

## Hunting

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My dad never explained precisely what he liked about hunting and fishing, but I believe it was several things.

As a young man, he liked being outdoors. As a teacher, and later as a principal, he spent all of his working days indoors working with people. The chance to be alone outside, by a stream or in the woods, was probably a treat for him.

He also enjoyed a challenge. Being able to catch a fish and land it or successfully shoot a pheasant provided that challenge. As I got older, it was something dad wanted to share with me.

Once when we were hunting with a friend, Harry, we were deep in the woods traversing a thick pine stand when I heard a tractor start up right next to me. It was particularly loud, and I jumped. Where was the tractor? How could one get this deep in the woods?

It turned out to be a ruffed grouse. While I clearly heard it, I did not see it. Harry and my dad also heard it and explained to me what it was. However, no one got a shot off or even saw it.

Another time we were hunting we came to a standing cornfield. There were probably pheasants in the corn, but they tended to run between the rows, and it was easy for them to hide. If you have a hunting dog, it will find the birds and flush them. We didn't have a dog but decided to walk through the field in the off chance that one would flush.

About halfway through, a pheasant flushed. I was so surprised I never lifted the shotgun to my shoulder. Harry waited but sensed that was not going to happen and took the shot, killing the pheasant.