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The Full Slate



November 2010 President's Message

By: Sergeant Roger Buhlis
PSPBL President

It's hard to know where to begin a President's message sometimes. As I write this in preparation for our first publication of the *Full Slate* in almost a year, I've become a bit overwhelmed and it wouldn't be difficult to launch into a stream of consciousness composition. So to avoid that let me recap the past year and provide an update to get you caught up.

In this past year Greg and Gerry have presented the 2-week PBL course in both North America and Australia, thereby opening the doors to PSPBL to instructors on two continents. We were excited to have two Australian PBL'ers attend and present at the 2010 PSPBL Conference in Virginia Beach last September. Gerard O'Connor and Brad Edlington were a delightful addition to the conference and they were certainly deserving of an award for "longest distance traveled."

This brings me to the 2010 Annual Conference, hosted by the Virginia Beach Police Department. The conference was coordinated by Sgt Daryl Plude and Master Officer Ron Tomnich and the Virginia Beach PD staff. Special thanks also go to PSPBL Vice President Josh Kyle for his work in managing and coordinating the conference preparations.

Conference attendees found Virginia Beach to be a wonderful and welcoming location. The schedule was relaxed but worthwhile with sessions designed for those who were new to PBL, those who were PBL and PTO veterans. We had a variety of breakouts, including discussion groups, presentations, a panel discussion, Dr Steven Hundersmaerck as our Keynote Speaker, and (of course) problem-based learning. An interesting twist on this conference was that neither Greg nor Gerry could attend. At the conclusion of the conference we felt we had truly "arrived" and that they had finally kicked their birds from the nest – we demonstrated we were able to fly on our own. What a great sense of accomplishment after the years of development and mentoring by Greg and Gerry!

At the Annual General Membership meeting we acknowledged the work of last year's Board of Directors and extended "thanks" to them for their work. Scotty Saltsman, Cheryl Lambert, Greg Williams, Alice Leffler, Andy Simmons, and John Lyons – Thanks!

I didn't mention Josh Kyle or myself in the previous paragraph because we were re-elected to the Board as 1st Vice President and President, respectively. Josh and I presented to the meeting attendees that we would like to continue in our roles. Josh expressed his interest in moving the Level IV certification process forward. I explained that I felt I was still trying to get my legs under me and develop my role as a leader. And for these reasons, the members present nominated us and voted for our return. We are very grateful for that and (I know I can speak for Josh here) we are honored to serve PSPBL in our roles. We hope we can live up to your expectations.

The first order of business was to fill the remainder of the Board positions. I suggested that I would like the duty of the 2nd Vice President to be the coordination and organization of the 2011 Annual Conference. Richard (Rick) Ross of the Durham Regional Police Services was nominated and elected to the position of 2nd VP.

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November 2010 President's Message (cont.)

Because the *Full Slate* is an important newsletter for our organization, and because Gerry's schedule no longer makes it practical to continue as our editor, I suggested that the Secretary position should be a good place for this responsibility to land. Dave Sorenson of the Virginia Beach PD was nominated and elected to the position of Secretary. We have Dave to thank for this (and future) issue(s) of the *Full Slate*.

Michele Wyatt of the Virginia Beach PD and Nick Schneider of the Durham, North Carolina PD were elected as Members at Large. More on this in a moment,

One of the suggestions made at the AGM was to seek a private bookkeeper or accounting firm to manage the PSPBL funds instead of having a single Treasurer position. We discussed this for a time as part of the ill-structured problem of managing an international non-profit in a "local" sense. I'm currently discussing this prospect with a few firms as we discussed at the AGM.

Now back to the Members at Large. One of the tasks I feel is important – as presented at the AGM – is to identify and re-engage all the potential members and agencies we've worked so hard over the years to develop. We've cultivated a number of relationships with agencies, academies, universities, and individuals, but we've lost touch with them. One of the primary tasks of Michele and Nick will be to try to "gather our flock" again, to re-connect with people who have been PBL or PTO trained, and to re-establish their relationship with PSPBL.

Nick began his job before the conference was concluded by creating a PSPBL Facebook page. Gerry said the people our age (his and mine, anyway) are technological immigrants, while the younger folk are technological natives. How true! Please find us on Facebook and re-connect with us.

Speaking of technology, our website is in dire need of work. We have grand plans for the site and we consider it an absolute necessity as a repository for resource information, a reliable source for PSPBL news, and a place for members to generate and share ideas. We know we have outgrown our current site and it needs work. I've committed to take on this project during the year and improve the site dramatically. Stay tuned.

Which leaves only Josh. Ah...Josh... I kid, because Josh is such a good leader and has been so supportive throughout the past year. He did an excellent job leading the conference organization and he's so humble and self-deprecating. Who can't love Josh? Josh has asked to facilitate the Level IV certification process for those who are ready to move forward from Level III. He began by developing a structure for the work and he's currently fine-tuning it. He presented his framework at the AGM, began organizing the pilot group, and he's steeling himself for the work ahead.

And there's plenty of work ahead....between publishing the *Full Slate*, identifying and organizing our members and membership drive, re-working the website, coordinating the 2011 Annual Conference, not to mention continuing to improve the quality of police training globally through problem-based learning, yes, there's plenty of work to be done. If you are willing to contribute in some way please contact me or one of the Board members. As we've learned through community policing, we cannot do this work alone or in isolation – collaboration is the key. You are the key.

Finally, at the AGM we heard a proposal from Wayne Jacobsen for the 2011 Annual Conference to be hosted by Brandon Police Services in Manitoba, Canada in conjunction with CAPE (Canadian Association of Police Educators). After a call for other proposals the Board approved the proposal. Because of the "crisp" Canadian weather in the fall, the 2011 conference will be held in May. Watch the website for details and registration information.



Revisiting PTO Program Structure

By: Cpl. Nicholas Schneider
Police Training Coordinator, Durham Police Department

The Durham Police Department (NC) transitioned from the Field Training Officer Program to the Police Training Officer Program in early 2009. We had been using the FTO Program for decades- as with many other agencies, our transition wasn't the smoothest. We decided to completely separate from FTO and start fresh. No FTOs were grandfathered in. All officers interested in training had to re-apply to become PTOs. The new requirements for PTO were much more difficult than that of the FTO Program. More time on the street, an application process, a clean Profession Standards record, and a review board were some of the hurdles faced by interested applicants. Even so, the issues we experienced were minimal considering the challenge we faced. Our first class under the PTO Program began in July 2009.

For the freshmen class of Trainee Officers, I elected to run the PTO Program by the book with only a couple of notable exceptions. First and foremost, Trainee Officers switched to another geographical Police District and another PTO upon successful completion of their Mid-Term Evaluation.

The other change I made was to assign the Neighborhood Portfolio Exercise after the Trainee Officers' successful completion of their Final Evaluation. (We utilize a twelve week Independent Phase of training for Trainee Officers newly released on their own. It is more of a mentoring/monitoring phase to facilitate the transition from riding with a PTO to being on their own.) Typically, the newly released Trainee Officers are assigned to their permanent duty assignment, often in another geographical district, once released to their Independent Phase. I decided that the NPE would be an excellent way to get the Trainees up to speed quickly and make important community contacts in the process.

We encountered many growing pains- issues with Journaling, proper use of the Coaching and Training Reports, proper completion of the Problem-Based Learning Exercises, etc. Certainly normal considering the stage of transition we were in- and I expect from a managerial/coordinator standpoint to see these issues arise from time to time for the duration. In an attempt to help further our learning and failing forward process, I held a PTO Retreat for all my PTOs at the end of the class. I wanted to thank them for all their hard work (We had a huge spread catered for them), and I also wanted to thoroughly debrief the preceding months. Three simple questions were asked: What did we do well? What didn't we do so well? What do we need to do to improve? (Do these questions look familiar?) All were very pleased with the end product of the PTO Program. In our PTO training courses, we had all been told that the program produced a Trainee that was able to perform as well as a two or three year veteran officer in field craft and critical thinking ability. We were seeing it firsthand! The PTOs were not exactly thrilled with the amount of writing they found themselves doing, but they all saw the importance and value of it. They seemed very pleased with themselves and what they had accomplished. I think that even more surprising to them was the amount of personal development they had experienced for themselves. The need for them to step out of their own comfort zones and become mentors, coaches, and instructors rather than the static evaluators they were accustomed to in the FTO Program helped develop leadership skills they weren't expecting. It was and is very exciting to see the change in them and how they continue to grow.

There were three major concerns voiced. The first concern was the number and "meat" of the fifteen Core Competencies. The PTOs felt that a number of them were redundant. We discussed each of the fifteen and how they related to our Learning Matrices. We elected to consolidate some of them and ended up with twelve Core Policing Competencies. The "new" twelve are: Police Vehicle Operations, Report Writing, Conflict Resolution and Problem-Solving Skills, Officer Safety, Use of Force, Leadership, Legal Authority, Communication Skills, Ethics, Local Procedures/Polices/Philosophies, Community-related Issues (Cultural Diversity & Special Needs), and Lifestyle Stressors.



"Don't be afraid to adjust, to change, to tweak, to perfect. Keep in mind the spirit and philosophy of the PTO Program- don't change anything at their expense and your department will be the better for it."



Revisiting PTO Program Structure (cont.)

The second major concern was with the Mid-Term and Final Evaluation weeks. According to the COPS original version, the Mid-Term Evaluation and the Final Evaluation were each one week long. Our PTOs stated bluntly that one week was not nearly enough time to appropriately evaluate a Trainee. They stated, "Anyone can behave and do right for a week..." Clearly, if completed properly, CTRs and PBLEs will show deficiencies and problems. Even so, the importance of the Mid-Term and Final Evaluations cannot be minimized. We discussed the issue, along with the positive and negative ramifications of any changes.

My PTOs proposed extending the Mid-Term and Final Evaluations by one week each. They argued that they felt that two weeks per evaluation was adequate to form a better educated opinion of the Trainees' level of competence. Looking at the big picture, this change could be hard to swallow. It would add two full weeks to the program. Translated for Command Staff: It would be two more weeks before we can put *that* body in *that* police car to answer *those* calls. Even so, with longer to evaluate the Trainee, it stands to reason that the PTO is able to observe the Trainee in a greater variety of calls for service and self-initiated activity. With this greater variety of activity, the Evaluator is able to get a better feel for how the Trainee is likely to act across the board.

In Durham's case, our Officers have rotating shifts. During two weeks, our Evaluators are able to view the Trainees during day shifts and night shifts. Clearly the types of calls vary from shift to shift. With a longer evaluation period, the Trainee has a greater opportunity to run the gamut of police service. Furthermore, everyone has a bad day occasionally. That one bad day is much more substantial if the Trainee has only a week to demonstrate what they've learned. If the Trainees' bad day is truly just that, they have longer to show that it was indeed only a bad day- not an overall, accurate representation of their competence and ability.

The third major concern was the PTOs felt that the third and fourth Phases, Patrol Activities Phase and Criminal Investigations Phase, respectively were out of order. They felt that the Criminal Investigations Phase should be the third Phase while the Patrol Activities Phase should be the last Phase. Their argument was that the first three Phases were the meat and potatoes of police work. Clearly, Patrol Activities are a pretty important part, too! Even so, the majority of law enforcement activity centers on Non-Emergency Incident Responses, Emergency Incident Responses, and Criminal Investigations. They stated that the Patrol Activities Phase should be an opportunity for the Trainee to demonstrate what they've learned and think more independently. Of course, this is not in lieu of the continued training, coaching and mentoring by the PTO. I agreed completely with their proposal.

My Captain (Training Division Commander) attended the PTO retreat with us and was present during all of the discussion. He and I discussed the PTOs' concerns and suggestions. We agreed with each point and implemented three changes starting with the next class of Trainees: The fifteen Core Competencies were condensed to twelve; Patrol Activities Phase became Phase D with Criminal Investigations Phase becoming Phase C, and the Evaluations becoming two weeks each. The first two changes have worked out very well. The evaluation extension has been an *overwhelming* success. Our Evaluators are able to provide a much better and accurate assessment of the Trainees' abilities.

While the primary goal of training is to teach a Trainee how to apply what they've learned, one should not forget that another necessary evil is the ability to separate a Trainee from the Program if needed. We certainly do not have the resources to retain a Trainee indefinitely if they aren't demonstrating competency. The rub is how to determine if the problem lies with the Trainee or with the PTO. Having a longer evaluation period assists the Evaluator in trying to determine the root of the problem. It provides more material and evidence for the Board of Evaluators to discuss prior to deciding on an action plan- or termination. As the Police Training Coordinator, I think that the added evaluation time helps to support the decisions of my office. It also has served very well to increase the trust of the Administrative Staff/Command Staff. They are able to see definitively that no decision regarding action plans or termination is taken lightly by me or the Board.

I am not an advocate of making sweeping changes in the PTO Program. The Program works. What about the old adage of "If it ain't broke, don't fix it?" The key is to have the latitude and support to change something, evaluate it, and tweak it. If things worked better before the change, change it back. It is that simple. Remember the Ideas step of Problem-Based Learning- workable, effective, cutting-edge solutions come from the most unlikely of ideas. Don't be afraid to adjust, to change, to tweak, to perfect. Keep in mind the spirit and philosophy of the PTO Program- don't change anything at their expense and your department will be the better for it.

What I Wish I Had Known When I Joined Policing

By: Gerard G. Cleveland – JD., MA., B.Ed.

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When I was a young man in my twenties, I was a police officer in Toronto. It was then, and it is now, a major city metropolis with millions of residents. We had approximately 5,500 sworn officers and several thousand civilian staff. When I graduated from the Ontario police college, I knew that I had the education, technical skills, and firearm training to get out on the streets in a busy area and do my job safely. What I didn't know then, but I do know now, is that in all important aspects of "the job" I was completely unprepared for policing.

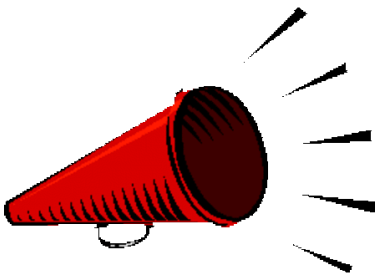


I loved my job working the beats in the downtown area. I would tell family and friends, "*I cannot believe I am being paid to go out and have this much fun.*" This was the late 1970s and over the next decade I saw policing change significantly. I convinced myself it had changed for the worse. I was wrong. The job had indeed changed, but many of my colleagues, like me, were simply unprepared to deal with the changes. After ten years, I went looking for challenges elsewhere while others worked up the policing hierarchy enjoying the job and doing well. A third group stayed, but they were generally unhappy and disillusioned with what 'the job' had become for them.

At the time, I convinced myself that we were a band of *brothers* (there were fewer *sisters* back then) and we were holding the line against anyone and anything that wanted to harm the rest of our community. That world view may be naive as 2010 draws to a conclusion, but I believe my motives for joining are surprisingly similar to the motives of most police officers joining policing today. I believed that protecting *the* vulnerable in the community was an exercise in *persuasion*, *presence* and finally, *force* if necessary.

What I now believe

Fast forward thirty years and I know that I was wrong in those beliefs about protecting the community. I was inexperienced and untrained. I entered policing completely unprepared for what really mattered in policing. I don't mean I was untrained in the traditional schooling of policing - in fact, I thought I was 'good to go' given that I had placed first in my graduating class of 120 or so police officers. No, what I am talking about is the emotional preparation to deal with the job. I was completely unprepared for the stressors, the interpersonal squabbling, the internecine power-plays and the strange miasma that hung over some platoons. Academy staff told me to expect to witness unbearable actions in my career, but I thought they were referring to what went on OUTSIDE the station. In my six months of training and my eighteen months of probation, I received no more than two hours of training on how to deal with my home life, any anger issues that may arise, ethical issues (other than the obligatory class on what to do if someone offers you a bribe) and dysfunction in the community, within our ranks and my own personal dysfunction in response to so much disorder.



Emotional Support

How is it possible that I did NOT receive any training for this most critical aspect of the job? We all know police officers are more likely to die from stress related diseases, suffer disability from mental illness or become angry and frustrated and leave – or worse, become angry and frustrated and STAY! And yet, police executives provided almost no training to deal with these exigencies inherent in policing. Even today that is largely true. I work with training agencies across the world and Emotional Intelligence training for INTERNAL issues rarely finds its way into the modern academy.

What I Wish I Had Known When I Joined Policing (cont.)

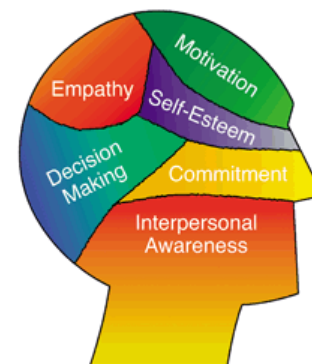
When I became a teacher, a principal and later a lawyer, all of those professions prepared me in a much more comprehensive way for what I would encounter emotionally while I was doing those jobs. Mentoring, education programs and job shadowing were just a few of the techniques those professions employed. In policing, the career where I most needed that training, I was badly let down by the programs of the day.

Please do not mistake my intentions in this article. I don't blame the trainers. They didn't know any better. They didn't know about PTSD, depression, the impact of policing on family life, or about stress, negativity and workplace bullying. But we know so much more now and yet, sadly our training has not changed significantly in three decades to help new police officers deal with those on-the-job issues.

What can we do?

My proposal is that every academy develops and implements a full program on the following subjects. They are, after all, what makes a police officer successful or, alternatively, cause him or her serious career grief:

1. **Self regulation**, including dealing with one's own emotions, such as anger and frustration on the job and at home;
2. **Relationship management** – yes, we should continue to teach them how to work with the community, but we **MUST** offer our recruits and our experienced officers (especially senior officers!) programs on how to deal with INTERNAL police issues. Every single one of us who is working, or who has worked in policing understands the negative effects of the internal police dynamic in every station, every city and every country. I call it the *Joy Vacuum* effect. We can deal with the nonsense on the street, but it's what happens in the station houses and with peers and supervisors, where we are woefully unprepared. I would be willing to bet that if we ask employees who left the job their reasons for quitting, a significant number would indicate that is was the toxic "affective" environment that drove them away.¹
3. **Social awareness** – Kipling said we should be able to *walk with kings, nor lose the common touch*. Teaching police officers, especially recruits how to fit into various social circumstances – including work, home, and social environments - will benefit all Chief executives running police agencies. Fewer complaints, fewer dismissals, fewer sick days and more job satisfaction are what we get from such a program. How have we not undertaken this sort of training yet?
4. **Self motivation**: Career planning, reasons for being a police officer, staying enthusiastic are just a few areas for both recruit and in-service training sessions. How often do we see the two and three year burn outs? If we prepare our staff in policing for this condition, they can help themselves to avoid cynicism – the traditional *last refuge of the idealist*.



What next for Policing

At present, I am working with a Doctor, Sarah Giles MD, who has discovered that after 17 years of schooling, many doctors begin their career and suddenly realize that this life path that they have worked so hard to attain is nothing like what they imagined. Much the same happens with lawyers. They spend years at school, only to find out that what "they thought was not what they got!" Both those professional groups often become disillusioned, distant and unhappy. But they get used to those negative feelings and they will not, or cannot, change their lives.

¹ For example see the UK example of police internal bullying at <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/profiles/detective-on-the-run-i-quit-the-police-force-over-bullying-and-violence-970885.html>

What I Wish I Had Known When I Joined Policing (cont.)

Much the same happens with police officers. They come into the profession roaring like a lion. Too many leave cynical and jaded. I am on a web circle with a large group of police officers, some of whom I worked with many years ago. What is strange is how negative they are about the world. This is because no one has provided them with career long training to deflect that joy-killing cynicism. I often read those emails and I wonder what happened to that youngster who thought that policing was a terrific way to contribute to the community.

In medical circles, Sarah and I are working towards refocusing those practitioners on what they once believed to be a just and noble purpose. Often, the doctors/lawyers/police officers lose their way after only a few years. If they leave, we lose a substantial investment. If they stay, emotionally unfit for duty, we lose even more.

After 35 years of working closely with police officers in many countries, I see an unacceptable disconnect between what police officers want emotionally when they join (purpose/to matter to others/ to be respected for helping) and what they end up obtaining after years of service. I believe that Emotional Intelligence training will bridge those distances, bringing the enthusiastic rookie back into to the grumpy, grizzled veteran.

Final Thoughts

People who work in police training have the opportunity to change the policing field. If we can prepare even a small percentage of those young minds who are joining policing and provide them with the emotional shields to protect themselves, more will stay in the job. We will have earned our pay. Many of them want to leave because they are frustrated and 'defeated' by a bureaucracy that has little to do with purpose and achieving their potential. We have to teach them to deal with that reality both cognitively and emotionally.

I wish I knew back in 1975 when I joined as a cadet what I know now. It's too late for me, but maybe somewhere in your agency, a young officer won't have to leave in five or ten years because no one told him or her what to expect or how to prepare for it emotionally. I hope you are the chief or the academy instructor who *fixes* the problem before your new employee has to confront it.

The well adjusted, engaged and self-reliant officer of the future depends upon us trying our best today to arm future employees with effective emotional skills for dealing with tomorrow's challenges.

Best wishes to all for a happy and safe 2011.

Kind regards



The Wake-Up Mind

By: Gregory Saville
Co-Chair - PSPBL

In the film Star Wars, the ancient master Yoda turns to novice Luke Skywalker and says: “All his life has he looked away... to the future, to the horizon. Never his mind on where he was.” In real life this is the problem of random thoughts and inattention to the present moment.

The Police Problem Based Learning certification program teaches new instructors how to become fully aware of their classrooms and their students. That means they must shed any bad habits regarding their own teaching obsessions – the obsession to be in front of a group, the obsession to tell endless war stories, the obsession to hear their own voices. We ask our instructors to pay attention to what is actually going on in the class at the time of the class and to what they are doing at the present moment.

It is the same for other moments in life whether you are a police officer, a parent, a bank teller, a student or a teacher. Clear-headed awareness and attention to the present moment is not as easy as it sounds.

This is the notion of the *wake-up mind*. In different circles it has different names; mindfulness, being in the zone, self-awareness, and many others. The wake-up mind is a state of being fully aware in the present moment. Though it sounds like the easiest thing to do, in fact it is among the most difficult. You cannot just *get* there and it is highly unlikely you are there most of the time, unless you have years of meditative practice behind you.

Why is it necessary?

The wake-up mind is the state of awareness in which we finally tame the flood of random thoughts that occupy most of our daily lives. Our mind creates thoughts of all kinds. That is its job. However, those thoughts don't always contribute to our best performance or excellence in our lives. Those thoughts often distract us from what is going on in the here and now.

One example of how this flood of thoughts creates a state of mind is what police officers call “tunnel vision” during a police chase. A police chase is a stressful and dangerous situation. It is necessary to fully concentrate on a number of things at the same time, often at a very high rate of speed – radio communication, vehicle control, observing the suspect vehicle, surrounding road conditions, weather, and so forth. This causes the officer to narrow his or her attention onto the vehicle being chased at the sacrifice of peripheral vision, what is called tunnel vision. It is rarely a choice. Usually it is a result of stress and adrenaline.

Some officers think tunnel vision helps them better see the road ahead during an emergency, but in fact it detracts them from the ability to perceive what else is around in those emergencies – and this can put lives at risk.

There are those who believe they already have perfectly calm minds and, in a tiny number of cases, that might actually be the case. But it is the rarest of person who has that innate skill. It is much more likely that person is simply unaware they are unaware. Ask that “aware” person to take 10 minutes undisturbed, sit still in a calm state and try not to get dragged away by the sound of the air conditioner, the room fan, an itch that crops up, phone calls yet to make, family matters, or other thoughts. It is the *dragging away* aspect of those thoughts that proves there really is no wake-up mind. It must be intentionally cultivated.

How do random thoughts trap us?

The flood of random thoughts in our daily lives distracts us from the task at hand.

We get momentarily dragged away from what we are doing by this thought or that thought. When we take the time to carefully examine this flood of thoughts we realize that we cannot remember all the random thoughts that occupy so much of our time.

It has been said the brain is a reflex organ that simply responds to every bodily stimulus. The brain is, after all, a normal biological part of being human. We cannot really shut it off unless we suffer a brain injury or fall into a coma. Nor should we shut it off. That is not really the intent of the *wake-up mind*.

The Wake-Up Mind (cont.)

Our normal workaday routine – living every day only occasionally aware of our present moment, continually distracted by a flood of random thoughts – **that** is the real mindlessness. Our goal in wake-up mind is the exact opposite: to wake the mind up to the presence of this flood of random thoughts; to see how we continually trap ourselves in them, and; to do something about it. That is why the wake-up mind is called mindfulness, not mindlessness.

The good news is that our mind provides us with the opportunity to choose what we respond to and what we do not. The bad news is that it won't just happen. It takes practice.

How does the wake-up mind help us?

In his book *Wise Mind, Open Mind*, UCLA professor and psychotherapist Ronald Alexander says, *“Mindfulness results in more focused and heightened concentration allowing you to note the themes unfolding in your mind and body moment by moment, rather than become immersed in the content of your thoughts, feelings, and sensations. You actually become aware that you have two selves, the self that’s having the experience and the self that is witnessing it and is separate from it.”*

As meditative competence increases you begin to realize that every one of the incoming thoughts is not necessarily worth spending that much time contemplating. In fact, few are. Yet they represent an enormous amount of mental energy in our lives. Obviously immediate thoughts relating to emergencies, such as pulling your hand away from an open flame, are thoughts you will not ignore. Then again, when you think back to times you responded in the most effective and best intuitive fashion to emergencies you were probably reacting from an intuitive, woken-up mind state. Athletes call this “the zone”. Even here the wake-up mind operates more effectively.

The wake-up mind also provides you with a kind of mental clarity allowing you to see exactly what is going on at a particular moment, especially what is going on with *you*. How are you feeling at this moment? Is that feeling impinging your ability to see others clearly? Are you correctly assessing others, their intentions, their feelings, and their actions? Are you reacting to this situation authentically, or are you trapped by some emotional trigger?

Resistance to the wake-up mind

There are many reasons why some resist learning more about awareness practice and dedicating a small part of each day to cultivate it. In the police world these reasons are legion. They are what Alexander calls the *payoffs*.

The payoff game begins with resistance to new ideas or resistance to any change. This is rooted in fear. Most people see change as confusing and mysterious. Especially in some jobs, like policing where confusing, out-of-control situations means danger, we spend our energy learning how to bring order to control disorder. It makes a situation safer and less fearful.

The tendency to see change and confusion as something to fear is the same mechanism that leads many to resist new ideas. The truth is the fear mechanism does a disservice to your growth and excellence. The wake-up mind deals with confusion and danger far more quickly and effectively than we know. That is why some trainers mistakenly believe when the chips are down we revert to our basic training. If you look carefully at those situations you discover when things go wrong and we respond effectively, it is because we tap into the power of our wake-up mind. It is the part of our mind that intuitively siphons what basic training works, and what does not.

The next step in the payoff game is that, rather than admitting the basic emotion of fear, we create a host of excuses to try and explain why we should not do awareness practice or cultivate wake-up mind. Those excuses get contorted into believing that NOT doing an uncomfortable new practice is better. That's the payoff.

Here are some of the payoff's Alexander describes:

Payoff #1 – We can avoid being judged as strange

It is fairly obvious that wake-up mind exercises and awareness practice is not taught at most, or any, police academies. Some officers may be familiar with the “empty mind” practice if they have martial arts experience. But since so few officers practice martial arts, this is new and unfamiliar territory.

The Wake-Up Mind (cont.)

Consequently, to embark on mindfulness training is to be an outsider. To be an outsider, particularly in policing culture, is to be considered strange. It takes considerable courage, and what Tennessee Williams called *gumption*, to choose a self-improvement practice others consider strange.

Payoff #2 – Avoiding failure

While they sound simple, wake-up exercises take considerable practice and dedication. There is a fear that nothing will happen and that “I will fail and be seen as inadequate by my peers who seem to get it.”

Avoidance failure was part of our early experience in the PBL program. We initially resisted incorporating these meditation exercises as a mandatory part of the course. Instead we ran them separate before classes began. This was a mistake. Few students attended. Few wanted to feel strange. Fewer wanted to wake up a 5AM to do something they didn't understand. When we incorporated the exercises as a regular part of each morning, everyone was in the same boat. No one could ostracize the other because they were all in it together. Payoff #1 was eliminated.

One of our most remarkable findings in the PBL program is how many officers value and honor the morning meditation exercises (we call them the Emotional Intelligence exercises). They continually tell us this in person and in their journals. I also hear back from students months and years later telling stories how they still use these exercises and have successfully incorporated the exercises in the lives of their children.

Payoff #3 – Avoiding feeling guilty

It seems odd that mastering a new skill, like the wake-up mind, might make anyone feel guilty. But committing to a new practice, even for only ten or twenty minutes each day, means you have made a choice that others have not. Some of those others might be close friends or family members who feel left out. Indeed, we have had spouses in the PBL program who have both thanked us and condemned us for the positive transformation their partner has chosen. In the latter case, feelings of guilt can emerge.

Another aspect of guilt is selfish. A simple meditation practice might hardly seem worthy of such weight, but it does mean moving in a new direction. Obviously a choice to move in a new direction is a choice you make because you want to better yourself. That is when feelings of guilt can arise:

- Guilt because you are making a positive change, others you love have not made that same choice, and you are leaving them behind.
- Guilt because you may think you are sending out a message that you are better than others since you've made a choice they haven't.

Accepting resistance and moving beyond

Ultimately, payoff games are just that – games. They are rooted in fear and our inability to see them for what they truly are. The best way to move beyond them is to honestly answer the following questions:

1. What do you fear?
2. How can you come to accept that payoff games pay off no one?
3. How can you communicate your intention to those who matter?
4. How can you find yourself a bit of gumption and dedicate yourself to improving your wake-up mind?

How do you begin?

Nowadays, courses and schools on mindfulness meditation and awareness practice are everywhere. Also helpful are courses in Yoga (particularly Kundalini Yoga) and martial arts such as Aikido. There is no substitute for a competent teacher, mentor, or a group of practitioners who can help with the many details of practice.

The Wake-Up Mind (cont.)

There are numerous guides and books on the topic of mindfulness and awareness practice. Here are a few good ones:

- **Wise Mind, Open Mind** by Ronald A. Alexander
- **Mindful Brain: Reflection and Attunement in the Cultivation of Well-Being** by D. J. Siegel
- **Pay Attention for Goodness Sake** by Sylvia Boorstein
- **Everyday Enlightenment** by Dan Millman

Each of those books has techniques and strategies. Some will resonate, others will not. If there is anything we've discovered in education it is that each person's path to learning is different. Try some out for yourself and see what works.

Finally, graduates of the 2-week PBL certification program will recall we spend time each morning on an awareness practice we call the E/I exercise. It is a guided meditation I created for the PBL program in which you practice watching your thoughts rather than attaching to them.

The class is first led through progressive relaxation stretches and then into some basic breathing exercises that Gerry Cleveland calls eight-by-eight-by-thirty (breathe in for eight slow counts, breathe out for eight slow counts, and repeat thirty times, though we do only three in the class). Next, I wrote a visualization (see below) that is read to the class prior to the meditation. We do this each morning starting with 45 seconds of meditation and gradually expand the length of time until we reach 5 minutes. Students are asked to write journal entries on their response to the exercise which we discuss during interviews.

Note that this is only a beginner exercise. In permanent practice it should be done each morning or evening in a quiet spot for 10 to 20 minutes. However, it does help introduce a practical method for building some competence in the wake-up mind. Every journey starts with a few steps. This exercise is a good way to begin.

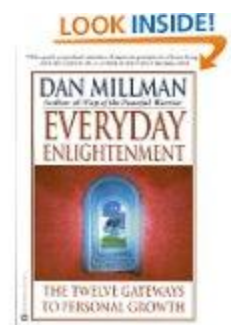
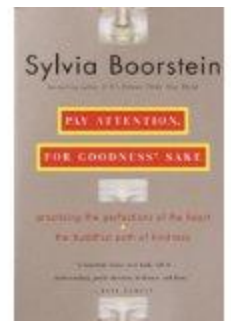
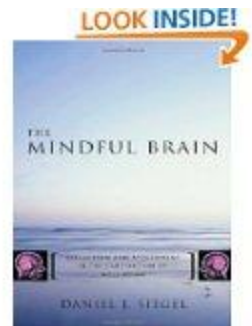
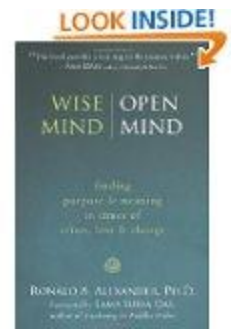
Begin the meditation exercise with the stretching and breathing regimes described above. Then remind the class of the two enemies of mindfulness, the sleepy-mind and the busy-mind. Busy-mind means you should return focus to your breath, and then back to the exercise. Sleepy-mind means you should sit up and pay attention; you are not doing the exercise. Then read the following:

Your mind is like a river of thoughts. A torrent in which one thought follows another. An endless stream. Each thought enters, stays, and then leaves. You cannot stop them, they are simply a part of the way your mind works.

The past thought is gone. The future thought has not yet arisen. Your actual awareness hangs between something that has passed and something else that has yet to arrive.

The time each thought spends in your mind distracts you from calm reflection. The time each thought takes in your mind is time you lose from taking a break from yourself. Take a moment now and just observe each thought. Do not engage the thought, just watch it. Pay it no heed. Let each thought come and go. Do not attach to it.

Your purpose is not to relieve stress or to relax. Your purpose is simply to take a short holiday. You have no purpose to this other than to take a moment to watch your thoughts. Take a moment, watch your thoughts, and do absolutely nothing at all about them.



Training: It's not just an Adventure – It's a Job

By: Sergeant Roger Buhlis
Richmond Police Department, California

Giving over the driver seat of a patrol car to a new recruit can feel as adventurous as heading out on an expedition with Indiana Jones (pre-“Crystal Skull” of course). Likewise, handing over the control of a classroom to the students can feel equally risky. But it's in the achievement of these moments that we realize – as teachers and trainers – learning has to be an adventure to be successful.

I have never trained a police officer who didn't want to drive the police car, make a traffic stop, or chase a criminal within the first week of training. After all, that's the kind of stuff most people want to do when they get into police work – they usually can't wait to get started in the work. Sometimes the freshness wears off, fear kicks in, and recruits back off (and this is why self-awareness training and EI is so critical in law enforcement...but I digress). The point is not what they want to do, but what we, as trainers, *are willing to let them do*.

I once taught PTO to an agency where I learned that the recruit officers weren't allowed to drive the patrol car until they got out of training. When I asked about this I was told that the patrol cars are assigned to individual officers and the PTO wouldn't want a trainee to crash his or her car. Essentially, the trainees couldn't be trusted to drive a car! In response I asked when the trainees are given *firearms*. Of course the trainees – many of whom had never fired a weapon before the academy, but had driven since they were 16 – were armed on day 1 with a pistol and a shotgun. Why would they not be allowed to drive a patrol car? (To be fair, I understand this practice has changed since the implementation of the PTO program).

Giving up control to a trainee is difficult. You don't know what their capabilities are; you don't know how they will respond to situations; you don't know what their level of understanding of department policies and procedures is; and you haven't built the trust you already have with your peers...yet. But there is no other way to discover all these things than to let your trainee demonstrate them. Sometimes they will surprise you with brilliant work. Sometimes they will surprise you with incredibly poor performance. Either way, it's a learning process and an adventure! Please don't think I'm telling you to let your trainee put you or themselves in harm's way – let's be reasonable. And I'm not saying that poor performance is acceptable – that's where your job as a facilitator becomes critical.

The same is true for classroom instruction. For example, putting away the PowerPoint projector, stashing the instructor notes, and turning the academy classroom over to the students is madness! The students *don't even know* what they don't know. How can we be so free-wheeling and willy-nilly about our classrooms and student learning? It's like going until the paved road ends, and then continuing on anyway! Who knows what you'll find at the end of the muddy unpaved road?



“The point is not what they want to do, but what we, as trainers, *are willing to let them do*.”



Hands On Learning

Problems = No Time Management

By: Sergeant Dave Sorenson
Virginia Beach Police Department, Virginia

Some legitimate concerns are raised occasionally about the time the trainees spend off the street to complete the PTO paperwork. Command staff members inevitably ask questions about the time trainees spend sitting in front of precinct computers, not answering calls for service. There is a lot of paperwork that has to be done. PBLEs, journaling, CTRs, Mid-Term and Final Evaluations are time consuming. However, I offer that much of the time spent completing these tasks is wasted.

When a trainee sits down in front of the computer to do their CTR, does he/she have bulleted notes, chicken scratch ideas, written examples of successes or failures, or fully filled out? If the answer is no to every one of those, then you have a major time management problem on your hands. Sitting down and constructing the CTR or Mid-Term/Final Evaluation in front of the computer will take a great deal of time away from the street. As a PTO Sergeant, numerous times I have come into the precinct and seen a trainee and/or PTO sitting in front of the computer, fingers eagerly waiting to type, but fail to do so for minutes at a time.

The problem lies in the CTRs' and Evaluations' greatest asset. It is the critical thinking tasks it takes to create this document. You are not answering questions, filling in the blanks, or circling a number. You must analyze past situations, performances, and responses to failing forward to create a narrative that tells a story. This story will either describe how the trainee has learned through a path of self-discovery, or has failed to learn from his or her own mistakes. This is not only great for documentation purposes, but reinforces the learning process for the trainee.

We as leaders and trainers need to encourage trainees and PTOs to use the time in the police vehicle wisely. I suggest they print off the paperwork, creating extra space for each comment section to allow for handwriting. After a call for service or related incident, the trainee and PTO should have honest discussions about the actions, good and bad. Notes should be made on the paper when the event could be used as material for the CTR/Mid-term/Final Evaluation. When it is time to type up the document, the creative process will be jump-started as opposed to stuck in neutral.

The Full Slate is published quarterly. If you have an article you want published or you have specific questions in reference to the PTO program, Problem-Based Learning in the academy or any other concerns, feel free to contact the society via the website:

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