


Church Safety Team

Protecting the Sheep

6: Fear, Physiological Arousal and Performance
The Safety Team Member's Response

Prepared by Bob Soule

STOP **WARNING:** This training series examines the topic of church attacks and preparedness. Graphic Violence from actual incidents is depicted and discussed for informational and educational purposes in some of these presentations. Children should not view this presentation except when allowed by their parent and/or guardian.




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6: Fear, Physiological Arousal and Performance

Fear, Physiological Arousal and Performance

In this presentation, you will learned:

- What courage is.
- What the Bible tells us.
- The physiological responses of your body when exposed to a critical incident.
- What is a critical incident.
- How you can reduce your body's physiological responses.
- About tools to help you prepare to reduce your physiological response in a critical incident.
 - ✓ Mental Rehearsal exercises of critical incidents.
 - ✓ The Tactical Breathing Exercise.
 - ✓ Reality-based training.
- About the Survival Mindset.



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What is the difference between a hero and a coward?


Courage is "the quality of mind or spirit that enables a person to face difficulty, danger, or pain."

"Without courage, all other virtues lose their meaning." -- Sir Winston Churchill

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat." -- Theodore Roosevelt from his speech "[Citizenship in a Republic](#)"

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." -- Joshua 1:9 (NASB95)

"But you, be strong and do not lose courage, for there is reward for your work." -- 2 Chronicles 15:7




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What is a critical incident?

- **Critical incidents** are events outside the normal experience that pose actual or perceived threats of injury or exposure to death that can overwhelm both an individual's and organization's coping resources. Examples of critical incidents may include: Natural disasters. Acts of terrorism. Mass casualty accidents.
- **Critical incident stress** is the serious injury or death of a member of the public while an employee is performing regular duties. The serious injury or death of an employee on or off duty. The suicide or homicide or unexpected death of an employee.
 - This applies to the work place, but now apply these circumstances by replacing the words, member, employee with parent, spouse, child, or friend.


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Conditions White, Yellow, Red, Gray and Black

"On the battlefield, the real enemy is fear, not the bayonet or bullet." -- Robert H. Jackson, Chief U.S. Prosecutor Nuremberg



Condition White is a place where you are helpless, vulnerable. Your alertness and vigilance are at their lowest. This condition is prevalent when you sleep.

- **Condition Yellow** is a basic level of alertness and readiness. A place where you are prepared for combat.
- **Condition Red** is where you are at your optimal survival and combat performance level. Your fine motor skills begin to deteriorate. (i.e. Using your slide release on your pistol is a fine motor skill.)
- **Condition Gray** is the upper realm in which those who train can be operate in and perform as trained through reality based training, stress inoculation. Complex motor skills such as walking, begin to breakdown.
- **Condition Black** is where your cognitive processing deteriorates. Your forebrain shuts down and the midbrain takes over (this is a 'log's brain). You stop thinking.

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Resource in Notes Package

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Fear, Physiological Arousal and Performance


An Example of Condition Black - Overwhelmed Stress Response

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What your Body will do in Response to Fear Induced Stress


- **Vasoconstriction** happens with stress. Low levels of stress shut down the little capillaries, causing some loss of fine-motor control.
 - As vasoconstrictions becomes more intense, the blood flow to the complex motor muscles begins to shut down. The blood pools in the body core and large muscle groups, and your blood pressure will skyrocket.
 - The outer layer of your body becomes almost a layer of armor as long as an artery is not hit.
 - You can take extensive damage without much blood loss.
 - This appears to be a survival mechanism intended to limit blood loss in a combat situation.
 - The price paid is a loss of motor control, because as the muscles stop getting blood, they stop working.
- As the body becomes increasingly stressed and moves into Condition Black:
 - ✓ It is common to lose peripheral vision.
 - ✓ The more intense the fear response is, the more narrow your field of vision becomes.
 - ✓ There is a loss of depth perception, meaning a threat will look closer than it really is.
 - ✓ A loss of near vision, meaning you have trouble seeing close things, like maybe your pistol sights.³

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What your Body will do in Response to Fear Induced Stress

- **Loss of Near Vision and Pistol Marksmanship.**
 - In a heart pounding event, with the loss of your fine-motor control and near vision makes it mandatory that you drill on these skills that seem simple when you are calm and collected.
 - ✓ You can limit the impact by preparing mentally and physically ahead of time.
 - ✓ Be aware that under extreme stress, you might not be able to see your pistol sights.
 - ✓ If you have time, try to use the Combat Tactical Breathing exercise and bring yourself down into a condition red.
 - ✦ The Combat Tactical Breathing Exercise will be introduced in the next slide.
- **Perceptual Distortions in Combat. NJ Klinger Study (2002)**
 - 85% Diminished Sound (Auditory Exclusion).
 - 16% Intense Sounds.
 - 80% Tunnel Vision.
 - 74% Automatic Pilot. ("Scared Speechless.").
 - 72% Heightened Visual Clarity.
 - 7% Temporary Paralysis.
 - 51% Memory Loss for Parts of the Event.
 - 47% Memory Loss for Some of Their Actions.
 - 22 % Memory Distortion.
 - 16% Fast Motion.


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Combat Tactical Breathing Exercise

This technique, known as combat or tactical breathing, is an excellent way to reduce your stress and calm down. This breathing strategy has been used by first responders, the military and athletes to focus, gain control and manage stress. In addition, it appears to help control worry and nervousness. Relax yourself by taking 3 to 5 breaths as described below.

- **Visualize each number as you count.**
 - Breathe in counting 1, 2, 3, 4.
 - Stop and hold your breath counting 1, 2, 3, 4.
 - Exhale counting 1, 2, 3, 4.
 - Repeat the breathing.
 - Breathe in counting 1, 2, 3, 4.
 - Pause and hold your breathe counting 1, 2, 3, 4.
 - Exhale counting 1, 2, 3, 4.


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Combat Tactical Breathing Exercise Continued

This video demonstrates the Tactical Breathing Exercise which is accessible at this link: <https://mobile.health.mil/tactical-breather>.

Tactical Breathing Trainer
Located at:
<https://mobile.health.mil/tactical-breather>

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Stress and Response Performance

- Learning the psychological techniques to manage stress not only reduces discomfort, but can enhance performance. Asken and Grossman (2010, p. 51)

Managing Arousal, Stress and Fear

Individuals who are experienced with a given set of skills show a different pattern of arousal from those who are less experienced with the same set. Asken and Grossman (2010, p. 91)


- Tactical Performance Imagery** is the use of your imagination to improve specific skills with your pistol relative to potential scenarios you could be faced with as part of the Safety Team.
 - Consider it as mental rehearsal of skills or potential scenarios. Asken and Grossman (2010, p. 151)
 - What does it take to be successful?
 - Belief and commitment. Visualize yourself completing the various training events, and scenarios properly and successfully.
 - Skill Improvement Exercises.
 - Imagery is used to complement and enhance physical skills, such as your handgun use, close quarter combat, and interactional skills.
 - It is useful for skills that are sequenced such as room clearing during an active murderer incident.

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Managing Arousal, Stress and Fear Continued


- Tactical Performance Imagery Continued**
 - Skill Maintenance.
 - Imagery is used to keep skills fresh.
 - Use it as a countermeasure for those skills that deteriorates without use.
 - Confidence Enhancement.
 - Enhanced confidence is often the result of effective mental preparation.
 - It can improved more directly by imaging needed emotional responses.
 - It can affect anxiety, motivation and feeling of effectiveness.
 - Maximizing the Effectiveness of Imagery.
 - Image in all senses.
 - Use the best perspective.
 - In a first person perspective, you image what you actually experience during the response.
 - In a third person perspective, you image as if watching a videotape, being outside yourself.
 - Image Correct Responses.
 - Imagery should be on process rather than outcome.
 - Image performing the skills and plan flawlessly.
 - Image in Real Time.
 - Begin the image of a skill in slow motion.
 - Image the skill or process in real time for best effect.

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Managing Arousal, Stress and Fear Continued

- **Tactical Performance Imagery Continued**
 - Maximizing the Effectiveness of Imagery Continued.
 - ✓ Practice and Image Problems and Success.
 - ❖ It is useful and important to image difficult or even negative situations, such as:
 - An Assailant pointing a gun at you.
 - Your pistol inducing a malfunction.
 - The assailant being in a location not anticipated.
 - One of the team members being injured.

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Managing Arousal, Stress and Fear Continued


- **Positive Self-Talk** is a powerful process that affects your behavior and a powerful tool to maximize your performance.
 - Focus your Self-Talk during a Mission on:
 - ✓ Tactical "task-relevant instructional" self-talk.
 - ❖ Your thoughts are focused on the challenge at hand.
- **Reality-Based Training** is an excellent approach to gaining experience and exposure to various types of missions.
 - Repeated training can help dampen arousal and strengthen emotional control. Asken and Grossman (2010, p. 92)
 - When it comes to inoculating warriors against stress, training such as reality-based scenarios (and experience) are unsurpassed. Asken and Grossman (2010, p. 93)
 - This training method will be introduced more thoroughly in the next presentation.

18 Rules of Positive Self-Talk

- Self-talk should be positive and encouraging.
- Self-talk should be specific and instructional.
- Self-talk should be repeated.
- Self-talk should be focused on the task at hand.
- Self-talk should be used to overcome self-doubt.
- Self-talk should be used to overcome fear.
- Self-talk should be used to overcome fatigue.
- Self-talk should be used to overcome pain.
- Self-talk should be used to overcome adversity.
- Self-talk should be used to overcome setbacks.
- Self-talk should be used to overcome obstacles.
- Self-talk should be used to overcome challenges.
- Self-talk should be used to overcome difficulties.
- Self-talk should be used to overcome problems.
- Self-talk should be used to overcome setbacks.
- Self-talk should be used to overcome obstacles.
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- Self-talk should be used to overcome problems.

By: Mike Sitt

Resource in Note Package


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The Survival Mindset

Identifying the psychological variables associated with a true survival mindset center around confidence in personal ability, personal values on life, belief in the mission, and your faith system. When in proper perspective, these values and beliefs create a mindset which controls survival stress, allowing the warrior to focus on the mission without distraction and respond without hesitation. Sidle (2008, p. 136)

- **Confidence.**
 - Maintaining a personal discipline to train without encouragement and without extra compensation.
- **Value of Life.**
 - When an individual chooses a profession where the potential to take another life is present, they voluntarily accept the responsibility to take a life to protect another or themselves.
 - "Sometimes good people have to kill bad people to protect other good people." Sidle (2008, p. 137)
- **Belief in the Mission.**
 - There are great risks in the taking of another life.
 - This is the arena a warrior voluntarily enters.
 - Today's warrior willingly enters this arena to serve and to protect.
 - The mission must make sense in the belief system of the warrior.

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The Survival Mindset Continued

- **Faith System.**
 - The promise of death is a bridge which all living beings must cross.
 - The personal peace which comes with having a strong faith system keeps the warrior's mind off the implication of death, reduces the additional stress (elevated heart rates), and allows them to focus their attention on the threat.
 - There is peace of mind resulting from a strong faith system.
 - ✓ This peace of mind:
 - ✦ Lowers the heart rate, allowing enhanced perceptual and mental processing.
 - ✦ Provides the ability for enhanced discretion and target selection.
 - ✦ The ability to complete more complex tasks.
 - A strong faith system minimizes the fear of dying.

"for the LORD your God is the one who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you." -- New American Standard Bible: 1995 update (Deu 20:4). (1995). The Lockman Foundation.

"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. -- New American Standard Bible: 1995 update (Heb 11:1). (1995). The Lockman Foundation.


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The Survival Mindset Continued

The Eight Principles of Personal Defense – In the words of Colonel Jeff Cooper

1. **Alertness.** "A commander may be forgiven for being defeated, but never for being surprised."
2. **Decisiveness.** "When it becomes evident that you are faced with a violent assault, your life depends on you selecting a correct course of action and carrying it through without hesitation or deviation."
3. **Aggressiveness.** "The best personal defense is an explosive counterattack."
4. **Speed.** "On the very instant that we know our assailant intends us serious harm, we must work just as fast as we can."
5. **Coolness.** "You must keep your head. If you lose your cool under attack, you will probably not survive to make excuses."
6. **Precision.** "If you are fortunate enough to have access to any sort of firearm when under attack remember that it is only as good as your ability to keep cool and shoot carefully."
7. **Ruthlessness.** "If you find yourself under attack, don't be kind. Be harsh, be tough, be ruthless."
8. **Surprise.** "By doing what our assailant least expects us to do, we may throw him completely off."



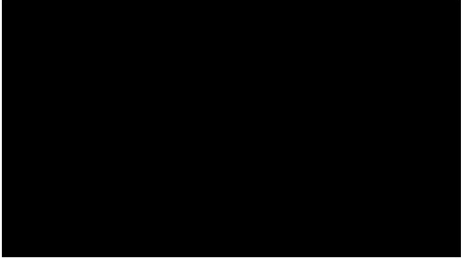

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The Survival Mindset Continued

- North Braddock, PA Church Attack – May 5, 2024




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6: Fear, Physiological Arousal and Performance The Safety Team Member's Response

8/6/2024

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- What is a critical incident.
- How you can reduce your body's physiological responses.
- About tools to help you prepare to reduce your physiological response in a critical incident.
 - ✓ Mental Rehearsal exercises of critical incidents.
 - ✓ The Tactical Breathing Exercise.
 - ✓ Reality-based training.
- About the Survival Mindset.

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Questions?

Should you have any questions, you may contact me at:

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Bob Soule

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The next training series presentation is:

7: Introduction to Reality-Based Training Part 1

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Heart Rate

Beats Per Minute

Above 175 BPM:

- Irrational fight or flee
- Freezing
- Submissive Behavior
- Voiding of bladder and bowels.
- Gross motor skills (Running, charging at high performance levels)

175 BPM:

- Cognitive processing deteriorates
- Vasoconstriction = Reduced bleeding from wounds.
- Loss of peripheral vision (Tunnel Vision).
- Loss of depth perception.
- Loss of near vision.
- Auditory exclusion.

Condition

Black

Condition

Gray

Condition

Red

Condition

Yellow

Condition

White

115 to 145 BPM = Optimal survival and combat Performance level for:

- Complex Motor Skills
- Visual Reaction Time
- Cognitive Reaction Time

145 BPM: Complex motor skills deteriorate.

115 BPM: Fine motor skills deteriorate.

60-80 BPM = Normal Resting heart rate.

220

200

180

160

140

120

100

80

**EFFECTS OF HORMONAL OR FEAR
INDUCED HEART RATE INCREASE**

12 Points of Positive Self-Talk

I will understand stress and control it during critical incidents.

I will seek out realistic training and am committed to learning my craft.

I will learn from my mistakes and the mistakes of others.

I will know that more people are killed in and around their vehicle than by gunfire.

I will wear my seatbelt at all times.

I will be well versed in body language, pre-attack indicators and deception.

I will adapt, improvise and overcome any adversary.

I will assume nothing and adhere to the one plus one rule.

I will use appropriate force when necessary.

I will be committed to maintaining balance and emotional health.

I will keep myself in physical shape.

I will survive this role as a protector.

Be the 5%