

9 Attitudes

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The 9 Attitudes for Self-Protection

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Functional Edge system



ALERT ATTITUDE

Attitude is a total alignment of your entire physical, psychological, and emotional being to a specific purpose.

There are three Pre-engagement Attitudes, three Engagement Attitudes, and three Resolution Attitudes. These attitudes are the holistic driving mechanism for all the strategies and tactics in the Functional Edge System.

Relaxed Attitude –

Being relaxed is to be at ease. This is the attitude of total enjoyment when in a safe environment with family and friends. There is little risk of danger. It should be the goal of everyone to enjoy a happy and tranquil life as much as possible so, regardless of profession, everyone's ultimate goal should be to achieve and stay in the Relaxed Attitude as frequently as we can. Having a place, family and friends that provide us with joy and peace will motivate us to fight back during war.

On The Alert

Being alert is described as being watchful and prompt to meet danger or emergency.

It is important here, and when training any attitudes, to find the balance. Being prepared to respond to danger is not the same as expecting danger at every turn. It does not serve our students to develop paranoia. In fact being overly cautious may result in paying too much attention to illusory fear while ignoring real danger.

Preparation

Preparation is getting ready for an occasion, test, or duty. An attack is certainly a test and I surely believe we have a duty to be able to protect ourselves. The fact that we are practicing self- protection is step one in preparation. Should we be attacked we have weapons and tactics we can deploy.

To be prepared we also need to be reasonably fit. Although you don't need to



be an Olympic or professional athlete, you need to be prepared for a physical exertion, whether it is combat or evasion and escape.

We all are capable of protecting ourselves but being fit will improve our chances considerably. In a future article I will address fitness for combat, but the martial arts community needs to stop telling people that “with only two pounds of pressure a small person can defeat any attacker”. This is fantasy. Although violence will not be a commonplace event

in any one individual's lifetime, when it does occur, it is chaotic, ugly, and physical.

Fighting requires physical exertion. Escaping requires physical exertion. Being in shape will allow us to fight longer or to continue our evasion longer. Fitness is a requirement for preparation.

Being fit carries over to our posture and breathing, which you will see, helps us better engage the attitude of being alert.

Intelligence

Another form of preparation is collecting intelligence. We can collect intelligence in advance or concurrently. Gathering information in advance is useful when travelling. Finding out ahead of time where the trouble spots are, local customs, recent incidents etc. can help us completely avoid danger altogether. However, regardless of how much information you gather ahead of time, the best intelligence is the kind you gather as you are going through your day.

Being in the Alert Attitude means that we are gathering and processing information from our environment and evaluating people, places, things and incidents around us as to what they represent. Are the people you see known to you? Is a complete stranger addressing you with too familiar a tone? What kind of interactions are you seeing around you? Actively collecting this information is crucial to the Alert Attitude.

To differentiate this action of actively searching your surroundings from an act of paranoia you can look to nature. Human beings are designed as predators. If you watch a tiger or lion on the move do you see nervousness or tension? No. A predator is relaxed in his awareness.

Keeping your head and gaze up and an erect spine will help you move with grace. Using your eyes to scan the environment in front of you and lightly swiveling your head as you walk, drive or even sit down

will help your awareness recognize any danger that might be headed your way in time for your body/mind system to sound the alarm.

Alarming Fear

Whether we find danger cognitively or subconsciously, the alarm our body/mind system uses is fear.

Much has been said by experts about managing fear but fear is an emotion. We cannot control or manage it just like we cannot control or manage feelings of anger or joy. The only thing we can manage or control is how we interpret and respond to the emotion and our ensuing actions in relation to the feeling.

Fear happens to be a release of chemicals into our organism. Sometimes the release is a gradual trickle and sometimes it is a sudden dump. These chemicals are released in response to a perceived danger and prepare us for exertion.

When in the Alert Attitude if we receive the Fear Alarm cognitively, that is we identify a specific danger, our next task is to move to the Preventive Attitude (more on the preventive attitude and its connection to fear on a future article); but what can we do when the fear signal came subconsciously?

The two major things we can do when we receive the chemicals of the fear signal are breathing and movement. First, consciously make yourself take deeper slower breaths. Then continue to scan with your eyes and your head. If you happen to be sitting, maybe shifting your position or angle on the chair, or standing up and walking might be the answer. Moving and scanning will help you identify the source of the danger signal, breathing will help you relax, see more, and move better.

This synergy is the key in the Alert Attitude.

Coaching Attitude

When training our students we have the responsibility of helping them be safe and without causing unnecessary paranoia. Make sure that they know that there is only a small likelihood of them ever being the victim of an actual predatory assault. That likelihood can also be reduced by using an Alert Attitude. This is the attitude used when we find ourselves in unfamiliar or seemingly dangerous places. This is also the first attitude we must adapt if we are in the Relaxed Attitude and suddenly our intuition signals danger.

As you see, in the Functional Edge System, just understanding the Alertness Attitude covers a broad range of subjects from physical fitness, awareness and detection, movement and posture, understanding fear, and how to best use our responses and interpretation of that emotion. It also provides the self-protection Coach several tools to enhance the survivability of their students.

PREVENTIVE ATTITUDE

In part one, we discussed at length the Alert Attitude which helps us locate and identify potential danger. Once we find and can identify a specific danger, or if a specific threat has targeted us, it's time to change our Attitude.



Preventive Measures

Remember that, in the Functional Edge System, Attitude is a holistic alignment of our physical posture and movement, psychological focus, and emotional purpose. With this in mind we will break down the Preventive Attitude.

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To prevent is to deprive of the power to act or to succeed. We must take actions that do not allow the threat we have identified to harm us. This does not only refer to physical damage but to psychological and emotional damage such as the effect of bullying for teens and kids, emotional abuse from domestic partnerships, and even workplace bullying for adults.

You Saw It First

If we were properly using our Alert Attitude and all the skill sets it includes, it is likely that we may see a threat before it has targeted us specifically. Here are two examples.

You are walking to your parked vehicle at night and from a distance you notice there is a stranger by your car door but he hasn't seen you yet.

You are at a bar and notice the local tough guy is being loud and provoking other people.

We have a great opportunity and advantage in the above situations mainly because the actions we take in the Preventive Attitude will almost always take us to safety and help us avoid harm altogether.

Which actions we take will depend on the scenario and our personal and professional obligations as well as our own moral, ethical and legal compass. For example if a lone female at night is approaching her car in the parking lot when she notices a stranger near her door, she can turn around, walk to a more populated and safe location while calling the police. The police officer that responds to the same case /call may use cover and concealment while approaching the car in order to observe or surprise the suspect.

In the case of the tough guy at the bar, the average person may prevent harm simply by moving to another place in the bar, alerting the doormen, or leaving the premises altogether. The doorman that

sees the same scenario take place has a different professional obligation so his Preventive Attitude will guide his actions as he moves in the direction of the danger.

It's clear that early detection helps us avoid a lot of the danger, and that finding early avenues of escape is the ideal strategy for the average person. It should also be clear that the strategies we use will vary depending on OUR role within the scenario and circumstances. However sometimes we are not so lucky and danger find us first.

You Are the Target



Sometimes there is another window of opportunity to act and that is when the danger has specifically targeted us but has not initiated an engagement. In these cases, the Preventive Attitude, enables us with several skill sets to make the situation less dangerous or to escape prior to an engagement starting.

The time gap that occurs in some scenarios gives us an opportunity to make the situation less dangerous, escape the situation altogether and sometimes, if the subsequent engagement is inevitable, it allows us to prepare and shift to the appropriate Engagement Attitude.

Once we are clear the threat has targeted us there are several tasks we must perform in the Preventive Attitude. We must quickly gather intelligence about our threat. Is it one person or more, are they overtly armed, what environmental weapons are at our disposal, at theirs? We must also look for potential force multipliers. Are there other people in the

area that can come help the threat? Are there potential rescuers or persons that may help us?

The next task is to gain the most advantageous position possible. This will be a combination of posture and movement. Our body language to a hostile person must be Calm Assertive. Although we must not be antagonistic or instigating in anyway, being overly passive, especially when dealing with bullies or territorial and hierarchical threats, may actually accelerate a physical assault. Our body language and tone must communicate clearly that, although we mean no harm, we are not going to allow ourselves to be victimized.

Our physical posture must keep our hands in movement that is congruous with our words and Attitude, and also position our hands and arms in a manner that prepares us to easily transition to the necessary Engagement Attitude. We must also actively look for environmental obstacles, like tables, chairs and walls that can slow down or impede the threat from engaging us.

Verbal communication can be useful in this pre-engagement stage as well. If the threat communicates with us it will give us information about what they want and an opportunity to use communication to our advantage. For example if the threat demands your wallet and money, he has established that he is a resource predator. He sees you as a source of "goods" and a calm demeanor and cooperation, to a certain extent, may be the right strategy.

If the threat instead says, "Hey! Watcha lookin' at me like that for?" this may indicate a Territorial / Hierarchical assault. This is a person seeking status or displaying dominance. In this case some Calm Assertive reasoning and rapport building may get the job done.

If we are threatened by a stranger that displays a weapon and says "Get in the van." We may now be confronted by a

process predator, this is someone for whom the act itself is the goal. Serial rapists and serial murderers are among the ones that fall in this category. These instances are very rare but preparation is useful. In these cases rapport building, calm assertiveness, and sometimes trickery and lying may be the strategy of choice.

Like when applying any strategy, we must be ready to shift our focus as the interaction between us and the threat continues. Simply put if you notice that a line of conversation agitates the threat, carefully redirect and shift the conversation to another subject.

Although, at first glance, the above tasks seem like a lot to accomplish simultaneously, we must have faith in our body/mind systems' ability to perform under stress. We are designed for survival and our practice and training will be there, especially when Fear raises its ugly head.

Afraid. You're Right.



Subconsciously or cognitively identifying a direct threat to our safety starts a physiological sequence of events that prepares us for action. Chemical compounds that make us more pain resistant make their course through our body. Blood flow concentrates in the extremities in preparation for explosive action.

Accompanying that response is that sensation in our stomach and torso we call fear.

As I stated previously in the Alertness Attitude, we don't train to manage fear in the Functional Edge System. We can only manage our cognitive responses to the sensation brought on by fear.

Much has been written in the past about the fear response. Clever acronyms have been developed around the word FEAR such as False Evidence Appearing Real, False Expectations Appearing Real and my personal favorite F#ck Everything And Run!

Humor and clever acronyms are descriptive and fun but they do not define a strategy.

The biggest obstacle to overcome when facing a threat and feeling the sensation of fear is the common human condition of cognitive labeling. That is, we feel this Subconscious response to danger first and then our cognitive brain wants to create a reason why we are feeling this way.

If a very large man screams at us as he approaches, our body prepares for action but as we get that queasy, shaky feeling in our gut and legs respectively, our conscious mind says "He's huge!" Suddenly we have a label or reason for that queasy feeling and our consciousness latches on to it. "Oh I'm afraid because he's big" . which leads to "big people can hit hard" which then expands to "I'm scared of big people" and on and on into what we call a downward performance spiral. We become internally fixated, we lose track of our changing environment, become intimidated and take no action.

The remedy for this in the Functional Edge System is a bit surprising yet simple. You see, we are aware of the problem, it is not the subconscious emotion of fear but our Cognitive interpretation of that emotion. The answer is a simple two - step process.

Step one is to remember to breathe. Yes, it's almost over simplistic but taking deep slow breaths will help keep you relatively calm and focused.

Step two is to cognitively go through all the Preventive Attitude tasks. Within the Attitude in which we encounter the "fear problem" lies the necessary skill set to solve it. Yes again it seems like too easy or too good of an answer, but it is that simple. Since we know that our cognitive interpretation of the fear response is the biggest obstacle, keeping our cognitive process on the tasks of threat assessment, rapport building, intelligence gathering, and strategic positioning, allows little room for thoughts of doom and destruction to creep in.

We are not perfect however and sometimes negative thoughts of our demise wiggle up to our conscious brain,

when they do, we must recognize them and immediately choose a relevant cognitive task to focus on.

In the Functional Edge System we are aware that only rarely will we face dangerous physical harm. By using the Alert and the Preventive Attitudes at the right time we decrease the opportunity and ability of threats to get to the point of an engagement. We also prepare for that engagement with training drills that develop the three Engagement Attitudes which we will discuss later.



SURVIVAL ATTITUDE

In previous articles we covered two Non Engagement attitudes; Alert and Preventive. By Non Engagement we mean that the predator(s) or Bad Guy(s) has not launched and overt physical attack. In this article we will cover the first of the Engagement Attitudes: Survival. This is the first Attitude we use once the assault starts.

If our efforts in using our Alert and Preventive Attitudes fail in detecting the problem in order to avoid it all together, or the bad guy persists in spite of our preventive strategies; it is time to focus our entire being in the task of survival. Fortunately in the Functional Edge System we take advantage of a two prong approach to the situation.



At First, You Don't Do It

When the attack is very sudden and violent, or comes from a completely unexpected angle, our first line of protection is our genetic survival system. Human beings are the top species on planet earth because we have developed uncanny instincts for Survival. We are designed to persevere and continue in existence in spite of adversity. This is the meaning of Survival.

At the moment of an explosive predatory attack, several things take place in our body/mind system in order to enhance our chances of survival. All of these occur at a subconscious and autonomic level. Being aware in advance of what they are will help us embrace this genetic gift and take advantage of it in the moment, as well as guide our training prior to any violent conflict.

It's All in the Reflexes

The first of these is the Startle Reflex, the body/mind system's immediate response to unexpected or overwhelming, visual, auditory, or tactile stimuli. The main objective of this reflex is to initiate protective motion of our upper body in order to avoid, intercept, deflect, or mitigate impact trauma to our head or the specific targeted area. For example, our arms may flex rapidly to cover ourselves from a blow to the head or face; or our midsection may quickly pull back and hollow out to avoid a punch or sharp object coming at our stomach. Another objective of this reflex is to prepare our lower body for locomotion; to move so we can escape or engage.

Regardless of what Instinctive Protective motion is triggered, it is important to know that no particular posture, gesture, or motion is indicative of whether the movement was Instinctive or not. That is to say, some people Instinctively are more prone to cover up, others are more prone to push away, while still others duck and avoid. The only indicator of instinctive motion is whether there were cognitive choices at the time of the assault and that can only be confirmed by the assaulted.

The motions triggered in our body by the Startle Reflex in their totality serve the ultimate purpose of remaining conscious, and breathing which of course are very necessary for us to prevail, whether we do so by escaping or by continuing to engage our attacker.

It's About the Chemistry

Another process that takes place during an explosive predatory assault is the Neuroendocrine Response. This is the release of chemicals into our bloodstream that accomplish several tasks. We discussed this in the Alert and Preventive Attitudes as the fear response because the physical feeling the release of those chemicals produces is the one most of us associate with feeling "afraid". During

those Pre Engagement attitudes it is more common to experience this as a slow release. Think of it as a drip. However, during a violent ambush the release may take the form of an opening of floodgates resulting in a temporary supercharged state.

Some of the chemicals released are epinephrine, norepinephrine, endorphins among others. Their designated tasks include; the production of more blood volume, movement of blood to skeletal muscle, the release of glycogen and fatty acids into the muscles and bloodstream for energy production as well as facilitating the conversion of the same into energy. The chemicals also increase our heart and respiration rate, they increase the oxygen level in the brain, stimulate the amygdala (the part of the brain responsible for survival tasks), they make us more pain resistant, and less prone to blood loss.

Basically, the job of these chemicals is to transform us into a formidable survival machine. The scenario, our directives and other factors determine whether we choose to survive by escaping or engaging.

But What Can You Do?

Although our instinctive responses to danger are amazing at their assigned tasks, it is well known that our body/mind system operates at its best when our cognitive skills and our instincts work in unison. The training methodology of the Functional Edge System is designed to achieve this goal. We focus in providing an experience that will help our students develop effective and efficient responses to these dangerous situations.

Our primary set of drills is designed to model instinctive behavior. We cognitively practice protective movements that look nearly identical to instinctive ones. The Two main behaviors are covering and pushing. We also train ancillary behaviors such as gripping and pulling that are seen frequently in real life attacks.

When facing a threat sometimes the attacker gives away his intention through physical or verbal pre-engagement indicators, this may give us time to act cognitively. If our cognitive protective action is a replication of what we do on instinct we can focus on accomplishing the same set of tasks whether we are surprised or not.



Put To The Task

The cognitive tasks we must perform during the Survival Attitude parallel the mission of our instinctive survival mechanisms.

First we must avoid, intercept, deflect, or mitigate impact directed to the head to remain conscious. If we have already been struck and are perhaps dizzy we must take the same actions to improve our level consciousness.

If the attack put us in a non-vertical, non-bipedal position we must seek to regain that as well. The goal is to be as vertical as possible as soon as possible.

To achieve all this, the next level of drills is designed to improve on our instinctive reflexes in order to accomplish more tasks with cognitive movements that are replications of instinctive ones. We learn to use these movements to pry or brace.

If the attacker uses a grappling assault such as a bear hug or headlock motion and they manage to compress our arms, we use the replicated instinctive motions to create space. This is called prying. If we use the same motion, before the bad guy is able to secure a bear hug or headlock, the action is called bracing. Whether we

pry or brace, either of these actions facilitate our Reversal Attitude.

Another stage of Functional Edge training shows the student, how to take those replicated instinctive motions, and turn them into impact trauma weapons. With practice the trainee now can take these gross motor skills and use them to shift into the Engagement Attitude.



Survival of the Fittest

All of the above stages of training, Embracing Instinctive Behavior, Replicating and Improving on Instinctive Behavior, and Replicating and Arming Instinctive Behavior; create experiences that help the student develop effective Self Protection Skill in a short time. This ideal for immediate self- defense needs.

The Functional Edge System also includes, for trainees less immediate needs or that plan on a longer commitment to practice, drills that refine their ability to respond to dangerous assaults with more clarity and options.

As mentioned before, Predatory Assaults are very physically demanding endeavors so we have developed drills that develop

Combat Specific fitness in the areas of Speed, Power and Endurance.

Along with the methodology of embracing the startle reflex, the Functional Edge System also trains the students in exercises that reduce the frequency, and severity of the same reflex

Attacking the same problem from two different sides makes the problem smaller at a faster rate, therefore, more easily solved. It also allows us to better bridge the gap between instincts and cognition so that we may respond to danger more efficiently and effectively.

Survival is intertwined with the Reversal and Engagement Attitudes and you will see this relationship continue through the Resolution Attitudes. It is also the most important because it is both the First Attitude our body/mind system uses when attacked and the ultimate goal in any incident.



REVERSAL ATTITUDE

Once a predatory assault has started and our Survival Attitude strategies are in effect (Staying Conscious, Breathing, and as Vertical and Bipedal as possible) we must turn the tide. In the Functional Edge System we achieve this by shifting to the Reversal Attitude. It is important to understand that, because of the dynamics and chaos of a credible predatory ambush, we may be in the Survival Attitude anywhere from just a micro second to several seconds before we can move to Reversal Attitude. The totality of circumstances, environment, and the explosiveness and ferocity of the attack will influence the time it takes for the shift in Attitude.



Put it in Reverse

To reverse means to change to the contrary. To understand the Reversal Attitude and our strategies during the same, we must understand what the attacker has done so far. The bad guy at this point is using the element of surprise and forward physical, emotional and psychological momentum in order to keep us off-balance, continue to control our movement or to apply more blunt trauma.

When entering the Reversal Attitude we must go beyond embracing our instinctive protective movements, we must build and improve upon them. Because range is compressed very quickly during the attack, one of the imperatives is to create room in which to operate effectively. In the Functional Edge System we have a body of drills that help us turn the two main instinctive protective behaviors (Compressed and Extended) into levers to create space and begin to move the attacker backwards and/or into solid

frames that allow us to keep the territory we just earned.

Go Forward

The next step in the Reversal Attitude is to get our Weapon Systems and Structure in the best alignment possible while keeping the attacker off balance with his structure off line. We accomplish this by using our frames and levers, along with our propulsion (legs) to drive forward with enough force to cause dis-alignment of the attacker's skeleton. When the bad guy's body/mind system is more concerned about maintaining or regaining balance and re-aligning its structure it will be less capable at hurting us.

Feeling Forward

As with all the Attitudes the Reversal will be fueled by emotion. Indignation is anger aroused by something unjust or mean. If you are a normal, law abiding citizen and someone trying to prove his status picks a fight with you, or a predator attacks you as a resource or for the process, you can and should feel indignant.

The relationship between fear and anger is very interesting, at a visceral level, the hormones coursing through our bodies are nearly identical and our "gut" feels the same. The biggest difference is in how the two emotions express themselves in movement.

Fear will normally cause a backwards movement or a freezing. Anger will propel us forward. It's that simple, we move away from the places, people, and things which we fear and we go after the ones that anger us. The specialized type of anger invoked by indignation is ideal fuel to drive forward and put our attacker on his heels.

Our attacker has seen us as prey and we must now physically, psychologically and emotionally show him he is dealing with a fellow predator.

Fast Forward

We have mentioned before that in the Functional Edge System, all of the Engagement Attitudes are closely inter-related. It very possible that with sufficient training in Mental Modeling, Attack Recognition and Habituation and possible mistakes from the bad guy; our Survival Action may also achieve our Reversal within one move

If the attacker makes a lot of mistakes, the environment and circumstances favor us, and our training supports us, we may even achieve our Survival, Reversal, and Engagement within that one move also, but too many factors have to align in our favor for it to be a frequent and reliable result. The dynamics of the real fight may demand otherwise.

There and Back Again

Finally we must remember that the explosiveness and ferocity of the attacker will have an impact on which attitude we are able to use. The dynamics of the fight may have us reversing the bad guy when suddenly through misfortune or deed we may get sent back to a Survival State from which we need to Reverse again.



It is this wavelike effect of Survive-Reverse- Survive-Reverse that we should prepare for. When the attacker's intensity is very high, we must expect chaos. This chaos is similar to swimming in the ocean with heavy currents and strong, massive waves. It is through exposure and training that we learn to ride the violence and ferocity and then turn the tide against our enemy.

ENGAGEMENT ATTITUDE

We have just been surprised by a predatory assault. We have managed to survive the initial onslaught of the attacker and used the Reversal Attitude to stop, or slow the cadence of the assault. Before we can bring the problem to a successful resolution we must Engage it.

Rules Of Engagement

To engage is to enter into battle. Picture this. You are the target of a predatory ambush. The predator is an invading army attacking your fort (yourself) in the middle of the night, while only a few soldiers are standing watch (Alert Attitude). These "soldiers" start defending the "fort" (Survival Attitude) while sending the alarm to the ones that are sleeping. The first few that arm themselves join their comrades at the wall and their increased numbers assist in repelling the enemy (Reversal Attitude). Finally a sufficiently armed group of skirmishers is sent after the invading force to ensure the enemy is sufficiently pre occupied (Engagement Attitude) while a larger contingent with an aggressive plan can move in to effectively contain all enemy forces, escape and evacuate, or destroy all opposition (The 3 Resolution Attitudes, Control, Escape, and Harm Respectively).

Tools of Engagement

Following the metaphor above, the initial group of skirmishers sent out after the enemy would only take primary weapons and ammunition. The weapons which we use to Engage our attacker must be few and fundamental.

These weapons must also be gross motor skills, easily deployable while under stress and from our basic instinctive protective movements, without too much deviation. In the Functional Edge System the Palms, Forearms, and Elbows form the basic Engagement Arsenal.

Loving the Monster

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Let's Do It Again and Again; But Not Again

One of the behaviors which we can temporarily embrace is the repeated dominant arm strike. It is very easy while in "predator mode" to launch the same weapon over and over again. This is a quick way to put "rounds on target" and press an advantage. The problem comes when we continue the repetitions to the point where our enemy can time us or habituate to the onslaught, thereby turning the tide.

In the Functional Edge we developed drills that allow the trainee to experience and use this particular behavior to their advantage. In training we allow the good guy, if he is so inclined, to engage with the same weapon up to three times at most. After that he must change the weapon or the target.

This allows the trainee to fully develop and embrace his predator mentality while fighting and at the same time using judgment and cognition to change strategy as needed.

What'cha Looking At?

A predatory behavior that may cause some trouble is target fixation. Once we decide to Engage, our binocular, predatory vision likes to lock on our prey and remain there until the job is done.

This can present problems when dealing with weapons, and multiple opponents. While we are Engaging the bad guy we must focus on getting our head in motion in order to break this target fixation. Simply putting your head on a "swivel" will help tremendously with your awareness.

Another strategy we use in the Functional Edge is to move your entire body, or your attacker's body if possible, sufficiently to change the "backdrop" view. This allows your peripheral vision to pick up other potential dangers in the environment.

So What's the Plan?

The goal of the Engagement Attitude is to cause temporary dysfunction of our attacker's movement, breathing, and/or structure. This temporary dysfunction opens the door for the Resolution Attitude we decide to use.

It is very important to note here that causing dysfunction is to clearly impair a person's ability to Move, Breathe, or Stand. The "Stun and Run" strategy, although it sounds like a great theory, is merely putting somebody in more danger.



Women are being told to use a couple of strikes and then run from a bad guy that now is going to follow and continue his onslaught and is even more prepared for counter attack.

Our Engagement must result in the attacker's diminished capacity, to pursue us if we decide to Escape, resist us if we decide to Control, or defend himself should the situation call for Harm.

The relationship of the Engagement Attitude to Survival and Reversal is also crucial to understand. If a predator telegraph's his intentions and we detect the assault coming, we may be able to go straight to Engagement Attitude. We must be careful that the weapons we use for Engagement also offer us the same protection of our Survival Attitude, and affect our enemy's balance as much as the Reversal Attitude.

We must also be ready, even when we are successfully Engaging our opponent, for circumstances to force a shift back to Survival or Reversal Attitude. Like the soldier's in our metaphor, we might have to fall back to our fort and rally our troops before Engaging again.

ENGAGEMENT ATTITUDES

Let's Resolve This

Every violent conflict has a beginning, middle and end. In the Functional Edge System these phases of the conflict fall within the strategies of the three categories of Attitudes; Non-Engagement, Engagement and Resolution.

When we successfully Engage our attacker we must do so with the intent to bring the conflict to a resolution that is favorable to us, given the circumstances, scenario, and our professional, legal, and moral positions in the same.

To bring a Resolution is to deal with something successfully. Although success will be, as stated above, subjective to the

person and scenario, there are some fundamental desirable results that apply to everyone.

We want to suffer the least amount of personal damage and injury, we want the resolution to be as permanent as feasible, and we want it to take the minimum amount of time to reach the goal.



A Great ESCAPE

To most normal, law abiding citizens the most practical resolution when confronted by a predatory attack will be to escape; to get away from a threatening evil.

There are two major tasks to accomplish when we choose to Escape. The first task is to disrupt our attacker's ability to stand, move or breathe significantly enough so as to greatly decrease the chances of them thwarting our escape. The fallacy of the "stun and run" method is that they train people to throw a few strikes and then leave without taking into consideration the bad guy's level of motivation and resiliency.

In the Functional Edge System we continue in our Engagement Attitude until it is clearly visible that the predator cannot chase us. We then create tactical distance first, with our eyes on the attacker ready to Re- Engage if necessary, then we turn and increase that distance as quickly and safely as possible.

This Evacuation and Evasion phase is just as important. When we choose to leave the scene of the attack, we do so in the direction of SAFETY. Safety = People, places, and things that will assist us in successfully resolving the attack. Some examples are running towards a public place where assistance and allies may be found. A process predator will very rarely risk continuing an assault in a very public place in front of witnesses; but a group of bully-ish thugs may revel in a public display. You must be aware of what you are running from as well as where you are running to.

Keep in mind that the scenario may require that you make your Escape in phases. In an incident like a mass shooting assault, you want to find cover and concealment, wait and evaluate your position in relation to the shooter(s), and then leave the area when it's safe. The most important thing to remember is that Escape does not mean a blind run. We must understand the circumstances we are facing and make our Escape as strategically sound as any other tool in our arsenal.



Under CONTROL

Sometimes our professional obligations require that, when we are attacked, we must remain there and keep the bad guy from leaving as well. Although most of the time this option is reserved for Law Enforcement, there are few circumstances

in which an average citizen may choose or have to exert control over another person rather than fleeing.

To Control is to exercise restraining or directing influence over another. We can either keep the person from moving or make them move only when and where we want to. We can only exert this level of Control after successfully Engaging our opponent and creating enough attrition so that he cannot effectively resist our control.

In the Functional Edge System we specifically want to control our subject's ability to move and his capacity to harm us. On the ground we will use the six Position / Transitions effectively using our body weight to restrict our opponent's torso and / or limb movement. While standing, we use the modified Street Clinch to move our opponent where we want him and limit his use of arms and legs for striking.

The decision on whether to control a subject or not is mostly influenced by our profession. In Law Enforcement the optimal Resolution is almost always the one in which the officer controls the bad guy to take him into custody. However, a night club doorman or security staff member may need to use control to deal with the demands of his job. It is easy to see that professionals need to understand the control resolution; but there are also circumstances in which an average civilian might resort to control. Imagine encountering an unarmed, thirteen year old, ninety pound, mentally disturbed girl in the middle of an outburst. While trying to reason with her she attacks. You may be morally obligated to control her instead of simply using strikes to knock her unconscious.

We must make sure that we take the time to think about which circumstances will make us choose a Control Resolution as opposed to an Escape one. We must deeply examine our values and beliefs about how much and how far we are

willing to go especially when it comes to the last Resolution Attitude-Harm.

**HARM:
First Do No Harm, Unless You Have To**

Choosing to Harm somebody, to cause damage and injury, and cause severe dysfunction and even another human's death, is not an easy task. Although we must always let the totality of circumstances influence our choices, it is essential that we are not trying to make that evaluation too late. The time we spend figuring out how much we are willing to do to another human and under what circumstances is just as important as the time we spend practicing exactly how we are going to do it.



Because learning how to cause harm is a matter for the training room, we will focus on the how much damage would be considered Harm as opposed to just Engagement. One mistake some trainers make is the assumption that the use of any one particular personal weapon or hitting a certain target automatically means Harm. Human beings can be surprisingly resilient and assuming that because you hit someone with an elbow in the face that you have caused damage, let alone harm them, can be dangerous.

The best way to determine harm is in the results. Generally, harming constitutes damage that nearly permanently or permanently affects the attacker's movement, breathing, and structure. Another easy mistake to make is focusing

on what "looks" damaged as opposed to significant damage.

A broken nose and a facial cut can look extremely bloody and gory but will hardly stop a determined attacker; torn knee ligaments are barely perceptible from the outside but the damage is enough to nearly immobilize a person.

Other injuries that may be considered Harm are; broken or dislocated knees, elbows, hips or shoulders; broken trachea, broken spine / neck; severe testicular damage; severe eye damage; multiple broken ribs; multiple broken fingers; internal organ damage and severe concussion.

The key is to look for the results. Is my attacker now gasping for breath while clutching his throat? Is he limping severely or can barely stand? Again the results of true Harm are readily observable and its use cannot be taken lightly.

Regardless of your profession and the scenario you find yourself in one of the three Resolutions Attitudes of the Functional Edge System will provide the strategy needed for a safe conclusion to a conflict that has gone physical.

Tony Torres
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Tony Torres was a defensive tactics instructor during his 9 years of service in the US Navy, where he had roles as a Search and Rescue swimmer and in Nuclear Weapons Security.

During his 13 year career as a decorated Master Police Officer in the City of Virginia Beach he worked on patrol duties and later in special units tasked with gangs and narcotics operations.

Following his years of public service, Coach Torres worked for Blackwater USA first as an instructor for Force on Force CQB Training, then as a Team Leader in Iraq providing dignitary protection (PSD) for US Department of Of State personnel including Ambassador Bremer – who was at that time ‘the most threatened man in the world’.



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