

CHAPTER 16

# Additional Lessons





## Nature

In 1948 a Swiss amateur mountaineer and inventor took his dog for a nature hike. When they returned home both were covered with cockleburs. After he dislodged a few from his pants curiosity got the better of George de Mestral. Running to his microscope to inspect one of the burrs he discovered small hooks that enabled the burr to cling to the tiny loops in the fabric of his pants. Within four years he would finish the design and patent VELCRO®!

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## Business Lesson

Some of the world's most important inventions have been inspired by Mother Nature through a discipline known as biomimicry. According to the Biomimicry Institute, "biomimicry is a new science that studies nature's best ideas and then imitates these designs and processes to solve human problems". Architects, engineers and inventors have been developing manmade imitations of nature's designs since Leonardo de Vinci studied the way birds fly in his attempt to create a flying machine. Modern day examples range from marine engineers who are looking at shark skin for ideas on how to make boats glide through the water more efficiently to researchers at MIT who are copying the water collection system used by a desert beetle. Looking for a break-through idea? Take a hike.