

When Arrows Fly, They Often Injure the Innocent

By

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When protests rage and apology flows, the result often is increased disorder. Among the angry cries for change is corresponding citizen fear, leaking from every human pore, due to uncertainty. All manner of disruption takes place, and the outcomes are seldom positive. Groups who see an opening to argue a point of view or philosophical position, not for sustainable change, rather a noisy agenda are all too often driven by aggressive behavior. Compromise is not the goal; it is complete alteration regardless of ancillary issues.

The media flocks to the scene, the cameras roll, and the entire exhibition becomes a slogan, demand or other sought after outcome and the whole fracas based on a few words that are used to incite and push an agenda. The problem is we never know who or what lies in the background, the silent energy behind the commotion. We react to conjecture and a severe lack of facts – a worst case scenario on which to address pressing problems and their resolution.

Being the reactive populace that we are, we often assume the argument is right and despite evidence to either prove or disprove, we push for “our” solution, which often is one that placates but does not resolve. It is abundantly clear we appear unable to put “self” aside, as we cannot engage with solutions as a goal, which equate to compromise utilizing facts as they are known or acquired.

This model indicates that outcomes (both minor and promised) will be temporary, and they seldom achieve sustainable change. In this process, politics, race relations, personal, financial, group agendas and other movements surge to the forefront; albeit only temporary. After days and days of rehashing by the media, the public loses interest and moves on awaiting the next media or “Breaking News” – one of the more overused excuses to prattle on and repeat nauseous information.

We often commit to the fool; the King’s dancing jester, the juggler, storyteller and silent observer. Sides were taken, rhetoric flows, solutions to the extreme proposed, and at the end of the day, not much happens as we are entrenched and unmovable.

To illustrate regarding a society without police; can you visualize the unhindered release of criminals without the thin layer of police to step forward and to keep them off your doorstep? We have numerous examples of what happens when individuals are not constrained by law; no one would wish that on others. Most Americans are woefully unprepared to protect themselves, family or their business, and most are naïve

harboring some altruistic belief in the good of humanity. Yes, if they are like themselves, but many are not, and it is those folks that pose the concern. If the 911 call does not result in police arriving, what does one do then?

However, that thought aside; it serves no purpose to harp or rant; it is just noise that most will tune out, especially after the media withdraws. Yes, there are concerns about policing, but not all police or more accurately, the majority of them simply do their job. We have equal, or greater animosity toward politics, selfish agendas, lack of social contribution, ineptness, criminality, terrorism, and the list is endless. Where is the outrage, the demand to fix and act like the citizen majorities desire? Seemingly, it is lost in rhetoric and inaction?

With police, it is only a few who create the environment from which the protestations

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are heard. A few are criminal, but too many experience years of dealing with too much dysfunction in society. They encounter an overload of deviance and violence, too much harm to others by some whose sociopathic behaviors are not controlled, which occasionally result in fatal outcomes. The effects of accumulated stress, adversity and trauma continue to remain as stark reminders that humanity, for some, remains elusive. People are hurt, personal and business

property damaged or stolen, and the message is lost in all the shouting.

A society plagued with getting high, glued to social media and tuned out of those things useful and harmful, oblivious until some trigger event occurs and then polarized engagement results. This approach is devoid of real data or detail, often running on pure emotion. Those who support join in and those who reject eventually show disdain, but not without a hardening of attitudes on all fronts. What is gained, it seems nothing!



It strikes me that those who commit crime, violence and other dysfunctional behaviors are themselves often a product of that lifestyle, now filled with daily events that surface in a repetitive manner. We often express concern for these individuals, especially in a court of law when the defense attorney makes his or her plea as to contributing cause for the client's behavior.

Our police are exposed to this same violence, sometimes each shift and they must deal with it, head-on, subject to abuse, violence, and occasional death; just doing their job. These encounters with crime, criminals, substance-induced behavior, death, violence, and other negative situations are a daily experience, and it goes on for decades. I would ask how you would handle this.

The following illustration is used in my book, “The Silent Killer of Police and First Responders”:

“The faces of police and first responders provide a window into the internal world of their feelings and emotions. When encountering the adversity or exposure to danger, trauma, and other negative job-related events, they present a mask of determination, strength, and fortitude. They face their duties without complaint knowing that what they do provides for the greater good.”

“An event that has summoned an officer or public safety response must now be handled take charge and bring order to disorder. They confront danger and endure as a silent witness to yet another human tragedy. No tears will fall, no emotion observed, and the physiological and psychological systems of the officer will instantly achieve full power as anticipation, safety, and decisions are made at light speed. “

“A state of high readiness is taking place, automatic and in response to perceived danger. The officer’s focus is acute as he or she scans and processes what is observed and a rise in protective action from potential danger peaks instantly. They develop a response to the issue or emergency that they cannot avoid.”

“The officer’s senses are sharpened, eyes rapidly observing, smells and sounds are acute, and the movement and behavior of people seen, are mentally acknowledged. The officer’s adrenal gland releases adrenaline resulting in an increased heart rate, a flaring of nasal passages for the intake of additional oxygen, eye pupils enlarge, and the individual’s muscles receive more blood in anticipation of increased body activity. Elevated adrenaline is necessary when facing danger or high-intensity situations, but when accumulated in the bloodstream, it has harmful consequences that lead to insomnia, nervousness, and lower immunity. Considering the number of high-stress situations in one’s career, we must see concerns for the officer’s health over time.”

“One incident becomes hundreds or thousands with the passing of years. Each event carries a level of stress and adversity, and it adversely impacts on the individual’s health and well-being. The rational approach to self-management of uncomfortable feelings is to suck it up, move forward, and deal with it. To some, it may lead to increased alcohol and drug use, and other potentially injurious behavior. We should establish a decisive goal of improving the person’s life balance. Negative encounters elevate stress and also impacts on family, peers, and others in one’s life. If the effects of stress and adversity are making themselves known in uncomfortable and harmful ways, do we not have an obligation to address them (Lumb, 2014:11)?”

The unforgiving public is quick to condemn police, fail to notice the demands placed on them to do what they will not do themselves, and then all too often choose to ignore the outcomes. The world that police inhabit is one that most people will never encounter, yet they resort to the condemnation of police as if they are world wise in this field of endeavor. NOT!

Stuck in the middle are the police, whose behavior is occasionally questioned, but not the motivations of the individual or group which was the reason for the 911 call. The public has a civic responsibility to see all facts but does not. Are they without care for facts and causes? When civil disorder breaks out, the political authority is fearful and huddling behind police lines, when they should be working for solutions. The media is tripping all over one another, and the public seemingly is either glued to “Breaking News!” or simply hitting the mute button (my favored method) and getting on with life and work.

We need to stop and rationalize these events, stop making them political or selfish and be grown up! I am weary of the power welding, threats, and acting independently as if the public is somehow invisible. The marching and bull horn shouting accomplish little considering the big picture. The executive actions are even more deplorable as Washington seems to be as arrogant as the noisemakers, but they are sneakier and do so in the quiet of the night, occasionally caught, but always seeking to avoid the spotlight of criticism.

If change for tomorrow is to happen, it will not be utilizing the present methods. An appropriate problem-solving model, calm and factual approaches are needed. However, that is seemingly not the agenda! One only need to read the thousands of comments to a media article about some conflict, such as Chicago, and the not-so-silent majority are not in agreement with the single movement. Minuscule change might occur, but it carries no longevity



SARA Problem Solving Model

Actual change seeks not to destroy, but to improve and create new pathways that address issues and fixes them. A bad situation worsens conditions, exacerbates attitudes toward the negative, and if seen for what it is, no sympathy exists, nor will it!

(A): Lumb, R. (2014:11). *The Silent Killer of Police & First Responders.* Building endurance to manage the Effects of Accumulated Stress, Adversity & Trauma. Amazon.com. ISBN-13: 978-1492114611. ISBN-10: 1492114618.