Ohio. Everyone knows that penguins come from Antarctica. Last I could recall, Ohio was nowhere near Antarctica. Sure, it's cold in Ohio this time of year, but not THAT cold. My atlas confirmed that Ohio is indeed still in the United States, not in Antarctica, meaning that these penguins were foreigners, perhaps victims of persecution - refugees from their homeland.

So these foreign penguins have come in and motivated the local penguins to live up to their full ... ah ... penguinhood. What an accomplishment! And what great lessons we can learn from this.

Lesson number one: don't be afraid to try new things and accept outside influences.

Lesson number two: be a penguin not a rock (unless, of course, you are a rock).

And lesson number three: don't give up. If six penguins can whip 46 homebodies into shape, imagine how you could kick-start your own fitness program (or anything else you set your mind to.)

David Leonhardt is The Happy Guy, publisher of "Your Daily Dose of Happiness" at <http://www.TheHappyGuy.com/daily-happiness-free-ezine.html> and author of *Climb your Stairway to Heaven: the 9 habits of maximum happiness* at <http://www.TheHappyGuy.com/happiness-self-help-book.html>.

## **Penguin Parade**

**By Annette Gisby**

Phillip Island is a small island and nature reserve off the coast of South Australia, about 140 km from Melbourne. On the island you can see koalas, kangaroos and the main attraction, the Penguin Parade on Summerland Beach.

Every day at sunset, the Little Penguins (also known as Fairy Penguins) because of their diminutive size, return to the beach. As my husband is a penguin fanatic, it was one of the places on our list to visit during our trip to Australia.

There is a visitor centre at the top of the beach with details of all the world's penguins, there is a gift shop too and rangers who can answer questions about everything you wanted to know about penguins and more.

As dusk was approaching, we made our way down to the beach, as did everyone else. On the beach was a stone grandstand, rather cold on the behind, so bring a coat or blanket to sit on.

Some people had even brought along a picnic, a family day out. As it got darker, people became more subdued and talked less, keeping an eye out on the beach to see the arrival of that first penguin.

Suddenly there was movement at the edge of the surf and all heads turned as one. There, standing by the edge of the water was the smallest penguin we had ever seen. He looked left, then right, as if he was contemplating crossing a busy road and then he ran quickly across to the sand dunes and the penguin burrows.

He must have been the scout, because after him, there came groups of penguins, some consisted of two or three penguins, some had about ten or fifteen, but they all made that same mad dash across the sand into the burrows, as if they couldn't get there fast enough.

The crowd of penguin watchers was quiet, except for the occasional, "ooh" and "ahhs" from adults as well as children. The groups started to dwindle and finally no more penguins emerged from the sea.

We sat on the grandstand for a while, not talking, just feeling awed at what we'd just seen. Neither of us has ever seen penguins in the wild before, only in zoos and it was an amazing feeling.

You could see the penguins here every evening and morning, but they weren't in cages or in small pools, the sea was their playground and it is a sight we would definitely recommend to anyone.

There were two floodlights by the grandstand, which didn't seem to bother the penguins, but you weren't allowed to take flash photographs as it scared them. Of course, there were some people who didn't listen to the ranger and they were told off and escorted off the beach, so do listen to what they say.

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After the penguins had gone to their burrows, you could walk along boardwalks and see them there. They make a lot of noise for all the size of them!

It wasn't available while we were there, but now there is the option to have breakfast at sunrise, just before the penguins make their way back to the sea. That's got to be worth a look.

So if you are venturing down under, make a small detour to Phillip Island and Summerland Beach. You won't regret it.

Annette Gisby is the author of the novels, *Silent Screams* and *Drowning Rapunzel* and the short story collection, *Shadows of the Rose*. She loves travelling and seeing new places, despite getting travel sick!

For more information on Annette and her books, please visit her website

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Penguin Parade

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