

©Linda Wegner

It was quite a weekend for the local Army Cadets corp. Somewhere around two dozen cadets and leaders packed up their gear and hiked three hours into mountain terrain for several days of guidance and map reading exercises known by the code name, *Lost Souls Weekend*. Among them, our two granddaughters.

This evening, blurred by excitement and extreme weariness they sat at our dining room table and poured out the events of the past couple of days. West Coast rain seeped into just one tent – mark that down as a success; in the “no-no” category, one cadet not only failed to arrive, she neglected to inform anyone that she would be absent. As Master Corporal in charge of that particular group, Elizabeth wasn’t happy.

Another group had its challenges, as well: “We took a wrong turn. We ended up at Check Point 6 instead of Check Point 2 and had to go back” explained Corporal Sarah. They chattered and I basked in the joy of their company as I prepared supper for the family. “What else did you do?” I questioned – although admittedly still rather mystified by some of the lingo that describes their training.

It was when they began to talk about night exercises designed to promote ability to avoid detection that my ears perked up. During this particular training, cadets are instructed to locate previously planted glow sticks and do it without getting caught. But that wasn’t all – planted among the genuine products were smaller, shiny versions of the real thing.

“They were randomly added to the mix, Grandma,” Elizabeth explained. “They are of no value, worthless, as far as achieving our goals. We call them Cadet Distracters.”

“...let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles...”  
Hebrews 12:1 (NIV)

May I choose the valuable over the shiny!