

Neural Based Scenario Training:

A Holistic Approach to Anchoring Combative Motor Skill Performance To An Optimum

Combative State

As many on this forum know through my past postings, I am a proponent of integrating a variety of training methodologies, including NLP and Hypnotherapy, for the purpose of enhancing motor skill performance during what I have called Survival Stress Reaction (SSR); please see my article on the Anatomy of Fear located at:

<http://www.personalprotectionsystems.ca/safetyarticles.htm> . One of the challenges that we face as instructors however, is how do we get our students to transition their training and skills from the school to the street if, and when, the time comes? How often have we seen students who are skilled in practice (closed mode) apply their training in a less-desirable context when called upon in an actual self-protection situation (open mode). It is my opinion that although we all train the physical, and some train the cognitive, most of us fail to train the emotional "states" that need to be "anchored" to both the physical and cognitive attributes during combatives training. The physical, cognitive, and emotional aspects to training are a holistic or synergistic three-legged chair, if one leg is missing then the chair will collapse!!! It is my opinion that those who can integrate this holistic and synergistic combatives state approach in training, will more likely be able to transition their skills from the school to the street, thus optimizing their combative performance during SSR.

To conduct desirable Neural Based Scenario Training (NBST), one must incorporate "structured" reality simulations that evoke the desired SSR state physically, cognitively, and emotionally. Noticed I stated structured !!!!! Far too often, scenario training that is not neural based, involves nothing more than throwing students into a so-called "simulation" that is nothing more than an unstructured free for all that has no cross over to the real world. NBST however, is designed to train and test combative motor skills learned in the environment that you "expect" to use the skills in. This type of training does take preparation, planning, and orchestration, and is dependent upon using role-players who have a script that allows them to branch depending upon the reactions of the trainee. If science fiction were reality, the use of Star Trek's holodeck would be my preferred NBST environment. Unfortunately, the holodeck is not a reality, it should be noted however, that some computer simulators that are used by the military and police do come close. (both the military and police understand the power of NBST) Having said this, we can make our training environments more NBST friendly; all it takes is a little imagination and application. Here at the school I incorporate strobe lights, fog machines, uneven flooring, disco colored lighting, furniture, wind fan, and all kinds of real and improvised weapons. Soon, funding permitting, I hope to have the ability to build a portable and changeable floor and wall-based environment, which can replicate a variety of different floor plans, thus enhancing the NBST experience for both armed (simmunition), and unarmed combatives training.

The NBST experience must also involve all sensory modalities including sight, sound, smell, touch, taste, and of course one's etheric sense (intuition, situational awareness, gut instinct). The attacker (role players) MUST use the verbal and non-verbal language in combination with the physiology, emotion, and intent of a "real" attacker. The more real the NBST environment, both internal (student) and external (environment), the more likely we can evoke the optimum combative state, and anchor it to the "trained" desirable motor skill response. This is one reason why if a student does something less desirable in a NBST simulation, as an instructor, you must ensure that you constructively debrief it immediately (utilizing video feedback is optimum) and then run the student through the same simulation again until their combative performance becomes desirable. This is why instructors must be careful that they do not allow a student to anchor a less desirable response to a combative state, which is easy to do if an instructor is not schooled and skilled in NBST. It is also important that NBST simulations are structured around unknown, low, medium, and high threat responses. As we all know, not every street encounter can be considered a "deadly force" threat. Again by anchoring a combative state to a variety of incremental threat responses, we are best preparing our students for a desirable outcome based upon their perception of threat (context) in the real world. The brain, through NBST conditioning, is more likely to say under SSR, "Been there done that, and I know what to do, and will do it"

Another very important component to anchoring an optimum combative state to a learned motor skill is to ensure that during physical practice, students, once they become consciously competent, begin to practice their skills with each other utilizing "imagination" and "emotion". In other words, students should be visualizing the context in which the motor skill learned will be used, again bringing in all their sensory modalities. Rather than just hitting a bag, they should visualize the bag is a threat intent on hurting them, someone they love, or someone who is under their care and control. Again the subconscious mind cannot tell the

difference between fantasy and reality, the more real the training, the more likely you can develop the optimum combative state and anchor the learned motor skills to that state. To take this one step further, prior to participating in a NBST simulation, students should also visualize or imagine (see my article on Combative Based Action Imagery) what their plan "A", "B", and "C" strategy will be against possible threats, but also give themselves permission to adapt, overcome, and improvise when needed. The secret here is to train in an optimum combative state (physically, cognitively, and emotionally) because if you do, you will more likely operate in an optimum combative state when the shit hits the fan in the real world when SSR is triggered.

NBST optimally conditions or "anchors" the brain (both conscious and subconscious) to using your non-verbal, verbal, and combative motor skills in an open mode (real world) environment during the pre-contact, contact, and post-contact intervention stages of an actual confrontation. In my opinion, most traditional martial art schools, and even some who say they teach RBSD/Combatives, are mistakenly anchoring, not knowing any better, combative state to their closed mode training of the school, training studio, or dojo. This is, in my opinion, the primary reason why I believe we see students not being able to transfer combative skills learned, to the reality of the street.

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