

2023

One morning, a few seasons ago, business forced me to turn the opposite direction from usual on the highway, downhill as opposed to up. I try very hard to avoid 580 at 8am, too much drama and lots of skill needed at that time of day. While trying to balance “not being a hazard to navigation” and a cup of coffee in my then ancient vehicle, a very nice new truck passed. Envy was replaced with a sudden raise in blood pressure. The license plate read:



Really?

I hoped that he was just a dedicated snowboarder, but it did get my mind moving a lot faster or maybe the coffee kicked in. I have never really answered that question. So, with a nod to Mr. David Letterman, (yes I am showing my age by referring to him), who has given up his top ten on late night and purely from my point of view, with a bunch of kids and grandkids whose lives and careers revolve around bull wheels and winter weather reports, here we go:



10. Skiing is a sport that adults can participate in until "that" day.

Not indestructible, cliff hucking, I just ordered my first beer adults, but normal aging adults that may need Advil, occasionally. At now 65 plus, you are never going to see this guy in a speed suit no matter what the bet Saturday night is, but I ski raced until last season. Trees are fun to duck, the Chutes can still be managed and linking turns on a groomed run a challenge that I still need instruction to do correctly. I started skiing again after a childhood at Sky Tavern at age 42. Now I hibernate in the summer on a sailboat and move in the winter. Cremate me in Gore-Tex, spread me on the 4 Hill

9. Skiing is affordable.

Stop rolling your eyes and let's do some math. Adult example. Join Sky Tavern early, rent some gear from the Program, ski all 20 days Sky Tavern is open a winter and at \$12.00 a day it's the recreation deal of the century. Take the adult lessons included in your membership so that by the end of a single season you "got this." Works out to about the same as renting a few videos at Red Box a week. Season 2. A full-blown adult Mt. Rose season pass can be had for maybe \$500 in the early fall, and new GM Greg keeps the place running for five months or so. Skis, boots and poles can be found at the Sky Tavern Ski Swap for under \$500. Find 20 days to get outside and you are in for \$50 a day. Take care of that stuff and it will last three years. Now you are in for \$30 per and when you are finished with those skis, donate them to Sky, take the tax credit and buy new skis form Bobos demo days in the spring. The math on kids is similar, plus add a smile factor.

8. You get to own cool cars.

OK, now this may just be one for the Dads, but now you "need" that SUV or truck with the rack on top, chrome rims, big tires, extra lights and real horsepower. It's snowing for crying out loud! That beast has more computing power than NASA when we landed on the moon and can crush a Fiat if you are yelling at the kids while backing up in the Wal-Mart parking lot. Mom will add heated seats to the order sheet. Kids will want Wi-Fi. Just make sure the parking lot dude still gets to show you were to park.

7. Sometimes a trip happens.

Here is the big buck reason to ski. Destination resorts are not cheap, but twenty years from now, do the kids remember the toys at Christmas or the time three families shared a two-bedroom condo in Park City and ate pancakes together in long johns? Been there, done that. Go ahead and ask any of my four kids. They keep pictures that answer the question. Do it. Highly recommended. We had to pass on this in 2023 because of the snowfall and the grumbling from family and friends was deafening. Got to figure it out again before it is "that day". Your turn to make those memories.

6. It can be a living.

No one since Stein Eriksen has gotten rich ski instructing, but a good many have had fulfilling, no regrets lives working in the mountains. Two of my kids are proof of that. Sometimes youth is not wasted on the young and old guys follow their dreams. Their Dad is one of them. Being happy is good!

5. The folks you meet.

Chairlift rides start with a silence as everyone settles in, but the inevitable "How's your day" or "Bar coming down" most certainly breaks it on every chair. Even with today's high-speed lifts, conversations flow. Backgrounds, jobs, best eateries and shared experiences dominate the ride. Chairlifts are the real social networks above 7000 feet. Join in.

4. The views.

Put snow on a weed covered, 300-foot-tall ex-garbage dump in Michigan and it looks like so much more. Stand at the top of Diamond Peak looking west to Lake Tahoe and your breath will be taken away by the magnificence! There are places where lifts unload that skiers gather and don't say a word. The view is what draws us together to share the power of the mountains. Those Kleenex dispensers at the unload are not just to wipe goggles.

3. The family that plays together, stays together.

Skiing crosses generations like no other sport. Seventeen-year-olds hit the park with slide slipping Dads watching every move. Grandparents show grandchildren lines they skied on 210s through the trees not that long ago. The kids may pass Mom and Dad every other lap down, but they are skiing together, they saw the same things, ate on the same deck and will share the day during the ride home. I am now skiing with the grandkids. One seven year old beats me up pretty well trying to keep up in her playground but it is what is keeping me here and moving. Three more grandkids are starting this season. My knees hurt thinking about chasing four munchkins but so do my cheeks from smiling so much.

2. Moving is good and kids are supposed to play outside.

It is in their DNA. Video games all winter long give thumbs a great workout and not much else. Bodies are meant to move, run, jump and climb. At the hill, kids must carry their own stuff and remember where they put it. They learn new skills, push some limits and crash and burn. They get back up and move on, usually faster. They lose, they win. Fun happens and so do some of life's little lessons. Being a parent is a big responsibility and being a good example is part of it. Get out and work those quads and show up the kids. Well, give it a good go anyway!

1. It is FUN!

Sky Tavern and skiing has changed my wife's, my kid's and my life so much for the better. I can hardly wait to see what the grandkids make of it. Skiing is a gift given by family and friends. Share it with a family and go make them happy!

In the end I found out that the truck's owner's name was pronounced Why Ski. Makes a much better story my way.

Merry Christmas,

Bill



Why I keep doing it.