

## The Aggressive Turners Thread

This discussion thread appeared on the rec.crafts.woodturning newsgroup in December of 2001 – it is an interesting discussion of force versus technique.

From: [Ruth \(rfniles@webtv.net\)](mailto:Ruth (rfniles@webtv.net))  
Subject: Aggressive Turners Amaze Me  
Newsgroups: [rec.crafts.woodturning](http://rec.crafts.woodturning)  
Date: 2001-11-18 05:21:07 PST

Just an observation: it amazes me when a turner asks why something awful happened when all he was doing is "attacking" the turning.

A catch so bad either the blank lets loose, the slamming tool breaks the tool rest, a gear-driven lathe is damaged, etc.

Pushing a parting tool so hard and so far it binds in the wood, whips out of your hand, pulls out of the handle, etc.

Large blanks with hard corners knocked off with a heavier gauge, slamming against the tool rest, ear offending, etc.

Raffin states (not exact words) "don't force a cut against spinning wood and a machine.....the machine will always win".

Is it a "man thing" to force a cut, pound the hell out of a tool or block of wood, finish a turning with as much speed and force as possible? I just do not get it.

Now, I'm not talking about "all" men, I really do like most men I've met. I just don't understand the thinking in the above instances. Oh, there have been times when the only satisfaction I got was to "attack and destroy" a particular piece of onnery wood, but not as a turning practice (there are times when you just have to kill something)  
:)

Just curious.

Ruth

Date: 2001-11-18 06:53:06 PST

Message 2 in thread

From: [Jim Pugh \(jpugh@eriecoast.com\)](mailto:Jim Pugh (jpugh@eriecoast.com))  
Subject: Re: Aggressive Turners Amaze Me  
Newsgroups: [rec.crafts.woodturning](http://rec.crafts.woodturning)

Ruth,

Wonderful comments. I read your post about 4 times trying to come up with something 'profound' to say in response. It does seem to be a male reponse to turn everything into a competition - but who wants a pile of quickly made items that are half-assed (pardon) when a bit of time and thought would make fewer items of much higher quality? I have a good friend who turns with me once a week and I have noticed that he typically takes about twice as long as I do to complete a similar turning. Mine still needs a lot of handsanding and other 'extra' work and his is complete. I think there is a lesson or two there.

I hope your post generates some useful response and those whom you are 'quoting' take it in the manner you intended. Okay troops, you are being gently prodded to take a look at the manner in which you work. And it probably applies to other areas of your life away from the wood lathe. What say you??

Jim Pugh, Elyria, OH

Date: 2001-11-18 07:15:25 PST

Message 3 in thread

From: [George \(someone@microsoft.com\)](mailto:someone@microsoft.com)  
Subject: Re: Aggressive Turners Amaze Me  
Newsgroups: [rec.crafts.woodturning](http://rec.crafts.woodturning)

Your observation coincides with my experience at school. I have to remind the males over and over again to ease pressure off the cut. The females are more tentative, and quicker to pick up what Frank Pain calls "cutting the wood as it wants to be cut."

Finesse and testosterone seem to be in continual conflict, don't they? Though females do seem to take forever to rough cut a cylinder or bowl. Best method I know is to rough like a man, quick and crude, make finish cuts like a woman, with care and concern for the wood.

Two best male turners in the past few years have been guitar players. Guess they're a bit more in touch with the difference that hand position and technique make in the "music" produced.

Of course, these are HS kids, and they don't have much experience with reality. They're used to getting what they want by pressure on their parents....

Date: 2001-11-18 08:49:33 PST

Message 4 in thread

From: [john lucas \(jlucas@citlink.net\)](mailto:jlucas@citlink.net)  
Subject: Re: Aggressive Turners Amaze Me  
Newsgroups: [rec.crafts.woodturning](http://rec.crafts.woodturning)

George

I used to teach rock climbing. Women would always learn better because they don't have the strength men have. They would learn to use their flexibility and balance to offset the strength. Unless you can do a dozen one arm pull ups, balance and body movement will win out against strength when climbing difficult routes.

I love to watch my friend Pat Matranga turn. She uses her whole body to create the moves that take off very delicate cuts. It's a lesson we all should learn. John

Date: 2001-11-20 14:04:51 PST

Message 5 in thread

From: [cindy drozda \(cdrozda@nyx10.nyx.net\)](mailto:cdrozda@nyx10.nyx.net)  
Subject: Re: Aggressive Turners Amaze Me  
Newsgroups: [rec.crafts.woodturning](http://rec.crafts.woodturning)

John, good point! And some other reasons why women learn better:

- They are more likely to believe the instructor and do what he/she says (the male approach can be to think "I know what I'm doing, that instructor is wrong")
- They are usually better at body sensing (in touch with their bodies).
- They are more able to relax, making it possible to learn something.

(Appologies for the stereotyping, not all women and men fit them...these are generalizations, not meant to offend anyone or start a fight)

...So why don't we see more women aviators, skydivers, woodworkers, machine operators, boat captains, woodturners, etc,etc.???? That's what doesn't make sense to me!  
-CD-

Date: 2001-11-18 08:40:53 PST

Message 6 in thread

From: [john lucas \(jclucas@citlink.net\)](mailto:john.lucas@citlink.net)  
Subject: Re: Aggressive Turners Amaze Me  
Newsgroups: [rec.crafts.woodturning](http://rec.crafts.woodturning)

Ruth

I agree. I think there is a tendency to buy bigger lathes so you can turn an even further out of balance piece or spin a piece 20 inch bowl at 2400 rpm. This leads to danger. People are buying bigger tools or putting 5 foot handles on the tool to arrest the problem not realizing they may be creating a dangerous situation.

I'm not against all that stuff I just think you have to look at the problem. If you are rubbing the bevel of the tool and have the the tool anchored to the tool rest before ever touching the wood you will have less problems. Also learn how the tool cuts.

Diamond parting tools and parting tools with tapered sides were designed to reduce the friction and clearance angles. The straight tools like the Chris Stott (I love that tool) have to have clearance cuts to work safely.

I agree with you on the brute force thing. Men (me included) will imagine that we can overpower the machine. Stick that gouge in there and hang on. In reality you can't always and that's where the accidents happen.

I love the quote by Richard Raffan. "The machine always wins" That's why you have to outsmart it by using the tools and safety equipment properly. john

Date: 2001-11-18 11:46:55 PST

Message 8 in thread

From: [KEN PORT \(woodcut@xtra.co.nz\)](mailto:KEN_PORT@woodcut.xtra.co.nz)  
Subject: Re: Aggressive Turners Amaze Me  
Newsgroups: [rec.crafts.woodturning](http://rec.crafts.woodturning)

Yes I see the same. Firstly lack of understanding of a cut or peel and basic techniques to achieve the result.

But also there is this weird sense that woodturning does not conform to any common wood cutting principles and therefore attacking a sensitive piece of living nature seems to be a good alternative to working with the wood, gently but firmly shaping to achieve the result.

Most Woodturners like myself starting out are only focused on producing something and are not prepared to spend the time to get basic tool to wood techniques worked out. My theory is when you understand how to make a shaving then you can make anything. Be challenged and give some time to making those shavings fly.

Cheers

Ken Port

[www.woodcut-tools.com](http://www.woodcut-tools.com)

Date: 2001-11-18 12:10:30 PST

Message 9 in thread

From: [Bruce \(bwhite@fidnet.com\)](mailto:Bruce(bwhite@fidnet.com))  
Subject: Re: Aggressive Turners Amaze Me  
Newsgroups: [rec.crafts.woodturning](http://rec.crafts.woodturning)

Nah Ruth, they are all lying to you.

It's a man thing. It's a lot like peeing in the snow, we can do it, women shouldn't try!!  
LOL

Just kiddin. I supervise a lot of fiber optic installations, when ever possible, my foreMAN is Roxy. Roxy is about 5'5" and probably weighs in at 120 lbs or so. She repeatedly outperforms the men and I don't mean by a little bit. Some of the work is delicate, but a lot requires a good bit of force, somehow she handles it, sweating less, cursing less and being more pleasant in the process.

Unless the job is running heavywall conduits or something, gimme Roxy anyday. I'm a lot more experienced with fiber cables than I am with turning, but I'm sure the old adage still holds true, Behind every good man is a woman making sure he doesn't screw up.

Wonder where Hilary went wrong?

Date: 2001-11-18 12:18:13 PST

Search Result 10

From: [LoDrag \(LoDrag@someplace.org\)](mailto:LoDrag@someplace.org)

Subject: Re: Aggressive Turners Amaze Me

Newsgroups: [rec.crafts.woodturning](http://rec.crafts.woodturning)

Good question, one I have asked other guys many times. A little background...I tend to try to finesse my way with things. Think up a plan and follow through rather than the 'Hand me that Big hammer' routine.

I used to work in a furniture store setting furniture up in the showroom. LOTS of lifting and moving of sofas, bedroom suites, dining room suites. I always wanted to use the furniture dollies and other 'helper' items. Some of the other guys didn't. I observed that the bigger or stronger the guy the more they wanted to USE those muscles in a he-man way.

I also delivered beer for a few years. I finally took over the majority of the keg deliveries since everyone else complained about it. Each keg weighs about 160 lbs. I am not a large or very strong guy, but I delivered those kegs as well as the original keg delivery guy. He was about 6 feet tall, 220 or so lbs. I am 5'7" and (at that time) around 150 lbs. I just used more leverage and balance to deliver the kegs. (Some deliveries required getting them down spiral staircases to freezers in basements. Not pleasant, but I could roll them down one step at a time. The normal keg guy would deadlift and struggle down those stairs. Mine was just sliding it down one step at a time...thump, thump, thump)

I have recently been working with a guy who is a contractor. He is 6'1" and 250 lbs. We have done quite a bit of work on my new house, including building a large storage shed, adding walls, tearing down walls, installing a water heater, and an evaporative cooler. In each case his first response to doing a job would be to 'push harder, lift higher, etc.'

I just think that most guys view their work as a competition of them vs. the job or tool or what-have-you. "That piece of wood ain't going to get the best of ME!" I have heard comments along the same lines as that above from quite of number of guys. They just don't like to be beat at anything, especially by inanimate objects!

That attitude does have it's place, at times (i.e. that contractor buddy does GREAT at demolition of walls. MUCH better and faster than I could do). But I generally believe that if you are forcing something that hard, you are doing it incorrectly.

BTW, as a video production company I usually like to get women as camera operators, especially for seminars, events, and "talking-head" type interviews. They are much smoother and gentler with the shots. If I want extreme sports videos, or fast aggressive action I will look for the guys that are more competitive. Hence, the "MTV" style of video which is fairly predominate nowadays.

LoDrag

Date: 2001-11-18 12:22:53 PST

Message 11 in thread

From: [Leif O. Thorvaldson \(Leif@marshell.com\)](mailto:Leif@marshell.com)

Subject: Re: Aggressive Turners Amaze Me

Newsgroups: [rec.crafts.woodturning](http://rec.crafts.woodturning)

I just knew that it would come to this! The feminization of the manly art of woodturning! I tell you fellas, let 'em in the door and they'll redecorate your shop from the floor to ceiling and then go on to the enthralling fun of overhauling you! (Slight apology to Lerner and Loewe!). Where would we be in cracking the atom if we had just asked it to split? What about splitting infinitives? How would we get off those stubborn nuts and bolts without a sledge hammer and ten foot long prybar? WD 40 is for wussies! Pretty soon we'll all be turning on mini's and producing drop spindles and those whatchamacallits for tatting. Hells Bells, we'll probably all be tatting!! While our Nichols, Stubbys, Serious and Poolewood 10,000's rust away in a museum dedicated to the Follies of Macho Man (extinct sometime after 1990 AD or CE or 1 FM!). Perhaps those of us left will have to be turning in underground locations with pole lathes as by then no electric motors (or gas, for that matter) will be produced over an 1/8 hp. Turning tools will all become friction tools (sandpaper). Rise up men (if you can still get it up) and resist this latest incursion!!!

P.S.: Excellent discussion point, Ruth! \*G\*

Leif

From: [Lyn J. Mangiameli \(kumayama@earthlink.net\)](mailto:kumayama@earthlink.net)

Subject: Re: Aggressive Turners Amaze Me

Newsgroups: [rec.crafts.woodturning](http://rec.crafts.woodturning)

Date: 2001-11-18 14:37:21 PST

View: [Complete Thread \(62 articles\)](#) | [Original Format](#)

I like you Ruth, but I don't buy the premise or the way your post is phrased (though somewhat redeemed in the final paragraph).

Initially your post appears as a list of straw "persons" that indeed anyone would seem foolish not to knock down. And indeed you have found a host of turners eager to do so. But actually you have posed a series of implied bifurcations, which fail to allow for the range of activities, motivations, styles, and circumstances that are involved in the task of woodturning. Just a few, not particularly organized, comments.

First, it seems possible that one can be amazed at another for "attacking" the wood when the facts revealed do not provide sufficient evidence to justify such a presumption. Of course the more one sees things a given way, the less valid evidence he or she requires to justify his or her presumptions and the conclusions built upon those presumptions. Generally turners are not in "denial" about their practices and associated consequences. Often a turner recognizes that something "awful" has happened as a result of "attacking" a turning. I've seen many posts here and elsewhere that have expressed that an over aggressive approach led to their problems, but I have also seen posts where both intermediate and experienced turners were going along in a quite refined way and still ran into trouble. Trouble that may be defined as "awful" by some, though rather ordinary by others.

In mountain climbing we speak of two sorts of hazards; objective hazards and subjective hazards. The latter were seen as the more dangerous. Objective hazards are avalanches, rock fall, friable rock, ice or rock not conducive to placing adequate protection, etc. Subjective hazards were those dealing with impaired judgment, poorly applied technique, inadequate knowledge, inattention, emotional overarousal, failure to use safety equipment, and the like (these things are not exclusive to one another). One can to a greater or lesser extent calculate the risks and dangers associated with objective hazards, though often not be able to eliminate them and still continue the climb (pursue the goal). It is more difficult to calculate the risks associated with subjective hazards (though I did some of this when researching the effects of altitude induced hypoxia on logical reasoning and problem solving), but one can often have more control over them. But the important point is that both types of hazards independently or interactively can lead to accidents (including death) and/or failure to achieve one's goal.

I believe that the situation for turners is quite comparable. Instead of the objective hazards following from the instability and variability of rock or ice or snow, turners deal with the instability and variability of wood. Instead of not knowing for sure what lies below the surface of the snow (such as a deep crevasse), turners don't know for sure what lies under the surface of the wood (such as voids, rocks, bark inclusions, pitch pockets, nails, rot, etc.). We can try to control for these things, but we can't eliminate them. Accidents can and will occur for reasons that have nothing to do with subjective error or personality style.

On the other hand, the subjective hazards of the mountain climber are almost exactly the same for the woodturner. We usually do have some control over these (though I am not very confident we have much control over our personality). We can work to eliminate or at least reduce most of the subjective hazards but doing such things as getting enough sleep, obtaining instruction, going slow when unsure, not turning when under the influence of (prescription or non prescription) drugs, checking that safety equipment is in place and in working order, etc. One may have a predisposition towards certain subjective hazards, but still eliminate them as a source of risk by establishing and following effective countermeasures (such as following a self-imposed rule never to turn when angry or after drinking). But again, mastery of subjective hazards is never complete.

Like in mountain climbing, the prudent turner attempts to calculate the objective risks and reduce the objective hazards to a minimum within the context of the desired goal. Sometimes the goal is great and the level of accepted objective risk is also. Sometimes the goal is mundane and the level of objective risk is reduced accordingly (i.e., you might chance being killed climbing Mt. Everest, but not bouldering in your back yard). Same goes for turning, you might take more risks dealing with a punky but beautifully spalted piece of maple, but not so for some plain grained and colored alder. The greater the objective risks, the more one tries to reduce the subjective (personally controllable risks) to zero. And of course, the manifestation of a subjective hazard can result in maiming or injury just as easily as can the occurrence of an objective hazard.

So one of the points I'm trying to make is that the incidents you describe (the catch leading to the blank coming loose, the tool rest breaking, the parting tool binding) can come about as much as a result of objective hazards as they might be due to personality style, presumed gender differences, or whatever you have boiled down to "attacking" the wood.

Indeed, the greater the mastery of technique (and other subjective hazards) the more willing many are to accept greater objective hazards in the pursuit of a plan, project, image. There's a line familiar to off-roaders that goes "the better the Jeep, the farther it will get before becoming stuck." I think a lot of accomplished turners are like this, both male and female. Some of these may be labeled "aggressive" turners. Another way of looking at these things is to say that the better one's tool technique, the more aggressive one can cut.

What I also find is that regardless of the area of endeavor (e.g., rock climbing, ski racing, turning, etc.), as long as brute force is not the primary requisite, the more accomplished the persons are, the less gender differences you find in personality, risk assessment, and performance.

So in the context of the above, I can provide a short hand response to your rhetorical observations: No those incidents you describe are not limited to the aggressive, the inexperienced, the insensitive and the half of the population that is male, and no I do not immediately draw the conclusion that such accidents occurred as a result of an overallly aggressive turner of either sex. There are a host of reasons they can occur and to restrict one's focus to one only makes it more likely that others will fall prey to the same accidents.

Lyn

Date: 2001-11-19 16:10:08 PST

Message 16 in thread

From: [Molly Winton \(larry@msn.com\)](mailto:larry@msn.com)

Subject: Re: Aggressive Turners Amaze Me

Newsgroups: [rec.crafts.woodturning](http://rec.crafts.woodturning)

"Lyn J. Mangiameli" <kumayama@earthlink.net> wrote

> I like you Ruth, but I don't buy the premise or the way your post is



> phrased (though somewhat redeemed in the final paragraph).

>

Lyn, Lyn, Lyn, you never disappoint me. As I was reading through the first 10 responses to Ruth's query I kept thinking, "When is Lyn going to jump in here?" Then I found you. Sometimes your level of pomposity exceeds even my expectations. Only you can turn an "observation" and opinion of Ruth's into a 2 printed page oration. I was somewhat impressed with your ability to work "bifurcations" into your response, but thought it quite condescending to open your comments with "I like you Ruth, but..." Please! Agree, disagree, express your opinion, great, but please spare us the loquaciousness (I threw that word in for your benefit).

This was a fun thread to read, and I believe educational, in that it may get us thinking a little prior to beginning a somewhat questionable cut, or give us pause to think about how we approach our turning. A differing or variant opinion was eloquently expressed by Bill G., Herman de V., and Rick F. without being condescending or pompous. Ruth specifically stated she was not talking about "all" men, she was questioning only the behavior in her specified instances. Her examples were very appropriately described as "attacking" the turning. I did not get the impression she was making gross generalizations. It is true this craft is populated primarily with men, so I suppose by that inference a generalization can be implied, but again she does clarify she is not speaking about "all". She even admits there are times she enjoys an "attack and destroy" attitude with a particularly ornery piece of wood, but also states, "not as a turning practice".

Your final paragraph is all you really needed, as you yourself stated, "...I can provide a short hand response to your rhetorical observations:...". Next time write your response, then edit it down to your concluding paragraph, then hit the "post" button.

Now I realize I am opening myself up for mass criticism for what can be described as a "flame" response, but bring it on. I've been wanting to respond to you for some time. I've resisted up to this point, because it's not necessary, nor often appropriate, to jump on someone in such a forum as ours, but this time you hit a nerve. I can always skip you postings, which I often do, but sometimes I just want to see how far into the realm you can go.

I like you Lyn, but...

Molly Winton

Date: 2001-11-19 17:11:08 PST

Message 17 in thread

From: [Lyn J. Mangiameli \(kumayama@earthlink.net\)](mailto:Lyn.J.Mangiameli@earthlink.net)

Subject: Re: Aggressive Turners Amaze Me

Newsgroups: [rec.crafts.woodturning](http://rec.crafts.woodturning)

Well Molly,

It all just goes to show that the world is much more interesting as a result of the diversity of those which inhabit it. Even if, at times, we are left at a loss to fully understand or explain the actions of others.



Just one personal note. It has never occurred to me to attack or be sarcastic towards some one for the level of their vocabulary (be it limited or advanced). However, I do apply the tenets of critical thinking to what has been asserted, regardless of the words in which the assertion was couched or the nature of the relationship I have with the person who has espoused them.

Lyn

Date: 2001-11-20 07:15:59 PST

Message 18 in thread

From: [AlldenDouglasInc](mailto:AlldenDouglasInc) ([allendouglasinc@aol.com](mailto:allendouglasinc@aol.com))

Subject: Re: Aggressive Turners Amaze Me

Newsgroups: [rec.crafts.woodturning](https://www.threads.com/newsgroup/rec.crafts.woodturning)

Lyn, Lyn, Lyn...

Get your toe stepped on?

Sometimes your level of pomposity exceeds even my expectations, too, and your response could not have illustrated it any better.

Gee, after all of the help you have offered, and research you've done, and the money you have spent, how could someone say such a thing? Actually, I spent the day yesterday at the lathe with this thread running through my mind, wondering how the group would respond. I hoped they would express thanks for the good things you do, and for the lyrical quality of your prose, and a plea to keep the bulldog attack tactics in the other, more infamous newsgroup you mention at times. If I recall correctly, you usually bemoan the type of communication used there, and celebrate the atmosphere in our little corner of the web. On the other hand, should some horrible miscreant question the assumed authority you use to state your beliefs, you rise up like the dragons of old, to reinforce and protect that diaphanous shield.

Take your butt whippin' like a man, Lyn, and please try to tone down the rhetoric, for all our sakes. It took two of my favorite members, both of the gentler gender, to slay the dragon....

Well done ladies.

Doug Trembath

Date: 2001-11-20 09:46:41 PST

Message 19 in thread

From: [Lyn J. Mangiameli](mailto:Lyn.J.Mangiameli) ([kumayama@earthlink.net](mailto:kumayama@earthlink.net))

Subject: Re: Aggressive Turners Amaze Me

Newsgroups: [rec.crafts.woodturning](https://www.threads.com/newsgroup/rec.crafts.woodturning)

Doug,

I work to separate feelings and emotional reaction from critical analysis, whether it be in my interactions with others, or in my critique of tools, or in my primary role as one who does assessment and research for a living. Indeed, I was attempting to make that clear in my opening comments to Ruth; that I could like her but find the merit of her particular opinion to be lacking in logic. It is not that I don't share feelings, and have compassion, and provide support (if you choose to look through the archives, I doubt highly that you will find anyone who has significantly more posts offering encouragement, giving praise

and expressing appreciation), it is that I keep them separate from analysis, and, when analysis is involved, have them follow after it. Though the PostModernists would like to argue otherwise, without objectivity critical reasoning cannot be maintained. For me, being aware of, and attempting to control for, forms of bias is integral to my daily activities. Likely, it is those qualities which provide some value to my reviews and critiques. Likely too, it is those same qualities that some now choose to label pompous.

I'm sure at some level you think I "just don't get it" and indeed I don't. I've reread my posts several times, and each time feel satisfied with what I wrote. As I see it, the criticism I have received has not been with respect to the quality of my ideas and reasoning, but rather directed to my personal characteristics. Molly chooses to sarcastically convey that she doesn't like my vocabulary. The thing is, those are the words I use when I think. I didn't insert the word bifurcation in there for effect, as Molly choose to do with loquacious, my writing is merely a manifestation of the vocabulary of my thoughts. I seek to offend no one by my vocabulary and I have never sought to offend another because of theirs. It goes back to looking at things more according to the quality of the ideas than the person who is saying them.

The authority (as you put it), or the validity (as I would put it) with which I speak is always open for challenge, as well it should be for anyone. As I see it, there is no dragon here to slay, but truth and logic to be discerned. The latter requires a competition between ideas, which involves critical appraisal of those ideas, and examination of their scientific and empirical foundation. For me, that is not only fun, but the only valid form of inquiry and way for knowledge to advance. My posts are sometimes longer because I don't just make statements, but include the rationale behind those statements for others to judge. I challenged Ruth's opinions and style of presentation, not because I wished to slay Ruth the dragon, but because I was searching for a more valid explanation of the behavior to which she was referring. If my offerings were lacking, I would have been most pleased to have their fallacies pointed out, so that I could refine my own thought. Lots of times this happens. I remember a thread that lead to a discussion of ballistics on that other NG (a topic I openly admitted I had only limited understanding of). I called for more knowledgeable persons to weigh in and indeed when a person better versed in physics and ballistics pointed out my errors, you may recall that I immediately conceded and sincerely thanked him for the correction. There was no "diaphanous shield" to protect, rather there was an appreciation for receiving facts that led to a better understanding. Again, for those who have followed my postings, you will see that similar thanks have been expressed on several occasions. So I see myself and others as possessing no inherent authority to uphold, rather I see true authority only arising from the accuracy and logic of ideas, not people.

Finally, you call on me to "tone down the rhetoric." In this thread, as most others, I have attempted to direct the discussion to the validity of ideas, rather than attacks on others for their personal qualities. It has not been I who has engaged in "bull dog attack tactics." Pretty much the only time you will find me attacking another more personally is when I have found them trying to demean others simply for what they are (I'd refer you to BZ's attacks on PN, in that other NG) or when intellectual dishonesty is blatantly promoted

(KBE, again in that other NG). It has not been I, in this thread, who has ratcheted up the rhetoric.

I imagine these thoughts will again inflame some, and reinforce the thoughts (positively or negatively) of others. But they are sincere and thoughtful expressions of my thoughts and views. I am content with that.

Lyn

Date: 2001-11-21 14:17:05 PST

Message 20 in thread

From: [Molly Winton \(larry@msn.com\)](mailto:larry@msn.com)

Subject: Re: Aggressive Turners Amaze Me

Newsgroups: [rec.crafts.woodturning](http://rec.crafts.woodturning)

Lyn, you are right. My criticism is not with respect to the quality of your ideas and reasoning, it is directed at your style of writing within this forum. It is my opinion that this NG is a casual environment where ideas, opinions, assistance and education can freely be expressed and shared. I emphasize the word "casual". This is not a professional periodical, disertation, or report of neuropsychological analytical findings. I have worked with many neuropsychologists/psychologists in my previous profession, and read their numerous reports, not to mention writing hundreds of assessment reports of my own. The language/vocabulary you use is very appropriate within these situations. Within this forum, it is my opinion this vocabulary comes across as being pompous and intellectual snobbery. As my Mom always says, "It's not WHAT you say, it's HOW you say it."

I also don't dislike your vocabulary. Quite the contrary, I think it's fabulous. I love words and enjoy being able to use one word or a short phrase to elequently express an idea or condition that could, in conversational language, take two paragraphs to explain. But again I emphasize, in the right context. Now maybe I could have found a gentler way of expressing my opinion to you, but as I said in my original post, you touched a nerve. Subjectivity overrode my objectivity. For that I apologize. I also acknowledge that my perceptions may have been polar to your intentions. There's nothing I wouldn't enjoy more than to sit down in person with many of the participants on this NG in order to get to know them as three dimensional individuals. You are definitely included. Someday I hope to have this opportunity. I'll buy.

Molly Winton

Date: 2001-11-18 16:26:56 PST

Message 35 in thread

From: [Steve Worcester \(madera@dallas.net\)](mailto:madera@dallas.net)

Subject: Re: Aggressive Turners Amaze Me

Newsgroups: [rec.crafts.woodturning](http://rec.crafts.woodturning)

I would agree. Women do make better turners from the standpoint that they are more liekly to finesse a cut vs. brute force. Unfortunately, there is a disproportionate amount of males in woodturning for that matter

Date: 2001-11-18 16:26:31 PST

Search Result 36

From: [rick@rickfrazier.com \(rick@rickfrazier.com\)](mailto:rick@rickfrazier.com)

Subject: Re: Aggressive Turners Amaze Me

Newsgroups: [rec.crafts.woodturning](http://rec.crafts.woodturning)

Ruth:

While I must agree with you in most cases I've observed, there are distinct examples that are exactly the opposite.

I belong to an organization called the Big Island Woodturning Club, which is a loose organization of woodturners on the Big Island of Hawaii (the southernmost island, not Oahu where Honolulu is). A good portion of the members of the club are professional woodturners. That is to say that a major portion of their living (if not all) comes from selling the turnings they make. These are guys that turn all day long, and trying to muscle things all of the time would only lead to an early grave. The body just can't take that kind of pounding for very long without having a lot of problems.

At each meeting we have some sort of demo, and each demo I've seen over the past year has emphasized technique that minimizes the physical effort and risk for the operator, even though many of them take off an amazing amount of wood.

It seems our society places a premium on brawn over brains, and this is definitely noticed by kids at an early age. After years of being pushed to do it stronger, bolder, (and often in a more dangerous manner) I finally got deep enough into the actual physics of what I was doing to realize that with simple machines or modifications to existing machines or technique, I could get as much work done as my co-workers with a lot less effort, and I spent a lot less time at the local emergency room too. That was nearly 30 years ago, and even today, I learn new ways to do things more efficiently and with less effort or risk. Maybe it's because I'm not a really big guy (5'7" or 5'8") or maybe it's because I'm basically lazy, but I find alternate ways to do something that is dangerous or requires a lot of muscle...

Of course, being a tool junkie may be part of the reason I do things differently... If there is a dangerous process or something that requires a lot of muscle, there is probably a tool that needs to be designed and built to take care of the problem...

Compared to the way I learned to turn in High School over 30 years ago, I can turn out a bowl at least twice as fast, but without taking the beating I used to, or making cuts that are dangerous to me or the equipment. Of course, I've blown up my share of bowls over the years, but making thin walled vessels will do that. With decent safety equipment and techniques, I've never injured myself on a lathe. My only lathe injury was in high school when a pair of bookends separated and hit me in the back of the head. A mild concussion was the result. The accident could have been avoided by proper orientation of the lathes in the shop, and by proper operation by the other lathe operator. By the way, most of my turning is done at 800 rpm or less, but I can still make a huge pile of shavings in a pretty short time. There are times a high horsepower lathe is necessary, and Raffin is correct. "The machine will always win" (if you are stupid enough to operate it beyond your capabilities or in an unsafe manner).

Thanks  
-\_Rick

Date: 2001-11-18 18:55:30 PST

From: [Herman de Vries \(herm@hdv.net\)](mailto:herm@hdv.net)  
Subject: Re: Aggressive Turners A maze Me  
Newsgroups: [rec.crafts.woodturning](http://rec.crafts.woodturning)

Ruth, I loved your post and the really great replies you've been getting. This group of turners could get good jobs as comedians!

When I "attack" the wood, as I've been known to do from time to time, it has nothing to do with testosterone or being male. I'll take a very heavy cut for a couple of basic reasons.

First, it's fun, 'specially with green wood. Hearing the smooth "swish" of a very sharp chisel cutting through the wood is SUCH a satisfying sound, and the temptation is to take a bigger and bigger bite. It's also such fun to see the long ribbon of wood come off the turning. I've never had a problem with a catch in this type of situation, likely because you only get the sound and the nice shaving if the bevel is rubbing properly. However, I doubt this is the scenario you are talking about.

I think the answer is impatience, impatience, or maybe impatience. I don't know about you others, but I hate roughing out an irregular block. I want to get that sucker to the place where the real shaping can begin, and not spend my time just knocking off high spots and corners. That's when I run into trouble, or rather, USED to run into trouble. After a few unhealthy scares I've gotten it into my thick skull that the most dangerous points during a turning are at the beginning, when I'm impatient to get it roughed out, and at the end, when I've been working at it the longest and am impatient to see the finished product. I have to mentally slow myself down at both points.

Just my 2 cents worth.

Herm [www.hdv.net](http://www.hdv.net)

Date: 2001-11-18 23:25:44 PST

Message 38 in thread  
From: [Rich \(rmt@jsmcom.hk\)](mailto:rmt@jsmcom.hk)  
Subject: Re: Aggressive Turners Amaze Me  
Newsgroups: [rec.crafts.woodturning](http://rec.crafts.woodturning)

Ruth,

I've always worked on the adage "if at first you don't succeed, crank up the rpm and use a bigger gouge". But then again, this might explain why my work requires the last two inches to be "turned" off using sandpaper!!

Rich

Date: 2001-11-18 21:03:21 PST

Search Result 40  
From: [Bill Grumbine \(ultradad@enter.net\)](mailto:ultradad@enter.net)  
Subject: Re: Aggressive Turners Amaze Me  
Newsgroups: [rec.crafts.woodturning](http://rec.crafts.woodturning)

Hi Ruth

I don't respond to a lot of the posts here, since there is already a wealth of knowledge on this board, but I do read them, and respond to a few. I'd like to offer a different viewpoint. First of all, I am often accused of being aggressive just for standing around minding my own business. I am 6' 2" and 350 lbs. If you go to my website and take a look at me, you will see that I am not a marshmallow. Many people ask me for which pro football team I play linebacker.

I have a Poolewood Euro 2000. It is a very powerful lathe. I have a Glaser 3/4" bowl gouge. It is a real weapon (see, even that figurative language sounds aggressive!). I hold 80 lb bowl blanks in one arm while I spin them on the lathe with the other, not because it is more macho, but because I can do it without a lot of effort. It would be akin to you holding a 10 lb blank in one arm. I can make cuts, which for me are normal, but from which many others would shy away. My upper body mass is more than the average male body weight. Does all this qualify as attacking the wood? For some it may be, but for others, like me, it is not. I am also a firm believer in the work smarter, not harder philosophy. It just so happens that when most are straining, I am still not working hard. I can also take that Glaser tool and produce fine angel hair shavings just by turning the tool to a different angle and using a light, but firm touch.

This is just background for my perspective. There are a number of turners here who are more accomplished and better known, but I have been teaching turning for over six years now, in many different venues, and to all ages from 7 years old on up.

Attacking the wood is an attitude, but not always a macho one (I have taught, and been taught by, a number of girls and women in various classes). A lot has been written about tool control and technique, most of it very good. In my experience, most of the attacking I have seen in woodturning has less to do with testosterone and more to do with lack of familiarity of how things work and fear. I have seen the testosterone thing in action too. It is usually associated with those who are trying to impress the rest of us with their prowess, but most of the attacking I have seen is directly related to lack of understanding or experience.

Believe it or not, most of the aggressive turning I saw was when I taught pen turning for Woodcraft. I had turned so many of those stinking things I could turn a set of tubes from start to final polish in less than 4 minutes. It was quick, but it was gentle. I was very good, and Woodcraft paid me a lot of money to make it look fun and easy. I sold a lot of lathes and pen turning supplies for the store. I told my students in every single class that they paid me to make it look easy, and that most people, including them, would take a lot longer. I found that the vast majority of people, men, women, and even children, focused more on how fast it could be done rather than the techniques involved. They use to laugh at me as I made a cut on a 2" pen tube using my entire body to make the cut (I guess it could look funny), but while they laughed, they forgot to listen to the importance of doing so. Then, when their turns came, there were all sorts of funny shapes coming off the lathe because they wanted to do it fast and not right. Many people blew up several sets of blanks trying to muscle their way through the job. Once people learned that doing it right led to fast, they changed their attitude, and the progress was amazing.

I don't teach pen turning anymore, but I do teach things like bowls, hollow forms, etc. I still see the same attitude, again in beginners of all sorts. Once they learn proper technique, things get better. However, turning is like any other skill. It needs to be practiced, reinforced, and practiced some more. If bad habits are practiced, then it is bad habits one will see.

A lot of what you describe seems to be focused on stupidity, and we are all stupid at some point. If there was a law against stupidity, we would all be in jail. The questions becomes, do we learn from their mistakes? Even better, do we learn from the mistakes of others? There is a lot of competition in turning, and I know I am about to step on a HUGE landmine here, but there is a lot of stupidity going on in the name of distinguishing one's self from the pack. I have seen some very famous names and some unknown names do some monumentally stupid things, all for the sake of increasing their fame. If some of these people were to do things of this magnitude for an employer, they would be fired for endangering themselves or others. Probably the worst I ever saw was a man who decided he could produce art if he stuck a running chainsaw into a spinning blank of wood. He was looking for a "schtick" to distinguish himself. He moved out of our area, so I do not know if he has managed to kill himself yet.

I have seen women with attitudes too. A number of years ago I watched a famous woman turner at a mini symposium ripping into a huge block of hard, dry wood. I could write her name here and most, if not all, would immediately recognize it. When asked by a man sitting at the demo what safety precautions she took, she literally sneered at him and said, "We're all turners here. You know the risks". Another woman at the same symposium (published author) had an unbelievably unsafe device of her own creation for turning certain types of work. When asked about it, she laughed it off and treated the questioner to a dose of humiliation for his impertinence.

This has become quite long, but I want to say that I don't think aggressive turning is limited to men. I would postulate that you see it more in men because there are so many more men who are turners as opposed to women. The attitude is a product of our culture. People speed, run red lights, yell at the microwave for taking too long, etc, etc, etc. It just bleeds over into a wonderful pastime, and happens in a place where it can maim or kill.

--

Bill Grumbine

commercial site: [www.wonderfulwood.com](http://www.wonderfulwood.com)

personal site: [www.enter.net/~ultradad](http://www.enter.net/~ultradad)

From: [Kevin & Theresa Miller \(atftb@alaska.net\)](mailto:atftb@alaska.net)  
Subject: Re: Aggressive Turners Amaze Me  
Newsgroups: [rec.crafts.woodturning](http://rec.crafts.woodturning)  
Date: 2001-11-19 11:03:03 PST

Message 51 in thread

John Jordan wrote:

> Many of us tend to respond to a problem with brute strength and force, when



> a lighter touch and finesse are what's called for.

Lighter touch and finesse nothing - if they'd just sharpen their gouge once in a while they would accomplish more. If the tools sharp, its like cutting butter. Well, w/most wood anyway. Turned some texas ebony the other day. It was almost as much fun as granite...

...Kevin

Date: 2001-11-20 10:02:13 PST

From: [Tony Manella \(ndd1@prolog.net\)](mailto:ndd1@prolog.net)  
Subject: Re: Aggressive Turners Amaze Me  
Newsgroups: [rec.crafts.woodturning](http://www.woodturning.com)

Ruth,

I am completely offended by your assumption that all of us of the male persuasion are just cavemen in woodturning smocks. Many of us are very sensitive people who grew up with Alan Alda as the leading sex symbol/role model. As a matter of fact I cry every time I watch a Richard Raffan video.

As a matter of fact, last night I turned a 17" bowl on my friend, fingerless Fran's home made bowl lathe powered by a 8hp industrial trash compactor motor. But before I tore into it with my 6" bowl gouge made from an elevator piston, I embraced and kissed the piece of aspen (I've got a picture to prove it). The wood was very comforted by my sensitivity and practically begged me to rip into her with all I had. So I did. After I gingerly roughed the outside in just two passes, I used a Kelton bowl coring system, which I modified by extending the handle to 10' so I could core from the safety of the next room and get more leverage. With taking extreme care, 12 seconds later I had managed to core out a 12" bowl from the 17 incher. After they dry out I will give one more pass on the inside and outside with the 6" gouge and then turn to my floor sander, which is mounted on a rolling stand, with the 12 grit sand paper, to smooth out my tool work. Voila, another beautifully designed work of fine craftsmanship made with compassion, caring and finesse. What more could one ask for? Gotta go just heard about a downed tree and it takes me about 4 hours to convert my car over to a rear axel mounted, 72" chain saw.

Tony Manella

Lehigh Valley Woodturners

(some of the names in this post have been changed to protect the innocent)

[herm@hdv.net](mailto:herm@hdv.net) (Herman de Vries) wrote in message

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Just my 2 cents worth.

Herm [www.hdv.net](http://www.hdv.net)

Kevin

Me son, I could get to like ya. Hope we meet some day. This is a hoot of a thread. Here is a thought for all you sex stereotypers (if that is a word and I do not have the dictionary handy). When I taught weight lifting, the women tended to use less weight and lift better, the men used more and cheated on the lifts. What I looked for was someone who lifted hard and in good form. Now my form has shifted as the chest goes south but I spend far more time on the lathe than on the weights. Yes, it shows. What I look for now is someone who uses good form but is not afraid to remove a reasonable (note the word "reasonable") amount of wood. There is time to rough down a piece with shavings flying and times to finesse a cut with fine surfaces left behind. As my great grandmother would say were she still with us, "there is always time for tea and friends."

God bless and safe turning Darrell Feltmate Truro, NS, Canada