

This posting was spawned by some of the discussions I have been reading in the K-bash thread. On another forum that I respect, a poster by the name of "gsudbrink" located the following quote from NASA:

" One test is worth a thousand expert opinions"

This quote is an axiom that we in the self-protection field should aspire to time and time again. There are too many experts in the traditional and RBSD field who are spouting off opinions that when acid tested both empirically and scientifically hold no weight. Some will also cloak their flawed opinions in scientific language to give credence to their opinions and beliefs.

I truly believe that credible research, both empirical and scientific specific to human performance, needs to be applied to everything that is being taught as realistic self-protection. We need to move from closed to open training environments where opinions and theories can be applied and tested under real conditions. Experts hold great power over those they teach. The power of suggestion is extremely influential upon one's performance and as such, an expert's opinion can and will have a direct effect upon one's ability, especially if the student believes the opinion to be true.

Good empirical and scientific research, however, can also shatter existing beliefs that those from the scientific realm had believed to be true all along. Remember the experts once believed that the world was flat, and it was not until an empirical researcher proved them wrong by adopting the mindset of; "Don't tell me, show me" (one test is worth a thousand expert opinions). We too need to adopt this mindset. I fully understand and accept the fact that some of my beliefs may be shattered in the years to come based upon new research and science in the field of combatives as it relates to human performance. As a responsible instructor, however, I accept this fact and as a result will adapt to the new research and science as it becomes available, but not before I empirically research it and acid test it as well. Ego has no place in combatives, but yet ego is what blinds many experts in the area of combatives who will not change their ways, even if their ways are flawed based upon sound research and development of others. "Do as I tell you to do because it works" type of instructors need to be challenged. In a finite context, I can usually make any technique work, especially in a closed environment where I can control context, but context in a live fight is constantly changing due to the dynamics of a real street fight. It is in this spirit that I train for the probable not the possible (you can what if things to death) and as long as the principals of combat are sound (from both an empirical and scientific perspective) then they should be able to be applied in a constantly changing context thus allowing one to adapt, overcome, and improvise when Mr Murphy rears his ugly head. This is where, IMO, that some traditional and RBSD instructors miss the boat !!!!

To date, the science of combat, as it relates to human performance, have isolated some combat truths. One has to remember, however, that there are a number reputable

schools of combative sciences that share some cross pollenization of principals, but yet often have diverse beliefs on application of technique, based upon their own empirical and scientific research. I myself base the core of my teachings on the combative based sciences rather than the combative sport based schools, as I believe that in real combat (read here, ðwhere the real risk of death or serious injuryö is a clear and present threat) the mind has been hard wired to react in a specific way for survival (based upon the research of Dr LeDoux). Although I do believe that these reactions are hardwired, I also believe that they can be ðmoldedö and used as a platform in a combative context. Having said this, I also utilize training techniques from the sport based combative schools to ðenhanceö the psychological performance of my students as well.

Phil Messina (Modern Warrior) coined the phrase; ðyour survival begins and ends with youö. When I trained with Phil in the early 1990s, he taught me that an instructor can say and teach anything, but in the end you, and not your instructor, are the one rolling around in the mud, the blood, and the beer. When the SH*T hits the fan opinions mean F**K all. Expert opinions vary, and it is because of this fact that the NASA axiom; ð One test is worth a thousand expert opinionsö needs to be adopted by all. In fact I would go one step further and say; ð multiple empirical and scientific testing on a combative principal is worth a thousand expert opinions.ö Don't tell me, show me in a variety of differing contexts, which are repeatable, measurable, and useable by the majority rather than the minority (experts) should be our battle cry to those who wish to impart their opinion(s) onto us when it comes to RBSD, which in the end, could mean the difference between life or death.

" Research is to see what everyone else has seen, and think what no one else has thought"

Albert Szent-Gyorgy (Nobelish 1927)

Darren Laur

PS: Some have asked me whom do I respect in the field of combative and combative sport based research, so here's a short list:

Bruce Siddle

Dr Alexis Artwohl

Lt Col Dave Grossman

Tony Blauer

Scott Sonnon

Richard Dimitri

Although all are experts in their field, many of their beliefs and philosophies do differ, some very diametrically from one another. Each, however, has something to offer us when it comes to survival training. I do not believe that there will ever be a finite conclusion to combative enlightenment, but there are some paths of enlightenment that are more "desirable" specific to the topic of survival and survival training, as it relates to RBSD, that one should be traveling.