Elite Performance During Chaos and Critical Stress

-In abbreviated format-

Presented By
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A Quick Bio
Police Officer, 10 Years

**SWAT** Team Member, 9 Years

And

**SWAT** Team Section Leader

**SWAT** Instructor, 6 Years
K9 Handler

Five Years
Nationally Certified Tactical Instructor

- SWAT Instructor
- Firearms Instructor
- Patrol Rifle Instructor
- Chemical Agents Instructor
- Less-Lethal Munitions Instructor
Seminar Instructor:

“The Psychology of Combat and the Survival Mindset”

“Mental Preparation for Deadly-Force Encounters”
This seminar is about:

Performing under
“Chaos and Critical Stress”

I know a little bit about these things.
And, I’ve learned it the hard way…
Fast-Forward...

I traded in my uniform.
For a different uniform.
Executive Director
Head of Cash Management Sales

Morgan Stanley
Let’s get into it…

Elite Performance during Chaos And Critical Stress
This seminar will teach you how your brain and body process **Critical Stress** and how to build this new understanding into your personal and professional life.
IF

You do not understand how your brain functions “under critical stress”

AND IF

You fail to understand how stress impacts your physiological responses and decision-making abilities…
Your Brain may be your Greatest Inhibitor of ‘Elite Performance’ while under Critical Stress. Which is when you need your skills most…
IF

You do understand how your brain functions “under critical stress”

AND IF

You integrate what you learn today into your Personal and Professional Life…
Your Brain will be your Greatest Weapon

And you will perform to your maximum potential.
What is Stress?
Webster Defines **Stress** as:

*–noun*

physical, mental, or emotional strain or tension

*–synonyms* 8. anxiety, burden, pressure, worry.
Webster Defines *Stress* as:

*Physiology* - a specific response by the body to a stimulus, such as *fear, pain,* or *anxiety* that disturbs or interferes with the normal physiological equilibrium (normal operations) of an organism.
The Human Brain
We have **THREE** Brains!
Our THREE BRAINS are:

1) The **Brain Stem**
   a. Often referred to as the “Reptilian Brain”
   b. Completely Reactive to it’s environment
   c. Human functions control digestion, HR, respirations, etc.
Our **THREE BRAINS** are:

2) The **Limbic System**

   a. Referred to as the “Old Mammalian Brain” and/or the “Emotional Brain”

   b. First began to be PROACTIVE in their environment. i.e., recognizing not just that they ARE hungry, but that they WILL BECOME hungry again and plan for food storage, etc…

   c. The Limbic System begins as *response to stimulus* in infancy, and will function throughout the life of a human, but DOES NOT MATURE. (Therefore, when emotional, we react as a two-year-old would react…)
The LIMBIC SYSTEM contains the following THREE common mammalian responses to danger, chaos, and stress:

Freeze  Flight  Fight
Our **THREE BRAINS** are:

3) The **Cortex**

   a. Unique to Mammals. All mammals have a “cerebral cortex”. The Human Cerebral Cortex is TWICE the relative size and TWICE the relative function of the lower-order mammals.

   c. This is the place in your brain where **reason** and **logic** exist.

      1. Necessary for formulating plans
      2. Necessary to draw upon lessons learned (training or experiences)
      3. Necessary for problem solving
      4. Necessary for full use of physical skills
3) The **Cortex**

d. Unlike the **Limbic System**, cortical cells (cerebral cortex) *do mature*, and cortical thoughts gain the ability to process at higher levels and in more complex situations. Therefore, we can learn as we progress and we can apply lessons learned, if we are functioning in the **Cortex**.

This *is* the strength of our species.
The Human Response

When a HUMAN brain perceives STRESS:

and

When a HUMAN perceives that he/she has OPTIONS (experience and control) to deal with that STRESS,

Then the HUMAN brain will retain function in the: CORTEX
The Human Response

When a HUMAN brain perceives STRESS:

and

When a HUMAN perceives that he/she has NO OPTIONS (lack of experience or control) to deal with that STRESS,

AND/OR
When a HUMAN is in a significantly emotional state,
Then the HUMAN brain will transfer authority of brain function to the:

LIMBIC SYSTEM
And that’s BAD.

The LIMBIC SYSTEM is NOT
The strength of our species!
Physical Symptoms of Limbic System Function

- Pupil Dilation (more light/less focus)
- Loss of Peripheral Vision
- Auditory Distortion
- Time Changes (Speeds up/Slows Down)
- Memory Loss
- Face ‘Flush’ – Skin Turns Red
Physiological Effects of Limbic System Function

- Inability to Respond Effectively to Objections
- Inability to Work Through Logical Solutions
- Inability to Find a “Middle Ground” or to Compromise
- Inability to Listen to Directions and Cues
- Revert to: FREEZE  FIGHT  FLIGHT
Three Types of Motor Movement

1. Fine Motor Movement
2. Gross Motor Movement
3. Complex Motor Movement
The Inverted “U” Hypothesis
Want to see this whole concept in action?

Let’s take a look…
Untrained Subject:

Emotional Response

= Limbic System Function
Chaos and Critical Stress?
Trained Subject:

Under Critical Stress
(Remains Calm)
Retains Complex Motor Movement
Decision-making Capability
And
Cortex Function
How do we prevent this shift of authority within the brain?

Education & Preparation
Paint the Landscape on the Brain.

“We will not rise to the level of our expectations…

We will fall to the level of our training…”

- Eric Parker
What does it mean to become...

Conditioned for elite performance?
Elite Performance during Chaos and Critical Stress is intentional and it is built by habit.

Let’s talk about three things you can do in your life to create a habit of Elite Performance under pressure.
#1

Get Comfortable
Being Uncomfortable
Build the habit of challenging yourself…

Ideas?
Take the call...
#2

Learn to Make Difficult Asks
Deliver the “Why”.
THE 7 HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE

Infographics Edition

Stephen R. Covey

Over 30 million sold!
Habit #4

Think Win-Win.
#3

Set Yourself Apart.
You want to be elite?
Four ways to set yourself apart

Always show up.

Seek and invest in skill enhancement.

Extraction as a Decision.

Be wary of “Clean Sheets”.
“Elite” Review

Get Comfortable Being Uncomfortable

Learn to Make Difficult Asks

Set Yourself Apart
The one thing...

The one thing that creates more stress in the face of layered difficulties is....

Doing Nothing.
If you can train a rat...
Suggested Reading
Gates of Fire, by Steven Pressfield
About Face, by Col. David H. Hackworth
Can’t Hurt Me, By David Goggins