

## “I am not a morning person”

by Doug Newbould

I'm really not sure when I discovered this fundamental truth about myself, but I am now acutely aware of this fact—I am NOT a morning person. I don't think it happened during my adolescence. At least my mother never mentioned I was a bear in the morning, getting up and ready for the school bus. In high school, I was into varsity athletics year-round, so most mornings I had to get myself to school for early workouts. I don't remember that routine as particularly traumatic. In fact, I think I enjoyed it. I know I had a huge advantage over everyone else during the first couple of classes, because my blood was pumping and my mind was alert.

Perhaps I discovered morning sickness at Colorado State University in Fort Collins. But, unfortunately, I don't remember too much from those years so I hesitate to pin the blame there. Dazed and confused is a state of mind that could spawn morning dysfunction, but I'd rather not think about that now. At least then I lived in a relative state of freedom, without a daily routine and able to choose on a daily basis—whether or not to get out of bed.

Perhaps I gained an aversion to mornings during the early years of married life, when I worked nights tending bar at one of the big bowling alleys in Grand Junction, Colorado. I would go to work about 5:00 p.m. and not get home until 2:30 or 3:00 a.m. When my wife got up and went to work in the morning, it was my job to wake up and tend to the children. That was when sleep deprivation really became routine for me. Looking back, I wonder how my kids survived the early years with Mr. Mom.

Once I got off the swing-shift and started working days again for the U.S. Forest Service, I really enjoyed

my job - so getting up early in the morning was not too much of a chore. However, that phase of my life introduced me to wildland fire-fighting, to 16-hour days, to the occasional all-nighter and to strong coffee. Still, I don't remember disliking mornings all that much.

Could it be Alaskan mornings I have developed such an aversion to? They never seem to start at the same time on any two consecutive days. Summer mornings seem to start before I get to bed some days. And winter mornings seem to get stuck in sunrise mode. But how could it be? I love the alpenglow of winter mornings and watching the sun rise from my office window. And I love the summer mornings, when you can get up to go fishing at 4:00 a.m. and the sun has already beaten you to the punch.

Or, could it be my caffeine-addiction? A pot a day of the strongest crude I can create has got to play a role. If that's the case, at least I know I'm not alone. There have got to be more espresso joints per capita in Soldotna, than anywhere else in the world (13 or 14 by my count).

The one cause I am in denial over—is age. As I approach the Big 5-Oh, I wonder if the cumulative impacts of the sleep-deprivation, all those all-nighters, and the triple-shot caffeine cocktails have finally done me in. I guess I just don't know why I'm not a morning person. And I certainly don't hate those bright, cheerful morning people. I'm usually just too groggy to care. Maybe I should just sleep on it—things always look different—in the morning.

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