



My brother, Tom, was teaching his 4-year old son, Trevor, “manly things,” like spitting off the bridge over the Mississippi River. It was great fun! Following that, they had planned on swimming. They decided to take the stairs to the beach.

On their way down, they unexpectedly stirred up a hornet’s nest. Hornets swarmed around both of them and began stinging. Tom yelled at Trevor to run back up the steps, followed him, and swatted hornets off his son and himself, as Trevor screamed in fear and pain. Once things settled down, they each had been stung four times.

Tom invited Trevor to decide which way to reach the beach: try tiptoeing past the dreaded nest of hornets, which meant only a short walk to the beach, or go to the entrance of the park and then to the beach, about a 1 1/2 mile walk.

When What You See Is Not What You Get

Without any hesitation, Trevor chose the long way.

As they neared the entrance to the park, my brother was glad to see a police car pull over, for he wanted to alert the policeman about the hornet’s nest so that it could be taken care of, and no one else would be attacked. To my brother’s surprise, the policeman started to walk towards both of them. Tom thought that this was a happy coincidence because it would be easy to point out where the hornets were located.

When they met, the officer inquired if Tom knew anything about a man abusing a child on the bridge. Two concerned citizens below it had alerted the police. They had witnessed a screaming child, running from an adult male, who was striking the child, repeatedly!



Immediately realizing that what had happened between Trevor and himself had been misjudged, understandably so, Tom explained and showed the officer the sting marks that they both had. Both of them then rode with the officer to the beach and pointed out the location of the nest. My brother also requested that the alert and concerned citizens be informed of “what had really happened.” He was grateful that they had not hesitated to call the police; however, Tom wanted the story straight! He was/is not a child abuser!

Hearing Tom’s story caused me to reflect. How often do we feel sure that our perception of reality is valid...when it is not? How often are we positive that events couldn’t be interpreted any other way? And they can! It makes one pause and reflect, doesn’t it?