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[Two book reviews: Curtis Creek Manifesto and I Never Met and Idiot on the River](#)

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I went on vacation and some of you recommended a couple books for reading. I couldn't find anything by Geirach on short notice, but managed to buy *The Curtis Creek Manifesto*, by Sheridan Anderson and from my local library, I acquired Henry Winkler's, *I Never Met an Idiot on the River*.

Henry's book is an easy read. His wife wrote the first chapter and by my estimation is the more talented writer in the family (or maybe someone helped her, but it wasn't Henry and not just because the writing styles are different. If you read the book, you'll understand). Henry doesn't necessarily do anything wrong and perhaps it's more about how he might dwell on the importance of things. There are various aspects of life that transcend into fly fishing and vice versa, so say that and move on. Assume that the reader has at least some inkling, so you don't have to beat the dead horse. Anyone who has been in the outdoors for 10 minutes should already have the same appreciation for it and perhaps he's belaboring some of his points for those who have not yet been. The book is a sales pitch for fly fishing, but that in itself isn't a bad thing.

Henry's attempts at humor are predictable and come up short. Honestly, I don't think he much cares and I can respect that. A friend of mine lost his brother this week. He was 61 and annoying nurses with bad jokes until the very end. My friend said that their credo has always been, if you can tell a bad joke, do it. And my friend lives up to his end, I can tell you that. His wife's perspective: "No one thinks you're funny." To which he'll respond, "I don't care. I joke to make myself laugh." BTW, he is pretty funny. Still, Henry's wife Stacey did a better job at humor than Henry and my friend's brother, but when you are telling facts about another it's sometimes easier to be funny. Her writing tone overall, I thought, was better. To be fair, she didn't have to provide as many details as Henry, so that makes for lighter writing/reading as well. Plus, she only wrote on chapter.

I would recommend this book mostly to younger folks, who have yet to experience, or are now experiencing, some of the challenges that Henry and many of us with even a tad of snow on the roof have faced. It will help put things in perspective and also guide you in how to overcome adversity and to appreciate each level of achievement, as well as the failures. I think the book does an excellent job of that and in that respect it is also a nice refresher course for folks at any stage of life. Sometimes we can forget, or perhaps belittle, our own accomplishments and Henry explains how that can affect our approach or avoidance of future challenges and successes. Married folks, especially with children, will easily relate to the relationships Henry has with his wife and children and different they are when on the water.

Henry took some excellent photographs and it's unfortunate that the quality of the reprints isn't great. I wonder if there's another printing of the book with crisper photos. If you, or someone you know, faces adversity, is new to the job market, or simply needs some inspiration, this would be a good book to read. Anyone who suffers from true obsession of the sport of fly fishing will be able to relate to this book and to how Henry tries to balance life on the water when his family is present.

**The Curtis Creek Manifesto**, \$9.95 at Barnes & Noble. If time is of value to you, it's only \$10. Just go get the book and skip my bore-ass review. As a sportsman, who is new to fly fishing, I thought this was an excellent book. Now, I am more of a visual and hands on learner, which means I don't really want to spend much time reading about how to do something. Of course, I tried tying my very first fly last week with nothing more than a Youtube video. A size 24 Trico. Guess how that turned out??? Anyway, the book is written in comic book style, which I could live without. I was never a comic fan, but I think it's the disorganization of it that grinds my type A a bit. Ironically, that very style permits Sheridan to jam a lot of information into 48 pages in such a manner that I will actually read it, instead of just trying to figure things out on the water (wasting valuable fishing time). Just three pages in and already I've learned a lot of new information, as well as the, "Oh, that's why I see guys doing that..."

The book breaks down tackle, tactics, etc., etc. in brief paragraphs, bullets, sidebars, thought clouds, etc. Sheridan also explains why certain things are the way they are, which is a big help as well. I really like that but would prefer that perhaps the items be categorized???? I believe that would have defeated Sheridan's purpose however, so I certainly won't fault him for it.

This book would be excellent for any beginner and especially for young fisher persons. I am not easily intimidated, but this book would not scare even the most skiddish of folks. The book suggests carrying it astream, but it's at least 8 1/2" x 11". There are good reasons to have the book this size and I like it, but it would be nice to have a Cliff Note version as a pocket guide as well. I tried to buy two, one for my daughter, but they only had one left. When I get back from vacation, I'll be tracking down at least one more copy. My wife asked why I can't just share my copy. Maybe she should read Henry's book...

Anyway, these are my thoughts and if you have any specific questions just fire away.