



Double-minded

Two heads are not always better than one

© Russ McNeil 2021 AhaUniversity.com

You scan the surrounding area . . . sun-bleached bones lie scattered here and there. The parched ground is cracked and dry; *bone*-dry, that is; painted in fiery burnt orange.

What d’ ya expect for a climate with an average temperature of 100°F and an average rainfall of only 4.4 inches per year? ¹ *Wait! What **was** that?!* Something just moved out of the corner of your eye, but now you don’t see it. You stand perfectly still waiting for it to move again so you can capture another glimpse of whatever it is . . .

And sure enough, there it is again: something plodding along close to the ground. And then the movement stops again, and again you lose sight of it. Whatever it is, is extremely well camouflaged. It’s about twenty yards out, but what *is* it? Curiosity gets the best of you. You begin to approach, closing the distance. You move slowly so as not to spook it.

Slowly . . . closer . . . eeeasy does it . . . closer still . . .

And then . . . suddenly the critter’s outline becomes apparent. It looks like a lizard of some sort. One hind leg is suspended, mid-step; the tail raised high. The animal looks as if it’s frozen in place. You chuckle silently. *How could **anything** be frozen in this furnace of a desert?* Then,

you see the tell-tale sign of *Moloch horridus*, aka the Thorny lizard, aka Mountain devil. ² Given your surroundings, you find the latter nickname particularly appropriate.

**What makes the desert beautiful is that
somewhere, it hides a well.**

—Antoine de Saint

Thorny lizards are native to the arid climates of Australian deserts. ² Their diets consist of ants. And ants. And ants. Only ants. Lots and lots of ants. Researchers report the thorny little guys put away up to 1,500 ants per feeding. ² They're *efficient* eaters as well. Among their favorite tactics is to take up position next to a long line of foraging ants, lick 'em up, in sequence, and chew with strong shearing teeth. ³ In so doing, Thorny lizards can put away up to 45 ants per minute. ² That's one ant every 1.3 seconds! That's several time faster than me, even on a good day!

Mountain devils don't always get to play the role of predator. If they aren't careful, *they* end up as

the entrée. In order to avoid that fate, the lizard's design includes no less than five distinct defense mechanisms.



- Camouflage—Thorny devils are colored perfectly to match the sandy, rocky habitat in which they live. Furthermore, they can change their colors rapidly, in chameleon-like fashion, to match their immediate surroundings. ²

- Spines—another obvious defense mechanism. The sharp spines make the lizards difficult to swallow (and risky to attack at all).^{2,4}
- Voluntary bloating—Thorny devils can puff themselves up by filling their chest with air. This makes them look more imposing (and harder to swallow).^{3,4}
- Freezing in position—When they perceive a threat, Mountain devils freeze in place, mid-step, with tail raised. The idea is to create the appearance of a plant.^{2,5} They often maintain this frozen posture even as predators move closer. This tactic combined with superior camouflage can be quite effective.²

The Thorny lizard's fifth, and final, defense mechanism is unique enough to warrant separate discussion. This unusual defense comes in the form of a second head. Sort of. *Moloch horridus* has a large thorny hump on the back of its neck.² When a threat gets close, Thorny lizard tucks its head down between the front legs. This “exposes the peculiar hump, or ‘false head,’ on the back of its neck instead of the [lizard’s] real head.”⁵

**You can complain because roses have thorns, or
you can rejoice because thorns have roses.**

—Zig Ziglar

Congratulations! You just sponsored a new rep by the name of Jack. You have high hopes for Jack. He certainly has a lot going for him. He not only *needs* the opportunity, he also *wants* it, and the timing is perfect. Jack has other things going for him as well. He's articulate, a person of upstanding character, and so far, he's proven to be quite coachable. In short, you found a “good one.” It seems as though your persistence in prospecting is starting to pay off.

Before long, Jack confides in you. He's struggling. A short conversation between the two of you ensues. What follows is an excerpt from that conversation (Y = You, J = Jack):

Y: "Struggling with what?"

J: "That prospecting thing. I'm learning about social media and how to use it, and to do it right takes some time to get ramped up. But that's not what I'm struggling with."

Y: "Okay, so what's the issue?"

J: "Well, I know I need to be prospecting people in face-to-face situations too. Otherwise, I'm leaving a lot of money on the table . . ."

Y: "That's true. My biggest successes in the business started as random encounters with people I didn't know."

J: "Yeah. See—I remember you telling me that. It's just that it seems like whenever I go to prospect someone I don't know . . . I . . . I just seem to freeze up. Or, if I don't freeze completely, I just let the conversation run its course without ever making an offer. I just don't understand. I don't really even know how to explain it."

Y: "You don't have to, Jack. What you're describing is actually quite common with lesser experienced reps. I used to struggle with the same exact thing. Would you like me to share some insight?"

J: "Of course, that's why I brought it up."

Y: "Well, if you're like most people, your 'struggle' as you call it, started years ago, when you were a child. Follow along, and I'll demonstrate what I mean. I'll say part of a sentence, and you fill in the blank it. Ready?"

J: "Sure."

Y: "Children should be seen and ____ ____."

J: "NOT HEARD"

Y: “Here’s another one: Don’t speak until you are _____.”

J: “SPOKEN TO”

Y: “One more: “Never talk to _____.”

J: “STRANGERS”

Y: “You didn’t even hesitate with your responses. You answered all three precisely as I expected, and you did it without having to think about it. It’s the same with just about everyone.”

J: “That’s interesting.”

Y: “It’s more than just interesting. It’s a testament to how our brain works, and it explains everything about your ‘struggle.’ What I’m about to share is potent stuff. Those three sentences we just went over (‘Never talk to strangers.’, etc.) wield great power. Think of them as ‘messages’ because, well, that’s exactly what they are. They’re messages. And all three of them share certain characteristics.

- They were all given to you by parents and/or others who were responsible for your safety and wellbeing.
- You heard them multiple times over the course of several years.
- You were young when you heard the messages; at an age when you were highly impressionable.
- Through “spaced repetition” (hearing them over and over for an extended period) the messages ended up deeply embedded in your unconscious mind.

This last fact—having been embedded in your unconscious mind—is why the warning messages are the key to your current prospecting struggles.”

J: “How’s that?”

Y: “Because. Our unconscious mind absorbs and latches on to repetitive messages. Eventually, repetitive messages develop into beliefs. Beliefs are of paramount importance because your actions will follow your true beliefs—not what you *say* you believe, but rather what you *truly* believe. Since our true beliefs reside not in our conscious mind, but in our *unconscious* mind, we aren’t always aware of them.

“Take for instance the belief that you should ‘never talk to strangers.’ We get in this wonderful crazy business which gives us an incentive to talk to ‘everyone,’ including strangers. We know *consciously* that we should approach people we don’t know, and yet without realizing it, we harbor longstanding *unconscious* beliefs that warn against talking to people we don’t know. These opposing beliefs are as opposite as black and white. The two remain locked in battle until something breaks the stalemate.



Is any of this making sense so far, Jack?”

J: “Absolutely! Two parts of my mind are working against each other. It’s like I’m double-minded.”

Y: “Exactly. And since your actions follow your beliefs, all too often the unconscious mind wins. The net result is you avoid prospecting people you don’t know altogether. All because a message from your youth has you believing you should avoid engaging with strangers. In the case of prospecting, your actions

are actually *in*actions—actions you neglect to carry out. Thus, you avoid approaching peeps you don’t know.

“Now, get this: for some people, inactivity is merely one part of the challenge. The unconscious mind can be a tricky ol’ thang. Let’s say you force yourself to talk to strangers despite the inhibiting beliefs. Your subconscious mind might very well sabotage your efforts without you realizing. Voice inflection, facial expressions, body language—all nonverbal mechanisms by which the unconscious mind can derail your prospecting efforts. The prospect declines your offer, and you have no idea it’s all because of inhibiting beliefs embedded deeply within your unconscious mind.”

The previous dialog is a conversation I’ve had with many a mentee. People find it enlightening to learn the source of their prospecting resistance. It is also liberating to understand the hidden resistance that plagues so many new reps.

The three example messages are at the root of many inhibiting beliefs, but they aren’t the only ones. The obvious question is: What can we do about unproductive, inhibiting beliefs? How can we get past them? The good news is there is a proven, sure-fire answer to these questions. It’s super important to know how to overcome the insidious challenge of inhibiting beliefs. Regretfully, we haven’t the space to do the subject justice in this lesson, but other portions of my content address it in detail.

Wrap-up

Rocky, sun-parched, ant-infested, and laden with bones—the desert habitat of the Thorny devil is *not* a fun place to be. And yet, the thorned lizard manages to thrive. At the first sign of predator trouble the sneaky

reptile goes into stealth mode by freezing mid-step. If that doesn't do the trick, it tucks its head down between the front legs, thereby exposing a false head. In so doing, the double-headed Thorny devil often manages to survive. It's a good thing too, because thorns or not, the habitat is countin' on it . . . something needs to address all those ants.

The story of Thorny lizard is a story of serious caution: *inhibiting beliefs hinder results*. Do you ever feel like you're plodding through the business, surrounded by inhospitable, barren desert? You're praying desperately for rain in the form of new team members, and yet it just doesn't seem to be happening.

You realize that part of the solution involves approaching people you don't know. However, this too is a stretch for you. It seems like any time you try approaching a stranger, it feels uncomfortable, awkward, perhaps even "wrong" on some level. Often, you freeze up entirely until the opportunity passes. You know consciously that you're offering people a gift, and yet, something seems to hold you back.

Can you relate? Are you bedeviled by experiences like this? If so, the thorn in your side is most likely caused by unconscious inhibiting beliefs. Such unproductive beliefs will, at best, hinder your results, and, at worst, they will prevent you from taking any action at all. Don't be double-minded, because when it comes to your *true* beliefs, two heads most assuredly are not better than one.

A lot of people need and want what you have to offer. Now, *that* is a truth worth internalizing because it is productive and liberating and rewarding for everyone involved. So, shed the false head, my friend. The world's a countin' on ya. That line of ants, I mean prospects, gets longer every day. So, get your beliefs in line with the truth, step alongside someone you don't know, and make your offer.

Just make sure to keep that tongue under control.

In chapter 15 of the *Book of Judges*, in the *Old Testament*, we read how Samson slew 1,000 Philistines with the jawbone of an ass. Every day, an even greater number of sales are killed with the very same weapon.

—Jack Nadel

—RM

Note: [The Critter Lessons Series](#) addresses the full spectrum of prospecting, including the following subjects related to this article: *The dangers of hidden beliefs* • *How I overcame my internal struggles* • *A sure-fire strategy to overcome your own inhibiting beliefs permanently* • *Step-by-step instructions on how to put the strategy into action.*

Regarding distribution of this article: You may freely distribute and/or post this article provided the following conditions are met: • it has not been modified in any way • title, references, bio, and this notice must be included • you realize no commercial gain from its distribution (including, but not limited to, affiliate programs and inclusion in other for-sale products) • you neither claim nor imply rights to any of the content herein.

References

1. **Unmack, P.** General information on Australia's deserts. *DesertFishes* <https://www.desertfishes.org/australia/desrtgen.html> (2003).
2. **Pianka, E. & Pianka, H.** The ecology of moloch horridus (lacertilia: agamidae) in western australia. *Copeia* **1**, 90-103 (1970).
3. **Wilson, D.** *Wildlife of the World*. (DK, 2015).
4. **Sharp, D.** Thorny Devil Facts. *FactAnimal* <https://factanimal.com/thorny-devil> (n.d.).
5. **Vitt, L. & Pianka, E.** "The Scaly Ones." *Natural History Magazine* (July 2006).

Russ McNeil writes prolifically and trains for the Network-Marketing and direct sales professions. His content—endorsed by over 50 top-earners and experts—focuses on the art & science of human connection. Russ's unique teaching approach uses traits and behaviors of animals as illustrations for

communication, sales, & people skills. His trademark humor and unorthodox writing style appeal to readers on every continent except Antarctica (and if he ever manages to get an audience with one of those pesky penguins, he'll probably stake a claim there too.) Discover more at [AhaUniversity.com](https://ahauniversity.com).

If you refer to this article in your own work, please cite the source as: McNeil, R. Critter Lessons: Double Minded. <https://ahauniversity.com/blog/double-minded> (2021).